



**WORLD  
MONUMENTS  
FUND**

**WORLD MONUMENTS FUND PARTNERS WITH U.S. MISSION  
TÜRKIYE AND TURKISH MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND TOURISM  
TO PRESERVE EARTHQUAKE-HIT CULTURAL HERITAGE SITES  
IN ANTAKYA, TÜRKIYE**

**New York, NY – March 7, 2024** – [World Monuments Fund \(WMF\)](#) has joined forces with the [U.S. Mission in Türkiye](#) and the [Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism](#) to undertake emergency stabilization work at St. Paul’s Greek Orthodox Church and the Antioch Synagogue following the devastating earthquakes that struck southeastern Türkiye in February 2023. WMF ranks these projects among its global priorities, clustered around the themes of crisis response and inclusive heritage, two of the institution’s key priorities.

The ancient city of Antakya (formerly known as Antioch) was among the places most affected by the devastating earthquakes that struck Türkiye and Syria in February 2023. Following a scientific expedition to understand better the conservation needs of the city’s historic fabric, WMF has identified two buildings— Antioch Greek Orthodox Church (also known as St. Paul’s Church) and the Antioch Synagogue—upon which to concentrate its disaster recovery efforts. The multifaith composition of the sites is in keeping with Antakya’s proud tradition of diversity and tolerance, which stretches from ancient times to the present day.

“With our decades-long experience in crisis response, our focus at World Monuments Fund remains on the collective healing of Antakya’s people and the preservation of the region’s diverse cultural heritage,” said **Bénédicte de Montlaur, President and CEO of World Monuments Fund**. “Our collaboration with the U.S. Mission in Türkiye and the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism will help facilitate the ongoing restoration efforts at these two significant religious sites.”

World Monuments Fund’s technical planning for the stabilization work began in January 2024, and the first site visit was conducted on February 26, 2024. U.S. Ambassador to Türkiye, Jeffrey L. Flake, and Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism’s Director General for Cultural Heritage and Museums, Birol İnceciköz, received a briefing on the project and a tour of the sites from World Monuments Fund’s Senior Program Manager Hungshi Chao in Antakya. The two officials also met project stakeholders from the local community.

During the tour, **Ambassador Flake** said, “It is important to collaborate with Türkiye on this project because Hatay is all about heritage. This has been a place where different faiths are mixed in harmony for centuries. We are happy to partner with our Turkish friends on this project.”

WMF’s work at Antakya Earthquake Heritage Sites has been made possible, in part, by support from the U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP) and the U.S. Mission to Türkiye. Moreover, WMF received permission from the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism to carry out this project and emergency stabilization and preservation work on other cultural heritage sites in Antakya. The U.S. Mission to Türkiye and the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism have a strong history of collaboration in cultural heritage preservation.