

SPRING SPOTLIGHT 2021



**Cultural Heritage  
in Conflict:  
The Case for Iraq**





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### Cultural Heritage in Conflict: The Case for Iraq

JUNE 7, 2021

— FEATURING —

**General David H. Petraeus**  
*US Army (Ret.)*

**His Excellency Dr. Fareed Yasseen**  
*Iraq's Ambassador to the United States*

**Bénédicte de Montlaur**  
*President and CEO, World Monuments Fund*

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With a presentation about heritage preservation in Iraq by

**Dr. Jala Makhzoumi**  
*Architect and Adjunct Professor of Landscape Architecture,  
American University of Beirut*



This year's Spring Spotlight event will explore the role of cultural heritage as a means of recovery and reconciliation. World Monuments Fund (WMF) is currently engaged in numerous projects in Iraq, among them the preservation of Ishtar Gate and the Ninmakh Temple of Babylon; conservation of key buildings at Erbil Citadel; the reconstruction of the Mam Rashan Yazidi shrine in Mt. Sinjar; and the rehabilitation of Mosul Cultural Museum, which was severely damaged by Daesh (ISIS) in 2015.

WMF President and CEO Bénédicte de Montlaur welcomes General David H. Petraeus, US Army (Ret.), and His Excellency Dr. Fareed Yasseen, Iraq's ambassador to the United States, to consider the role of cultural heritage as a means of recovery and reconciliation in Iraq. The event also features a special presentation on heritage preservation in Iraq by landscape architect and preservationist Dr. Jala Makhzoumi.

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*Donations to Spring Spotlight provide critical operating funds that ensure a sustainable future for the organization. WMF is committed to working with local communities around the globe to safeguard humanity's highest cultural achievements and now, more than ever, your contribution makes that possible. Thank you, as always, for your commitment.*

## About the Speakers



### **GENERAL DAVID H. PETRAEUS, *US Army (Ret.)***

General David H. Petraeus (US Army, Ret.) is a Partner with the global investment firm KKR and Chairman of the KKR Global Institute, which he established in 2013. Prior to joining KKR, General Petraeus served over 37 years in the U.S. military, culminating in six consecutive commands, five of which were in combat, including command of the 101st Airborne Division during the fight to Baghdad and the first year in Iraq; of the Multi-National Security Transition Command in Iraq; of coalition forces in Iraq during the Surge; of the U.S. Central Command; and of coalition forces in Afghanistan. Following retirement from the military, he served as Director of the CIA. General Petraeus graduated with distinction from the U.S. Military Academy and earned a PhD from Princeton University's School of Public and International Affairs. He has earned numerous honors and awards, and has been decorated by 13 foreign countries.

### **HIS EXCELLENCY DR. FAREED YASSEEN, *Iraq's Ambassador to the United States***

Dr. Fareed Yasseen has served as Iraq's ambassador to the United States since 2016, and previously as head of Policy Planning with Iraq's Ministry of Foreign Affairs; diplomatic advisor to Deputy President Adil Abd al-Mahdi; and ambassador to France. Initially trained as a physicist, Dr. Yasseen carried out academic research in the field before engaging in political activism and human rights advocacy. He has worked and consulted for various startups, think tanks, and UN agencies, including the Secretariat of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. In 2016, Dr. Yasseen was awarded the Robert and JoAnn Bendetsen Public Diplomacy Award at Tufts University and made Commander of France's Order of the Legion of Honor.

### **BÉNÉDICTE DE MONTLAUR, *President and CEO, World Monuments Fund***

Bénédicte de Montlaur is President and Chief Executive Officer of WMF, the world's foremost private organization dedicated to saving extraordinary places while empowering the communities around them. She is responsible for defining WMF's strategic vision, currently implementing that vision in more than 30 countries around the world and leading a team that spans the globe. Her background mixes culture and the arts, politics, international diplomacy and human rights. Prior to joining WMF, Montlaur spent two decades working across three continents as a senior diplomat at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

### **DR. JALA MAKHZOUMI, *Architect and Adjunct Professor of Landscape Architecture, American University of Beirut***

Dr. Jala Makhzoumi is an architect and adjunct professor of landscape architecture at the American University of Beirut with expertise in post-conflict recovery, heritage conservation, and sustainable development. She served as an ecological landscape consultant for projects that include the Baghdad Comprehensive City Development 2030, the Damascus Master Plan 2030, and the Saida Urban Sustainable Development Strategy. She is President of the Lebanese Landscape Association; co-founder of the Cambridge Centre for Landscape and People; and partner at UNIT44, a Lebanon-based design and planning practice. Dr. Makhzoumi studied architecture in Baghdad before completing her master's in environmental design at Yale University and earning her PhD in landscape architecture at Sheffield University. She is a recipient of the 2019 European Council of Landscape Architecture Schools' Lifetime Achievement Award for her outstanding contribution to landscape architecture education and practice.



## WMF IN IRAQ SINCE 2003

For over 55 years, WMF has protected the world's cultural treasures, working across 700 sites in 112 countries.

In Iraq, WMF's work began nearly two decades ago when the Iraq War began in 2003, bringing instability to the region and exacerbating existing challenges to the preservation of cultural heritage sites. In response, WMF launched a joint initiative with the Getty Conservation Institute in 2004 that would create a long-term framework for stewarding cultural sites within Iraq.

A workshop series for Iraqi archaeologists and conservators in Jordan helped rebuild conservation capacity by providing training in the latest conservation techniques. In 2006, Iraq's cultural heritage was collectively included on the World Monuments Watch, raising awareness and calling for action for its protection. Our early efforts

evolved into major projects, including a decade-long project at Babylon that resulted in the site's inclusion on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2019.

Today, our work in Iraq continues, from Babylon to Erbil, Amedi, Mosul, and Mount Sinjar, harnessing the power of cultural heritage to strengthen communities and create economic opportunities.

Settled over 6,000 years ago, Erbil Citadel was featured on the Watch in 2000, 2002, and 2004 after decades of civil unrest and deterioration. In 2020, WMF completed the restoration of Erbil Citadel's Heritage Building Complex in collaboration with the local authorities. Our ongoing project to restore the site's historic hammam will help revive its social role as a community gathering place.

Al-Hadba Minaret in Mosul, Getty Images.





In the hilltop town of Amedi, we have been working since 2018 to build local conservation capacity and develop a framework for the protection of historic towns in Iraq.

In 2020, WMF launched two projects to repair the destruction caused by ISIS at heritage sites across Iraq. At the Mosul Cultural Museum, the country's second largest museum, our team is working with the Iraqi State Board of Antiquities and Heritage (SBAH), the Musée du Louvre, the Smithsonian Institution, International alliance for the protection of heritage in conflict areas (ALIPH), and local authorities to prepare the restoration of the site, destroyed by ISIS in 2015—revitalizing the museum as a cultural hub in the wake of conflict.

In Mount Sinjar in northern Iraq, we are working with the local community to restore the shrine of Mam Rashan, targeted by the ISIS as a Yazidi site of worship.

By including workshops for local heritage professionals, our projects will ensure other affected sites can be rebuilt while encouraging minority representation in recovery efforts.

In Iraq and elsewhere, cultural heritage represents opportunities to rebuild the fabric of society by working hand in hand with local populations and supporting economic growth. With your support, WMF's work around the world taps into the potential of places to bring us together, safeguarding the irreplaceable for present and future generations.

Right: Erbil Citadel Heritage Complex central court during conservation.



## Crisis Response Program

Heritage sites around the world face immense challenges. When disaster strikes at a heritage site, the clock begins ticking. Sometimes days or weeks—or even hours—are all that stand between rehabilitation and loss.

WMF's Crisis Response Program supports cultural heritage sites physically affected by the destruction resulting from natural disasters, armed conflict, and other disruptive events.

With your support, WMF can quickly deploy preservation experts to work with local advocates to assess damage, begin emergency stabilization, and develop comprehensive plans for recovery once humanitarian needs have been met.

Help us be ready to act. Your gift in support of the Crisis Response Program will ensure the world's cultural treasures are saved in times of crisis.

[wmf.org/CrisisResponse](https://wmf.org/CrisisResponse)

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*as of June 3, 2021*

Cover: Nabu-sha-Khare Temple, Babylon, Iraq.



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