

Baroness Goldie speech at 24th Conference of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention

Director General, ladies and gentlemen. May I extend Congratulations to you, Mr Chairman, on your election and to Director-General Arias and his team for all the work in preparing for this Conference.

Mr Chairman, the United Kingdom fully supports the statement made by the European Union this morning.

It is now over 100 years since the horrors of the First World War – a conflict in which my late father fought. The global community's revulsion at the use of chemical weapons in that conflict first propelled nations to come together and try to ban them. Just over 20 years ago we collectively took a huge step forward with the enactment of the Chemical Weapons Convention, paving the way for verified destruction of all declared stockpiles – a process now close to completion.

The OPCW has, rightly, been lauded for this historic achievement and has taken its place as an integral part of the rules based international system; not only verifying destruction but inspecting industrial activity and supporting states to fully implement the convention's provisions.

Whilst the threat of chemical weapons use never fully disappeared, sadly and regrettably it reared its ugly head again with confirmed use in the conflict in Syria, as well as in Malaysia, Iraq and indeed in my own country, the United Kingdom. Ladies and gentlemen, the UK will not stand idly by in the face of chemical weapons attacks.

In response the international community came together again in June 2018 and unequivocally reaffirmed that all chemical weapons use was abhorrent. Not only was the use of chemical weapons condemned, we also agreed that measures should be put in place to identify those responsible for the appalling chemical weapons attacks in Syria. There must never be impunity for such crimes.

The OPCW has now been working diligently on Syria and its chemical weapons programme for over six years. The UK remains gravely concerned at Syria's failure to address the significant outstanding questions with its Declaration. There are serious and substantial gaps and deficiencies that Syria has so far failed to account for. Under professional and expert scrutiny by the Technical Secretariat, Syria has nevertheless slowly and grudgingly acknowledged more and more chemical weapons activities. We call on Syria to fully implement the provisions of the convention and its obligations never, under any circumstances, to develop, retain or use chemical weapons.

Ladies and gentlemen, the United Kingdom has full confidence that the women

and men of the Technical Secretariat, including the members of the Fact-Finding Mission, Declaration Assessment Team and Investigation and Identification Team, will continue to conduct their work professionally, thoroughly and impartially. We look forward to receiving the IIT's first report in the near future. It will then be for us, the States Parties to decide how to respond.

In order for the OPCW to continue its vital work it first needs an adequate budget. The United Kingdom will be supporting the adoption of the Director General's proposed programme and budget, as recommended by the Executive Council by an overwhelming majority. Assessed contributions will not be increased in 2020 and we think the proposals to make use of the 2017 cash surplus are proportionate and are justified. The United Kingdom encourages all states to join consensus on the budget proposals when they are considered later this week.

The other priority for the United Kingdom is to see the successful adoption of the United States, Canadian and Dutch proposal to add two families of Novichok to the Convention's control lists. It is now over a year since this initiative was launched in response to the use of a nerve agent, with lethal effect, in Salisbury in the United Kingdom. It is imperative that the OPCW has the means to verify compliance with the convention in respect of these dangerous toxic chemicals.

Upholding the chemical weapons convention and underscoring the importance of rejecting all chemical weapons use wherever it occurs is not about picking sides – it is actually about working together united by a common objective of good to ensure that there is no place for chemical weapons in the twenty-first century. We urge all States Parties to support the vital efforts of the OPCW in achieving this shared aim.

Thank you very much indeed.

British Embassy works with Congress to strengthen its technical capabilities

The activity aimed to share the experience of the British Parliament on investigative research, the role of congressional representatives, transparency and accountability, amongst other topics.

Audience was composed mostly of newly elected deputies and their advisors, re-elected congressmen and technical teams who run Congress' internal management. The event was organized by WFD, the UK's public body in charge of promoting democracy around the world.

Speakers included Edward Potton, Head of Science and Environment Research at

the House of Commons Library; Patricio Vallespin, former Chilean Congressman and international consultant; Tania Sanchez, specialist in transparency, access to information and citizen engagement; and George Evans, Senior Programme Manager at WFD.

By running this activity, the British Embassy wants to strengthen its collaboration with Congress on matters that will help to build up on the institution's technical capabilities and liaise closely with the needs of a new Legislature due to be inaugurated in January 2020.

[The AAIB has sent a team to North Wales](#)

[unable to retrieve full-text content]The AAIB has sent a team to investigate an accident involving a light aircraft.

[Export bar placed on rare bronze sculpture by François Girardon](#)

- The statuette, valued at £1.2 million, is an example of the Baroque style prevalent at the Court of Louis XIV

An export bar has been placed on a 17th-century bronze figure of Apollo in a bid to keep the work in the UK.

The £1.2 million sculpture by François Girardon (1628-1715), depicts the mythological sun god Apollo. The figure is holding a lyre, representing his association with music, and is crowned with a laurel, alluding to his pursuit of the nymph Daphne.

Girardon defined the sculptural style of French Baroque and made a significant contribution to the decoration of the Palace of Versailles which was the principal royal residence of the French kings from the late 1680s until the French Revolution.

This particular piece epitomises the tastes of the French 'Sun King' Louis XIV and may have been made for him personally. The figure is a rare statuette and one of only two known extant bronzes based on an earlier terracotta model made by Girardon.

The decision follows the advice of the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest (RCEWA). The Committee noted that the statue was an exceptional example of Baroque sculpture, comparable to some of the best French bronzes of the period.

The RCEWA made its recommendation on the grounds of the statue's outstanding beauty and outstanding significance for the study of the history of French bronzes, François Girardon and his working practises.

Committee Member Stuart Lochhead said:

Produced on a grand scale, this sumptuously cast bronze of Apollo with his lyre and a flaming torch epitomises the splendour of the court of Louis XIV. François Girardon, sculptor to the self-styled Sun King himself, played a leading role in the decorative schemes at Versailles.

As this bronze represents only one of a handful of works by Girardon in UK collections, its export abroad would certainly be a loss to active scholarship in this field and to the nation in general."

The decision on the export licence application for the bronze statuette will be deferred until 24 February 2020. This may be extended until 24 June May 2020 if a serious intention to raise funds to purchase it is made at the recommended price of £1,200,000 plus VAT of £240,000.

ENDS

Notes to editors

1. Organisations or individuals interested in purchasing the statue should contact the RCEWA on 0845 300 6200.□
2. Details of the statuette are as follows: □ A statuette of Apollo; model c.1675; cast before 1715, possibly c. 1675 Bronze H. 69.5 cm Model by François Girardon (1628-1715); founder unknown.
3. Provenance: The early provenance of the bronze is unknown; Acquired by the dealer Cyril Humphris before 1967; purchased for private collection in 1970; passed to current owner in 2019
4. The Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest is an independent body, serviced by The Arts Council, which advises the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on whether a cultural object, intended for export, is of national importance under specified criteria. □
5. The Arts Council champions, develops and invests in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives. It supports a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to digital art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections. www.artscouncil.org.uk.□

Export bar placed on Liss masterpiece

- The Old Master painting, from the height of Liss's career, has been valued at £5.6 million

An export bar has been issued for Johann Liss's 'The Temptation of Mary Magdalene' in a bid to provide the opportunity for a UK gallery to acquire it.

Johann Liss (c. 1595-1631) was one of the leading painters in the Baroque style and a major force in the re-energisation of Venetian painting.

The work, valued at £5.6 million, depicts Mary Magdalene turning away from a figure offering symbols of earthly riches towards an angel, in an ambiguous representation of the common theme of vice versus virtue.

Although this painting has been in the UK for over 250 years, 'The Temptation of Mary Magdalene' was not known to scholars until 1994 and had not been exhibited publicly before that time.

Due to his death at the age of 36 in 1631, there are very few surviving works completed by Liss, making this work a rare example. The painting at risk of export demonstrates Liss's strong command of original composition and distinct painterly skill. The work combines elements of both Northern and Southern European Baroque painting, showing the influence of predecessors such as Rubens, Caravaggio and Titian.

The decision follows the advice of the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest (RCEWA). The committee noted that the painting could be considered "Liss's masterpiece."

Committee Member Christopher Baker said:

Johann Liss's dramatic painting is a spectacular, dynamic study of the struggle between virtue and vice. This complex and very rare work draws on Baroque art from northern and southern Europe to create a wholly original synthesis, in which the artist's fluid, painterly skills are brilliantly demonstrated.

The 'Temptation of Mary Magdalene' has the additional interest of being a painting that has been in Britain since the mid-eighteenth century. As a work of extraordinary beauty with a fascinating history, its export would represent a profound loss.

The RCEWA made its recommendation on the grounds of the painting's importance

for the study of the work of Johann Liss and his working practices.

The decision on the export licence application for the painting will be deferred until 24 February 2020. This may be extended until 24 August 2020 if a serious intention to raise funds to purchase it is made at the recommended price of £5,665,200 plus VAT of £173,040.

Offers from public bodies for less than the recommended price through the private treaty sale arrangements, where appropriate, may also be considered. Such purchases frequently offer substantial financial benefits to a public institution wishing to acquire.

ENDS

Notes to editors

1. Organisations or individuals interested in purchasing the oil painting should contact the RCEWA on 0845 300 6200.□
2. Details of the painting are as follows: □ Johann Liss (d. 1631) The Temptation of Saint Mary Magdalene Oil on canvas, 98.8 x 125.8 cm
3. Provenance: Possibly Richard Chauncey (d. 1760), Edgcote, Northamptonshire, and there framed as the overmantel in the former Billiard Room during the re-modelling of the house between 1747–52; Possibly his son, William Henry Chauncey (d. 1788); By inheritance with Edgcote to his brother-in-law, Thomas Carter; Possibly by descent to his granddaughter Julia Aubrey, who married William Ralph Cartwright (1771–1847) of Aynhoe Park, Oxfordshire; Possibly inherited with Edgcote by his son by his second wife Richard Aubrey Cartwright (1811–1891); Thence by descent to his grandson Ralph Cartwright (1880–1936); Anonymous sale ('The Property of a Family Trust'), London, Christie's, 9 December 1994, lot 96; Purchased by current owner in 1995.
4. The Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest is an independent body, serviced by The Arts Council, which advises the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on whether a cultural object, intended for export, is of national importance under specified criteria. □
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