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International Conference

**THE NICOSIA CONVENTION: A CRIMINAL
JUSTICE RESPONSE TO OFFENCES RELATING TO
CULTURAL PROPERTY**

**National Library,
15 - 16 June
Riga, Latvia**

**SESSION I. PROSECUTION OF DAMAGE, DESTRUCTION AND ILLICIT
TRAFFICKING OF CULTURAL PROPERTY**

The financing of terrorism through cultural property

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- Abstract -

HARMAKHIS OPERATION - CULTURAL HERITAGE BRIGADE

Since 2016, the Historical Heritage Brigade has been conducting an investigation into the financing of terrorism through the illicit trafficking of cultural property. The archaeological goods came from sites in the Cyrenaica region (Libya) which, at the time of their plundering and smuggling, were under the control of terrorist groups linked to Daesh.

The main people involved were two Spanish antique dealers, who had created a smuggling network that brought the goods into Spain via Thailand and the United Arab Emirates.

To do so, they had the collaboration of two well-known traffickers of cultural property from Iran and Jordan, who provided them with transport and part of the documentation necessary for the subsequent laundering.

Once in Spain, the archaeological pieces were restored and laundered by creating false transport documents provided by two companies. With the purchase and transport documents, the import of the goods was declared to the Ministry of Culture and an export permit was applied for, which, once obtained, acted as a safe-conduct on the international market.