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Later

UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Iran Damaged by U.S.-Israeli Airstrikes

By Grace Kuth



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Photo by Diego Delso via Wikimedia Commons

Golestan Palace in Tehran, Iran.

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United States-Israeli strikes on Iran have caused significant damage to multiple UNESCO World Heritage Sites. These locations are legally protected by international law under the [1954 Hague Convention](#) for the

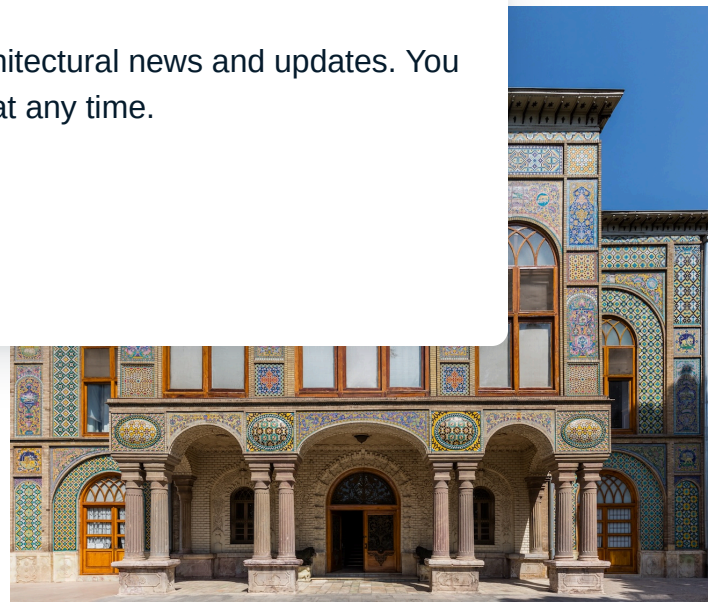
Protection of Cultural
Armed Conflict
the Protection of
Heritage.

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“Any damage to
people it belongs
heritage of all humanity, because every people
contributes to the world’s culture,” reads the
preamble to the 1954 Hague Convention.

On March 2, Tehran’s Golestan Palace, was damaged
—its Hall of Mirrors shattered—by shock and debris
following an airstrike to Arag Square. The walled
palace, which dates back hundreds of years, is one of
the oldest monuments in the Iranian capital. It received most of its characteristic features in the 19th century,
during the influential Qajar era, when it became the residence and seat of power of the ruling family.



Golestan Palace. Photo by Diego Delso via Wikimedia
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“Golestan Palace represents a unique and rich testimony of the architectural language and decorative art
during the Qajar era...parts of the palace complex can be seen as the origins of the modern Iranian artistic
movement,” UNESCO stated.

Images and videos from the [Associated Press](#) reveal broken windows, archways, and
attacks. Shattered glass covers the palace’s floors.



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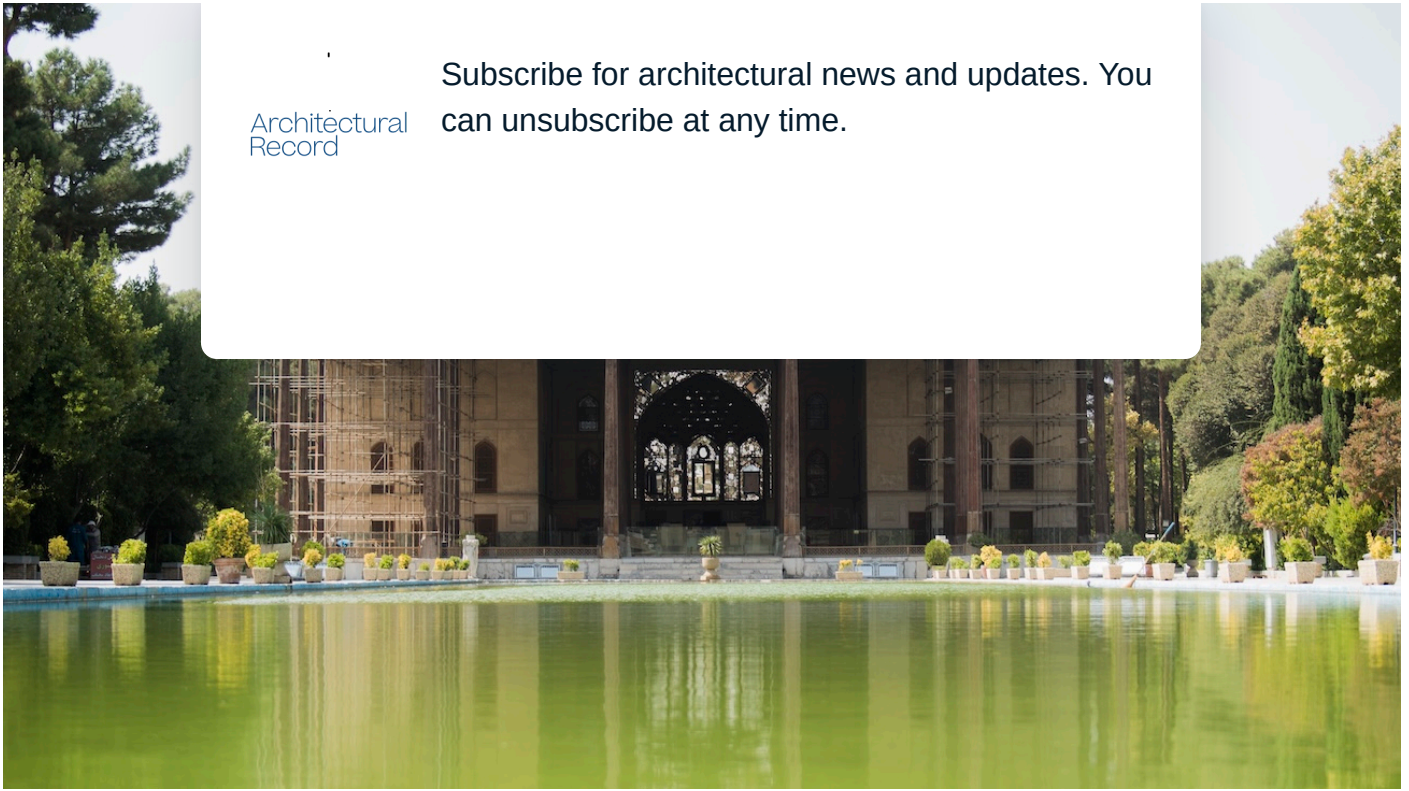
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Chehel Sotoun. Photos by Amir Pashaei via Wikimedia Commons (1), Pegaay al via Wikimedia Commons (2)

On March 4, the U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield—an organization dedicated to protecting cultural property—released a [statement](#) urging the U.S. government and Israeli Defense Forces to “take immediate and concrete steps to identify, map, and protect cultural sites throughout the region, especially in Iran, in full compliance with international humanitarian law.”

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Ali Qapu Palace. Photo by Diego Delso via Wikimedia Commons

Per the [New York Times](#), the Chehel Sotun Palace and Chehel Sotun are UNESCO World Heritage sites.

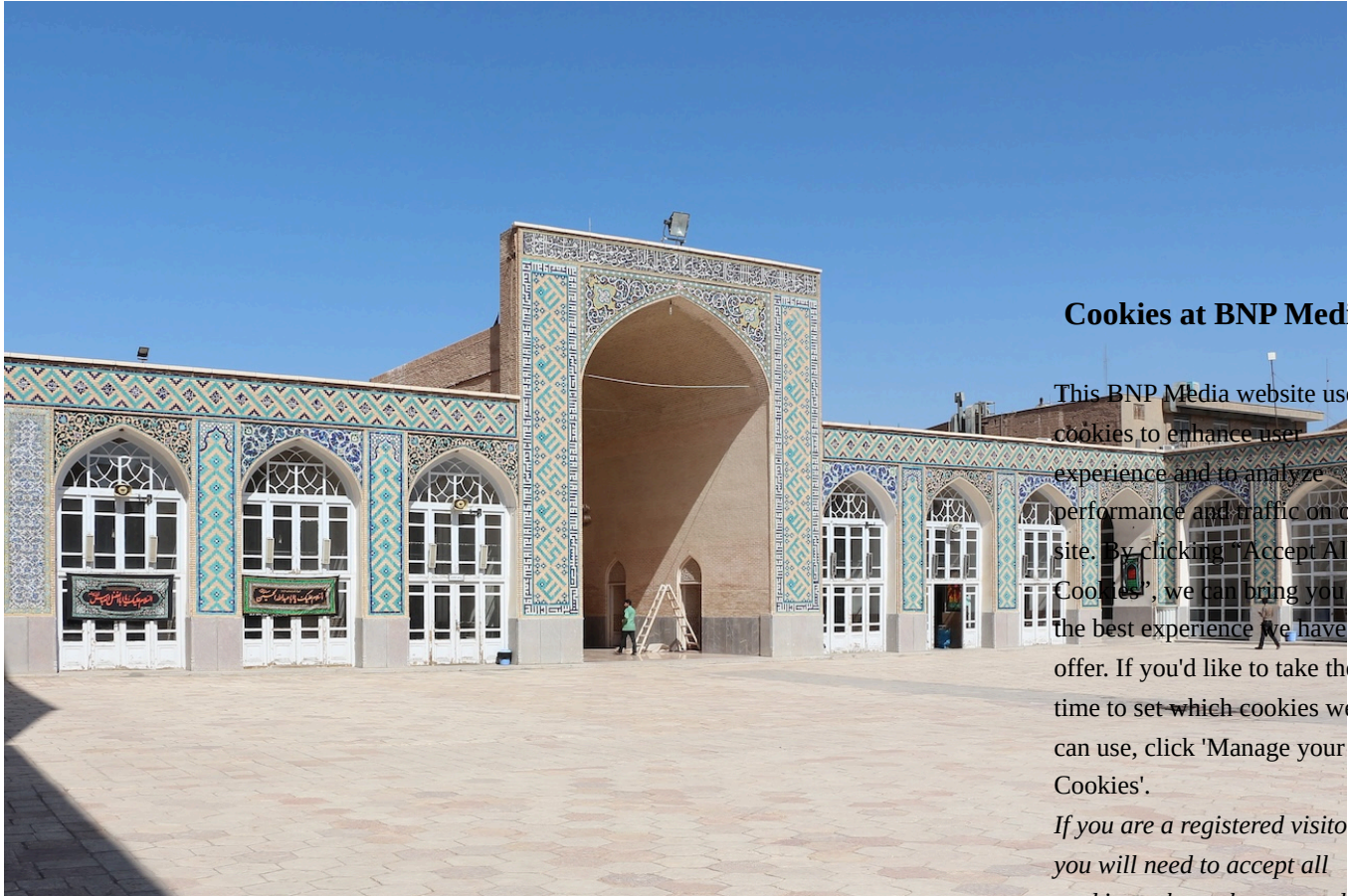
The Chehel Sotun is a historical scene with its intricate tilework windows, cracked walls, and

The strikes on Isfahan caused injury to another UNESCO-listed site, the Jameh Mosque, which dates back to the 8th century.

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the Ali Qapu and three of which were destroyed in the 1978-79 Iranian Revolution. The life and death of the city's architecture.



Jameh Mosque. Photo by Bernard Gagnon via Wikimedia Commons

Two days prior to the attacks on Isfahan, U.S.-Israeli forces hit the perimeter of the Falak-ol-Aflak Castle, a UNESCO site in the city of Khorramabad, according to the head of the province's heritage department Ata Hassanpour. Fortunately, the castle remains intact, though offices associated with the heritage department and adjacent archeological and anthropological museums were destroyed, per the [Guardian](#).

“War advocates say that whatever is destroyed, we will build a better one later. Okay, build a new Ali Qapu and Chehel Sotun and Golestan Palace,” wrote Iranian scholar Mojtaba Najafi in an [X post](#). “For me, ancient monuments are as important as human lives. Because they connect me to my past, and their destruction means that my memory is destroyed. The lost life of a citizen cannot be rebuilt.”

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Falak-ol-Aflak Castle. *Photo by Ovid via Wikimedia Commons*

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ories. Their
l identity of a
Iranian
Iran what the
lella Signoria is
structures,
exist today and

would be very difficult to reconstruct. I liken it to when the Taliban destroyed the Buddhas of Bamiyan or a Russian missile struck the Transfiguration Cathedral in Odesa, Ukraine.”

As the bombing continues, the number of historic sites damaged in Iran has risen, with reports at press time of over a hundred cultural heritage sites impacted.

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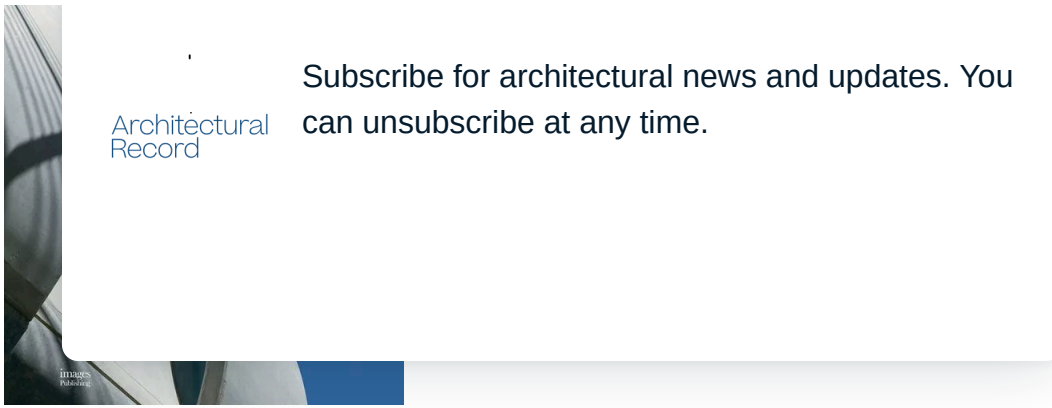
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