

## DRMC Report for ICOM Executive Board

The Disaster Resilient Museums Committee (DRMC) is the ICOM International Committee with the mission to serve global museums as an effective, inspiring, instrumental, and cooperative interdisciplinary platform about emergency preparedness and disaster response. It was established at the 2019 ICOM Triennial Meeting in Kyoto, Japan.

The goals and objectives for the DRMC for 2019-2022 were:

- To increase awareness about the importance of disaster risk management within ICOM;
- To identify opportunities for collaboration with other stakeholder organizations in the field of cultural heritage and disaster response; and
- To provide a mechanism within the museum community for the dissemination of information resources, training opportunities, and professional networking about disaster risk management.

Much of the past three years has been devoted to establishing the operations of the DRMC, coordination with the Secretariat, and the newly appointed ICOM Standing Committee on Disaster Risk Management convened by the Executive Board. The DRMC bylaws were approved by the members and provided to the Secretariat. A protocol for action and coordination in case of emergencies between the ICOM Standing Committee on Disaster Risk Management, ICOM International Committee on Disaster Resilient Museums and ICOM Secretariat was also developed and approved. The DRMC has been following this protocol and will make necessary adjustments as needed in the years ahead.

The COVID-19 global pandemic necessitated significant adaptation in terms of programming and has slowed the development of the DRMC. For example, ICOM-DRMC was not initially listed among the International Committees for the 2022 ICOM Triennial Meeting in Prague because of confusion with the DRMC Standing Committee, a situation that has occurred many times the past three years. These organizational difficulties will hopefully improve as distinctions can be made between the International Committee and the Standing Committee and as DRMC becomes more established as the impact of the pandemic lessens.

Nevertheless, DRMC was successful in hosting successful programs in conjunction with its annual meetings in 2020 and 2021:

**2020 DRMC Annual Conference**, “Current Approaches to the Conservation of Conflict-Affected Heritage,” 27-28 February 2020, Washington, DC, USA. Co-organized with the Smithsonian Institution and supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

This in-person, pre-pandemic conference included more than 250 attendees. Speakers discussed on-going cases from Ukraine, Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria, and Iraq as well as cutting-edge conservation approaches proposed by scholars in the UK and the USA, which show great promise in assisting the global effort to restore what has been damaged by armed conflict and recover what has been lost. These presentations are archived on YouTube. The conference was accompanied by a hybrid business meeting of the DRMC.

**2021 DRMC Annual Conference**, “Interdisciplinary Networks for Cultural Heritage Risk Management: Case Studies and Opportunities for Collaboration,” 4-7 November 2021, Tokyo/Rikuzentakata, Japan. Co-organized with ICOM Japan, Japanese Association of Museums, Cultural Heritage Risk Management Center, Japan.

This in-person and hybrid conference presented 12 papers from museum practitioners in Japan, Korea, Switzerland, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ecuador, France, Taiwan, and Vietnam. Conference attendees included these countries as well as the USA, Ukraine, Georgia, Greece, and Guatemala. This conference brought together museum professionals involved with disasters to share their knowledge and expertise of successful disaster planning and response as well as situations that failed. It commemorated the 10th Anniversary of Great East Japan Earthquake at Iwate and included excursions to Iwate Tsunami Memorial Museum and the Iwate Prefectural Museum.

**2022 ICOM Triennial Conference**, 20-28 August 2022, Prague, Czech Republic.

DRMC is co-sponsoring several timely sessions at the 2022 ICOM Triennial: “Museum Techniques and Risk Management,” with ICAMT; “Training the Trainers: Facilitation Skills Workshops for leaders in Conservation Risk Assessment,” with ICMS, ICTOP, INTERCOM, ICOM-CC; “Expert Session: Resilience of Historic House Museums and their Collections to Risks posed by Climate Change, Environmental Disasters, and Conflict Zones,” with ICOM-CC, ICMS, ICTOP, DEMHIST, INTERCOM, ICOM-JAPAN; and “War and Heritage: The Power of Museums in Preparing for and Representing Armed Conflict,” with ICOMAM.

DRMC members have been active in many different public arenas. The DRMC has launched a social media presence on Facebook to disseminate information about the field. The DRMC Facebook page had approximately 3,600 members as of August 2022. Allied organizations, such as the Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative, promote its content. DRMC members have also made important interventions in the field, including H. A. McGhie’s *Museums and Disaster Risk Reduction: Building Resilience in Museums, Society, and Nature* (Curating Tomorrow, UK, 2020). Its members regularly participate in conferences, such as the Be Museum virtual conference in 2020. It has networked and shared resources across ICOM international committees, national committees and the DRMC Standing Committee, including ICEE, ICOM Lebanon, ICOM Georgia, ICOM Armenia, ICOM Azerbaijan, ICOM France, ICOM LAC, ICOM-CC, ICOM ICMS, ICOM INTERCOM, ICOM ICTOP, and ICOM Define.

Finally, the past three years have witnessed three major crises for museums: the 2020 explosion in Beirut, Lebanon; the 2021 takeover of Kabul, Afghanistan; and the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine. DRMC has been involved in each event. ICOM-DRMC offered resources and support to the Secretariat as it supported museum salvage in Beirut. The DRMC Secretary has coordinated safety concerns of staff and collections with Afghan museum workers in Kabul and elsewhere in Afghanistan. The DRMC Vice-President has been a key leader in responding to the crisis in Ukraine and formed the Heritage Emergency Response Initiative to support museums and heritage institutions at risk. These activities demonstrate the relevance, support, and need for the DRMC as an International Committee.