

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**December 12, 2025**

### **The American Society of Overseas Research and the Libyan Department of Antiquities Sign Memorandum of Understanding to Protect and Preserve Libyan Heritage**

ALEXANDRIA, VA— The American Society of Overseas Research (ASOR) is pleased to announce the signing on December 4, 2025, of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Libyan Department of Antiquities (DoA) for the protection, preservation, and promotion of Libyan history and heritage. The agreement formalizes more than a decade of cooperation between ASOR and DoA on projects that have been sponsored by the U.S. Embassy to Libya. These activities advance the action plan for the bilateral Cultural Property Agreement between the United States and Libya.

"This signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between ASOR and the Department of Antiquities marks a new chapter in our partnership," said Jeremy Berndt, Chargé d'Affaires of the U.S. Embassy to Libya. "It formalizes years of collaboration and sets the stage for continued joint efforts in training, preservation, and institutional development."

Through the framework of the MOU, ASOR and the DoA will continue to collaborate on conservation and heritage education projects and build upon ASOR's extensive collaborative work in Libya since 2015. Among its diverse projects, ASOR has:

- Supported community-led heritage protection efforts;
- Sponsored the participation of Libyan heritage professionals at ASOR's Annual Meeting;
- Fought against the illicit trafficking of Libyan cultural property;
- Documented threats to cultural heritage in the Cyrene region.

"In our work in Libya over the past decade, ASOR has developed valuable ties with networks of local heritage professionals and communities working together to understand and preserve the remains of their past," said Sharon Herbert, ASOR President. "This MOU stands as a commitment to continue and enhance this important work."

With this new MOU, ASOR and DoA are expanding their shared commitment to conserving Libya's heritage for present and future generations. A recently announced partnership to address damage caused by Storm Daniel to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Cyrene represents a significant step forward. This initiative broadens

their collaboration beyond anti-trafficking and education to include the stabilization and restoration of built heritage.

“ASOR is committed to supporting the cultural heritage professionals and the people of Libya in their efforts to protect, preserve, and present to the public the rich cultural heritage of Libya,” said Jane DeRose Evans, ASOR President-Elect. “We are privileged to be able to collaborate with the people in the Department of Antiquities who have dedicated themselves to this important work.”

ASOR and DOA signed the MOU at the culmination of a four-day legal workshop in Tunis that focused on building legal and prosecutorial capacity in Libya in order to counter the multi-faceted problem of illicit antiquities trafficking. To that end, the workshop brought together Libyan and American legal, law enforcement, and heritage professionals.

“ASOR is honored to formalize our commitment to Libyans and their heritage through this new agreement,” said Andrew G. Vaughn, Executive Director of ASOR “For over a decade, ASOR has worked with the Libyan Department of Antiquities and other partners to tackle some of the biggest challenges facing Libya’s cultural heritage and to celebrate the rich and diverse story of Libya and its people. We are delighted to expand this collaboration in the years to come.”

“This Memorandum of Understanding marks a new chapter in our ongoing collaboration with ASOR to safeguard Libya’s rich cultural heritage,” said Dr. Mohammed Faraj Mohammed Al-Fallos, Chairman, Board of Directors, Department of Antiquities. “Libya’s heritage is central to our national identity and to world history. Together, we will strengthen efforts to preserve, study, and share this heritage with future generations. This partnership reflects our shared commitment to protecting Libya’s cultural legacy for all humanity.”

Learn more about the Memorandum of Understanding here

<https://www.asor.org/news/2025/12/libya-mou-signed>

For more information about ASOR’s cultural heritage efforts, please visit

[www.asor.org/chi](http://www.asor.org/chi).

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**About ASOR**

Founded in 1900, the American Society of Overseas Research is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that supports the study and preservation of the ancient Near East and wider Mediterranean through research, education, and cultural heritage initiatives.