

Experts raise alarm over climate change threat to cultural heritage

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Experts want special measures from the UN to protect ancient sites from the effects of climate change

Climate change could wreak "irreversible damage" on the world's most precious ancient monuments and other cultural sites, experts warned

Saturday as they pushed for UN protection for major global sites.

Academics and [policy makers](#) gathered in Athens for a meeting on the threats to [world heritage](#) called for an array of tools to predict, measure and counter the [effects of climate change](#).

They are campaigning to have the issue included on the agenda at the UN Summit for Climate Change in New York in September.

Dimitrios Pandermalis, director of the city's Acropolis Museum said that while environmental damage and deterioration has always been a challenge for monuments, these threats are accelerating.

"The scale of things is different and the destruction can be irreversible," he said.

The UN Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) warned in October that warming was on track towards a catastrophic 3C or 4C rise, and that avoiding global chaos would require a major transformation.

"Climate change is a threat to our future, but also to our heritage, natural and cultural," said UN Secretary-General Anthony Guterres ahead of the summit.

"Extreme weather events and shifts in climate are taking a toll on [ancient monuments](#) and sites."

The Athens meeting called for improved tools to help gauge the threat posed by [climate change](#) and mitigate risks, like threat maps based on climatic projections.

The conference highlighted the challenges in preserving underwater heritage such as shipwrecks.

The Head of the Research Centre for Atmospheric Physics and Climatology at the Academy of Athens warned that "with man-made global warming everything will become more acid in the atmosphere but also in the seas" posing a threat to submarine monuments.

The conference was jointly hosted by the Greek government, the UN and the UN's cultural agency UNESCO.

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