

United States House of Representatives  
Committee on Financial Services  
2129 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

MEMORANDUM

**To:** Members of the Committee on Financial Services

**From:** FSC Majority and Minority Staff

**Date:** April 14, 2016

**Subject:** April 19, 2016, Task Force to Investigate Terrorism Financing hearing titled “Preventing Cultural Genocide: Countering the Plunder and Sale of Priceless Cultural Antiquities by ISIS”

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The Task Force to Investigate Terrorism Financing will hold a hearing entitled “Preventing Cultural Genocide: Countering the Plunder and Sale of Priceless Cultural Antiquities by ISIS” on Tuesday, April 19, 2016, at 10:00 a.m. in room 2128 of the Rayburn House Office Building. This will be a one-panel hearing with the following witnesses:

- Mr. Robert M. Edsel, Chairman of the Board, Monuments Men Foundation
- Mr. Yaya J. Fanusie, Director of Analysis, Center on Sanctions and Illicit Finance, Foundation for Defense of Democracies
- Dr. Patty Gerstenblith, PhD, Distinguished Professor, DePaul University College of Law
- Dr. Amr Al-Azm, PhD, Associate Professor, Shawnee State University
- Mr. Lawrence Shindell, Chairman, ARIS Title Insurance Corporation

The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has derived significant illicit revenues from the plunder and destruction of cultural sites and artifacts in Syria and Iraq. Some claim that ISIS's actions represent “the largest challenge for the international heritage community since [World War] II.” Despite several international efforts to preserve and protect cultural artifacts from looting by terrorists through the decades, especially during times of armed conflict, the United Nations General Assembly stated on February 12, 2015, that the organized looting of antiquities is occurring on an “unprecedented scale” and is generating significant income for terrorist groups in particular. The Task Force will receive testimony from experts concerning the scope of the problem, the ways in which similar looting

Members of the Committee

April 14, 2016

Page 2

and destruction of cultural artifacts have been combatted during past conflicts, how ISIS's looting and theft can be inhibited or prevented now, and how demand for artifacts may be reduced outside the conflict area.