November 13, 2015

The Honorable Robert P. Corker
Chairman
Committee on Foreign Relations
423 Dirksen Senate Office Building
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Corker,

The Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) deplores looting and the destruction of the world's cultural heritage.

We have spoken out forcefully against the pillaging and damage of ancient monuments, art and archeological material, have developed strict guidelines to ensure that museums do not acquire looted antiquities, have encouraged both the United States and foreign governments to help safeguard these irreplaceable treasures in instances of conflict around the world as well as pledging the AAMD's support through its Protocols to assist in those efforts. The AAMD believes that protecting works of cultural significance in danger of damage, destruction or looting as a result of war, terrorism or natural disasters is the responsibility of everyone and especially of institutions whose mission is to protect, conserve and study the artistic heritage of human kind. Members of the AAMD stand ready with our colleagues around the world to offer whatever help can be provided to museum professionals, international organizations such as the Blue Shield and custodians responsible for safeguarding the cultural heritage of countries in crisis.

We encourage members of the committee to continue to work closely with the museum community to assure that the world's heritage is protected from those who would destroy that which is irreplaceable – the manifestations of our shared creativity. In this spirit, we have suggested language that we hope would strengthen the legislation of S.1887 by extending its protections to Iraq, and to correct some technical issues.

Please take this letter as confirmation that AAMD has supported and continues to support S. 1887.

Sincerely,

Johnnetta Betsch Cole, Ph.D
President, Board of Trustees, Association of Art Museum Directors
Director, Smithsonian, National Museum of African Art