

Adaptive Emergency Conservation at the National Museum of Iran During Armed Conflict







Cultural Heritage under Thread

- war
- political instability
- environmental crises
- armed conflict

The Beginning of the Crisis

The missile hit near the building of the National Museum of Iran







These images were taken after fuel storage facilities around Tehran were hit by missile
The smoke and pollution covered the sky
Shortly afterward, oil pollution mixed with acid rain covered the museum grounds and building with black stains

From Preventive Conservation to Adaptive Emergency Conservation

. non-ideal conditions
. the goal changes

Uncertainty Decision-Making

predictable circumstances

. stable environmental conditions
. sufficient resources
. proper equipment



ideal protection → adaptive protection

Risk assessment and analysis of possible dangers

the most important threats were identified

· Unauthorized entry into the museum building

· Theft of objects and destruction of artifacts

· Impact of war projectiles on the building and structural collapse

· Impact of non-explosive secondary projectiles (shrapnel)

· Fire risk caused by explosion

· Structural vibration and the falling or displacement of objects

· Power outages and disruption of environmental monitoring systems

. destruction of water supply facilities

Emergency evacuation and transfer of golden and silver objects











The first priority was the emergency evacuation of selected high-value objects, particularly gold and silver objects

Identifying the Museum as a Cultural Site

An important step was to clearly identify the museum as a cultural and non-military site.







Iran is a State Party to the 1954 Hague Convention

Emergency packing and Evacuation

Packing of 3,500 historically sensitive objects required a large team and night-shift activity



Prioritization and Temporary Interventions



Decision-Making Based on Risk Assessment and the Principle of Least Damage for Maximum Rescue

Passive Protection









Soot, combustion products, and especially thermal shock could seriously damage plaster and stone objects

Protection Against Blast and Shrapnel















Sand bags were combined with strong metal frames could absorb part of the energy from a blast wave, provide some protection against shrapnel, and reduce the possibility of objects falling or being displaced

block the windows of underground storage





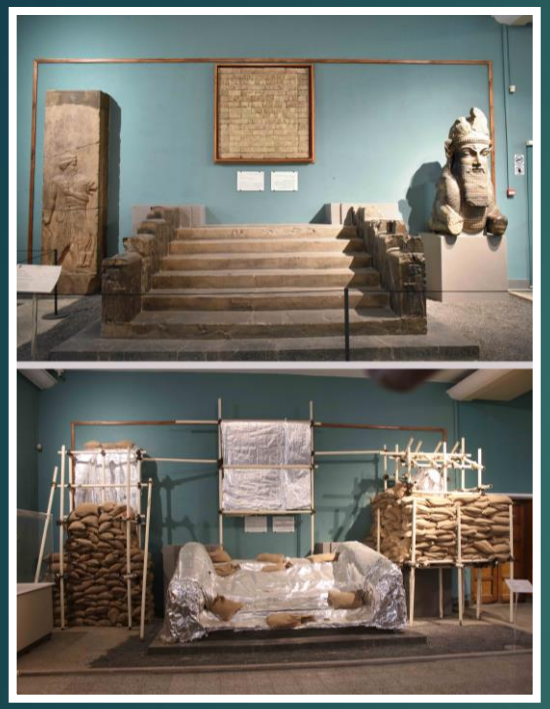








crisis changes the meaning of optimal conservation






emergency conservation

✔ making the best possible decision

✖ finding the perfect solution

information

conditions

time

resources

First rescue then optimization