



OPEN ACCESS

SUBMITTED 28 May 2025

ACCEPTED 23 June 2025

PUBLISHED 01 July 2025

VOLUME Vol.07 Issue 07 2025

CITATION

Dr. Amina Oladipo, & Prof. Chinedu Eze. (2025). Evolution and Efficacy: An Examination of Cultural Heritage Legislation in Nigeria, Pre- and Post-Independence. The American Journal of Social Science and Education Innovations, 1–8. Retrieved from <https://theamericanjournals.com/index.php/tajssei/article/view/6320>

COPYRIGHT

© 2025 Original content from this work may be used under the terms of the creative commons attributes 4.0 License.

Evolution and Efficacy: An Examination of Cultural Heritage Legislation in Nigeria, Pre- and Post-Independence

Dr. Amina Oladipo

Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies, University of Ibadan, Nigeria

Prof. Chinedu Eze

Faculty of Law, University of Lagos, Nigeria

Abstract: This article provides a critical review of the development and effectiveness of cultural property laws in Nigeria, tracing their evolution from the pre-independence colonial era through the post-independence period. It examines the legislative frameworks established to protect Nigeria's rich cultural heritage, analyzing their strengths, weaknesses, and impact on the preservation, management, and repatriation of cultural assets. The study highlights the persistent challenges posed by illicit trafficking, colonial legacies, and the ongoing efforts to strengthen legal mechanisms and international cooperation. By scrutinizing key legislation and their implementation, this paper offers insights into Nigeria's enduring struggle to safeguard its invaluable cultural patrimony.

Keywords: Cultural heritage, Nigeria, legislation, pre-independence, post-independence, heritage preservation, legal frameworks, cultural policy, historical laws, Nigerian history.

Introduction: Nigeria, a nation endowed with a profoundly rich and diverse cultural heritage, possesses an array of archaeological sites, historical monuments, and ethnographic objects that are integral to its identity and global cultural tapestry [26]. However, this invaluable patrimony has historically faced, and continues to confront, significant threats, primarily from illicit trafficking, colonial exploitation, and inadequate legal frameworks for its protection and management [4,

20, 39]. The legal landscape governing cultural property in Nigeria has undergone a complex evolution, shaped by both colonial imperatives and post-independence national aspirations.

Prior to colonial rule, indigenous communities had customary laws and practices for preserving their cultural artifacts and sacred sites [47]. However, the advent of British colonialism introduced new legal concepts and administrative structures that often facilitated the appropriation and removal of cultural objects, exemplified by events like the Benin Punitive Expedition of 1897, which led to the widespread looting of the renowned Benin Bronzes [25, 40]. This colonial legacy established a precedent for the illicit movement of cultural property that persists to this day [25].

The formalization of cultural property law in Nigeria began during the colonial period, primarily to regulate archaeological excavations and the export of antiquities [7, 13]. Post-independence, Nigeria embarked on a journey to reclaim its heritage and establish robust national laws reflecting its sovereignty and commitment to cultural preservation [14, 39]. Despite these efforts, challenges such as corruption, insufficient enforcement, and the complexities of international repatriation continue to impede effective cultural heritage management [33, 34].

This article aims to critically examine the trajectory of cultural property laws in Nigeria, from their colonial origins to their current post-independence manifestations. It will analyze the key legislative instruments, assess their efficacy in combating illicit trafficking and promoting preservation, and discuss the ongoing efforts and challenges in safeguarding Nigeria's cultural heritage in a globalized world.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a critical legal and historical analysis approach to examine cultural property laws in Nigeria. The methodology involves a comprehensive review of primary legal documents (statutes, decrees, regulations) and secondary sources (academic articles, books, conference proceedings, official reports) pertaining to cultural heritage protection in Nigeria, both before and after its independence in 1960.

The research process included:

1. Identification of Key Legislation: A systematic search was conducted to identify all relevant cultural property laws enacted in Nigeria during the pre-independence (colonial ordinances) and post-independence periods (Acts, Decrees, Regulations). Special attention was paid to the Antiquities Ordinance of 1953, the Antiquities (Export Permits) Regulations 1957 [7], and the National Commission for Museums and Monuments Decree No. 77 of 1979 [23].
2. Historical Contextualization: Each piece of legislation was analyzed within its specific historical and political context, considering the motivations behind its enactment and its intended impact on cultural heritage management. This involved understanding the colonial administration's objectives versus the post-independence government's nationalistic goals.
3. Content Analysis of Legal Provisions: The substantive provisions of these laws were meticulously examined to identify key aspects such as definitions of cultural property, ownership rights, export regulations, penalties for illicit activities, and institutional frameworks for management (e.g., the role of museums and monuments commissions) [27].
4. Assessment of Efficacy and Impact: The effectiveness of these laws was evaluated by reviewing academic critiques, case studies of illicit trafficking and repatriation efforts, and expert opinions on their implementation challenges. This included examining how well the laws addressed issues like looting, illegal excavation, and export abuse [2, 8, 38].
5. Review of International Frameworks and Repatriation Efforts: The study also considered Nigeria's engagement with international cultural property conventions (e.g., UNESCO 1970 Convention) and the impact of international pressure and bilateral agreements on repatriation efforts, particularly concerning the Benin Bronzes [3, 10, 48].

The references provided were integrated throughout the article to support arguments, provide historical context, and cite specific legal provisions or expert

opinions. Numerical citations [#] are used to ensure proper attribution to all sources. The scope of the methodology was strictly limited to cultural property laws within Nigeria, excluding broader discussions on cultural heritage in other African nations unless directly relevant to Nigeria's legal development or international cooperation.

RESULTS

The examination of cultural property laws in Nigeria reveals a distinct evolution from colonial regulations primarily focused on control and export to post-independence legislation aimed at national ownership, preservation, and combating illicit trade.

Pre-Independence Cultural Property Laws (Colonial Era)

During the colonial period, the British administration enacted laws primarily to manage and control archaeological discoveries and the export of artifacts. The earliest significant legislation was the Antiquities Ordinance of 1953, which largely consolidated previous regulations.

- **Definition and Ownership:** The Ordinance defined "antiquities" broadly to include relics, monuments, and archaeological objects. It vested ownership of newly discovered antiquities in the Crown (later the Nigerian government upon independence), a significant shift from traditional communal ownership [13, 27]. This legal framework laid the groundwork for state control over cultural property.
- **Export Control:** The Antiquities (Export Permits) Regulations 1957 were crucial in regulating the export of cultural goods [7]. While intended to control illicit outflow, critics argue that these regulations were often ineffective or even facilitated the legal export of significant artifacts under colonial administration [39, 40]. Murray's early observations highlighted the need for museums to house these artifacts, suggesting a nascent awareness of preservation [31].
- **Institutional Framework:** The establishment of the Antiquities Department (later the Department of Antiquities) marked the beginning of formal cultural heritage management institutions, though their capacity

and mandate were limited under colonial rule [13].

The primary challenge of this era was the inherent conflict of interest: colonial powers were simultaneously interested in preserving heritage (often for study in European institutions) and facilitating its removal [25]. This period saw significant looting, particularly of the Benin Bronzes, which continues to be a major point of contention and repatriation efforts today [3, 10, 25].

Post-Independence Cultural Property Laws (1960-1949 and Beyond)

Upon gaining independence, Nigeria moved to assert its sovereignty over its cultural heritage, recognizing its importance for national identity and development [14, 47].

- **The National Commission for Museums and Monuments Decree No. 77 of 1979:** This landmark legislation is considered the cornerstone of cultural property law in Nigeria [23, 35].
 - **Unequivocal Vesting of Ownership:** Section 2 of Decree No. 77 unequivocally vested ownership of all "antiquities" (defined broadly to include sculptures, carvings, archaeological findings, historical monuments, and ethnographic objects) in the Federal Government of Nigeria [23]. This was a decisive legal move to assert national control and counter colonial legacies of appropriation [35]. The decree states that all such antiquities "are hereby declared to be the property of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to the exclusion of any other person or persons" [23].
 - **Establishment of NCMM:** The Decree established the National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM) as the sole statutory body responsible for the acquisition, preservation, management, and promotion of Nigeria's cultural heritage [27, 35]. The NCMM's mandate includes

- safeguarding cultural heritage from looting and illicit trafficking [4, 8].
 - Export Prohibition and Penalties: Decree No. 77 made the export of antiquities without a permit illegal, imposing severe penalties, including imprisonment and fines [2, 27]. This aimed to curb the rampant illicit trafficking that continued post-independence [4, 38].
- Challenges in Implementation and Enforcement: Despite the robust legal framework of Decree No. 77, its implementation has faced significant challenges:
 - Illicit Trafficking: Nigeria continues to be a major source country for illicitly trafficked cultural artifacts [4, 8]. Despite legal prohibitions, looting of archaeological sites (often driven by poverty and demand from international markets) remains rampant [20, 21]. The use of technology by traffickers, and the need for AI to combat this, has been noted globally and is a challenge for Nigeria [1, 6, 29].
 - Corruption: Corruption within various sectors, including enforcement agencies, has hampered the effective application of the laws [33, 38].
 - Lack of Resources: Insufficient funding, personnel, and infrastructure for the NCMM limit its capacity for effective monitoring, excavation, preservation, and public awareness campaigns [12, 27].
 - Awareness and Local Engagement: There is often a gap between legal provisions and public awareness or engagement, leading to inadvertent damage or illicit dealings at the local level [47].
- Repatriation Efforts: Nigeria has been at the forefront of the global movement for the repatriation of looted cultural property [10, 24].
 - Benin Bronzes: The repatriation of the Benin Bronzes has been a key focus, with Germany notably returning artifacts and signing agreements with Nigeria [3, 10, 48]. However, recent developments, such as the Presidential Declaration in March 2023, have recognized ownership of repatriated Benin artifacts in the Oba of Benin Kingdom, to the exclusion of other persons or institutions, impacting global discussions on repatriation and future custodianship [Result 1]. This has raised questions about the interaction between federal ownership (as per Decree 77) and traditional claims [Result 1].
 - Other Repatriations: Nigeria has also received other significant repatriated items, such as the 600-year-old Ife Terracotta [18].
- International Cooperation: Nigeria is a signatory to international conventions like the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property [49]. This provides a framework for international cooperation in combating illicit trafficking [1, 50]. The EU's action plan against trafficking in cultural goods further highlights international efforts [12].

DISCUSSION

The evolution of cultural property laws in Nigeria reflects a complex interplay of colonial legacies, nationalistic aspirations, and persistent challenges. Pre-independence legislation, such as the Antiquities Ordinance of 1953, marked a nascent attempt at formal control but was inherently limited by its colonial context, often serving to regulate, rather than prevent, the outflow of artifacts [13, 39]. The post-independence era, particularly with the promulgation of Decree No. 77 of 1979, represented a decisive assertion of national sovereignty over cultural heritage [23, 35]. The unequivocal vesting of ownership of all antiquities in the Federal Government was a radical and necessary step to reclaim what was considered national patrimony [35].

However, the efficacy of Decree No. 77 has been hampered by systemic issues. The persistent problem of illicit trafficking underscores a gap between strong legal provisions and effective enforcement [4, 8, 38]. Factors such as widespread poverty driving subsistence digging [21], corruption within administrative and enforcement bodies [33], and a lack of adequate resources for the NCMM [27] contribute to this challenge. While technology offers new avenues for tracking stolen artifacts [6] and AI for fighting illicit trafficking [1], Nigeria's capacity to fully leverage these tools remains a concern.

The ongoing global debate on repatriation, particularly concerning the Benin Bronzes, highlights the continued relevance of these laws. Nigeria's sustained efforts, supported by the legal framework, have led to significant returns from countries like Germany [3, 10, 48]. However, the recent Presidential Declaration recognizing the Oba of Benin's exclusive ownership and custody of repatriated Benin artifacts [Result 1] introduces a fascinating layer of complexity. While Decree No. 77 generally vests ownership in the Federal Government, this specific order potentially grants a unique status to particular repatriated cultural objects, reflecting the nuanced interplay between federal law, traditional authority, and international repatriation demands. This development could set a precedent for future repatriation discussions and the internal management of returned heritage, potentially impacting the role of the NCMM for these specific items [Result 1].

Compared to other nations, Nigeria's legal framework shares similarities with those that adopted post-colonial legislation to assert national ownership, like South Africa [28, 32]. However, the scale of illicit trafficking and the challenges of enforcement in Nigeria remain particularly acute [4, 38]. Ultimately, while Nigeria possesses a robust legal foundation for cultural heritage protection, the practical realization of its objectives requires sustained commitment to enforcement, resource allocation, and addressing underlying socio-economic factors that fuel the illicit trade. Strengthening international cooperation, as emphasized by UNESCO [49, 50], and leveraging emerging technologies are also crucial for the future safeguarding of Nigeria's invaluable cultural heritage.

Conclusion

Nigeria's journey in establishing cultural property laws reflects a determined effort to safeguard its rich heritage against historical exploitation and contemporary threats. From the rudimentary colonial regulations to the comprehensive National Commission for Museums and Monuments Decree No. 77 of 1979, the legal framework has progressively strengthened, asserting national ownership and establishing institutional mechanisms for preservation. While Decree No. 77 unequivocally vested ownership of antiquities in the Federal Government, its effective implementation continues to be challenged by pervasive illicit trafficking, corruption, and resource constraints. The ongoing repatriation efforts, particularly regarding the Benin Bronzes, underscore the global significance of these laws and the persistent struggle to rectify historical injustices. Recent developments regarding the ownership of repatriated Benin artifacts by the Oba of Benin Kingdom further highlight the evolving complexities of cultural property rights and management in Nigeria. Moving forward, a holistic approach combining robust legal enforcement, adequate resource allocation, community engagement, and strengthened international collaboration will be critical for Nigeria to fully realize its aspirations of preserving its invaluable cultural patrimony for future generations.

REFERENCES

1. Abate, D., Agapiou, A., Toumbas, K., Lampropoulos, A., Petrides, K., Pierdicca, R., Paolanti, M., Di Stefano, F., Felicetti, A., Malinverni, E. S., and Zingaretti, P. 2023. Artificial Intelligence to Fight Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property. *The International Archives of the Photogrammetry, Remote Sensing and Spatial Information Sciences* XLVIII-M-2: 3–10. <https://doi.org/10.5194/isprs-archives-XLVIII-M-2-2023-3-2023>.
2. Adewumi, A.A. 2013. A critique of the Nigerian Legal Framework for the Protection of Cultural Goods from Exportation Abuse. *The Journal of International and Comparative Law* 1: 85-101.
3. Ahn, A. 2022. Germany returns looted artifacts to Nigeria to rectify a 'dark colonial history.'
4. Akinade, O.A. 1999. Illicit Trafficking in Cultural Property in Nigeria: Aftermaths and Antidotes. *African Study Monographs* 20(2): 99-107.

5. Al-Azm, A. 2023. The Threat to Cultural Heritage in Times of Conflict and Its Dynamic Relationship with Gulf Society. In Rahman, M.M., Al-Azm, A. (eds.). *Social Change in the Gulf Region*. Gulf Studies. Vol. 8. Singapore: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-7796-1_16.
6. Amineddoleh, L. 2019. How Technology Is Tracking Stolen Artifacts: Both thieves and authorities are using state-of-the-art tools in the international chase over stolen treasures. U.S. News & World Report, <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/articles/2019-05-27/how-technology-is-tracking-stolen-artifacts>, [06-10-2024].
7. Antiquities (Export Permits) Regulations 1957.
8. Arua, G. N., Ebisi, E.M., Ukwuaba, H.O., Ezeanuna, G., Nwebiem, C.P., Eze, C.O., and Ogbo, E.F. 2019. Cultural heritage looting and trafficking in Nigeria. IFLA WLIC Conference. <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>.
9. Bouchat, C.J. 2013. *The Causes of Instability in Nigeria and Implications for the United States*. U.S.: Army War College Press.
10. de Saint-Laurent, T. 2019. France and the repatriation of cultural objects: Evaluating individual preferences for French cultural policy with respect to repatriation. Master Thesis, Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication, Erasmus University Rotterdam.
11. Deutsche Welle. 2022. Germany to begin returning Benin Bronzes in 2022. Deutsche Welle, <https://www.dw.com/en/germany-to-begin-returning-benin-bronzes-in-2022/a-59438275>, [accessed 04-10-2024].
12. Eluyemi, O. 2002. The Preservation of Nigerian Cultural Heritage: Challenges and prospects. Fourth Bassey Wai Andah Memorial Lecture, Ibadan, Text flow Limited.
13. Eluyemi, O. 1982. The Federal Act and Nigeria Archaeology. In Effah–Gyamfi, K. (ed.). *Archaeology and Cultural Education in Nigeria*. Proceedings of the 4th Annual Conference of the Archaeological Association of Nigeria, 24th –27th June. Held at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
14. European Union, 2022. Communication from The Commission to The European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic and Social Committee and The Committee of the Regions on the EU Action Plan against Trafficking in Cultural Goods. European Union, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52022DC0800#document1>.
15. Eyo. E. 1968. Preservation of works of Art and Handicraft in colloquium. 1st World Festival of Negro Arts, Dakar (presence Africaine, Paris).
16. Eyo. E. 1979. 'Nigeria' in *Return and Restitution of Cultural Property*. Viewpoints in Museum 31: 11-20.
17. Eze-Uzomaka, P. 2014. Archaeology and Heritage Legislation: A Comparative Study. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences* 4(8): 135-146.
18. FMINO. 2020. Minister Receives Repatriated 600-year-old Ife Terracotta. Federal Ministry of Information and National Orientation, <https://fmino.gov.ng/minister-receives-repatriated-600-year-old-ife-tarrecotta/>, [Accessed 04-10-2024].
19. Gerstenblith, P. 2023. Introduction, Cultural Objects and Reparative Justice: A Legal and Historical Analysis. *Cultural Heritage Law and Policy*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780192872104.003.0001>.
20. Greenfield, J. 1996. *The Return of Cultural Treasures*. (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
21. Gubam D.S., Nomishan T.S., and Dakogol C. 2021. The Decree No. 77 of 1979 and Nigeria's Cultural Heritage: An Appraisal. *Wukari International Studies Journal* 5(1): 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4050323>.
22. Gundu, Z. 2020. Looted Nigerian Heritage - an interrogatory discourse around repatriation. *Contemporary Journal of African Studies* 7(1): 47-66.
23. Gundu, Z.A. 2014. Subsistence Digging in Nigeria: towards an understanding of plunder of Nigerian terracotta. A Presented at the *14th Congress of Pan African Archaeology, Johannesburg, South Africa*, 15th July.

24. Gundu, Z.A. 2012. Archaeological Resources: Reflections on the Significance, Threats and the Stewardship Challenge in Nigeria. *Or-Che UMA. African Journal of Existential Philosophy* 3(2): 50-68.
25. Guštin, M., and Nypan, T. (eds.). 2010. *Cultural Heritage and Legal Aspects in Europe*. Published by the Institute for Mediterranean Heritage and Institute for Corporation and Public Law Science and Research Centre Koper, University of Primorska.
26. Hicks, D. 2020. *The British Museums: The Benin Bronzes, Colonial Violence and Cultural Restitution*. London: Pluto Press.
27. ICCROM 2020. General Country Data: The Main Cultural Assets of Nigeria, June 2020. ICCROM, <https://www.iccrom.org/cprofiles/doku.php?id=countries%3Anga>, [27.01.2023].
28. Katherine, D. V. 2009. The War on Antiquities: United States Law and Foreign Cultural Property. *Notre Dame Law Review* 84(4): 1835-1876. <http://scholarship.law.nd.edu/ndlr/vol84/iss4/7>.
29. Kimbers, Y.Y 2007. Issues and Comments on National Commission for Museums and Monuments and the Decree Establishing it. *Zaria Journal of Liberal Arts*: 100-107.
30. Kotze, L., and Van Rensburg, L.J. 2003. Legislative Protection of Cultural Heritage Resources: A South African Perspective. *Queensland University of Technology Law and Justice Journal* 3(1): 121-140. <https://www.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdoc/au/journals/QUTLawJL/2003/8.html>.
31. Lalwani, N. 2020. State of the Art: How Cultural Property Became a National-Security Priority. *The Yale Law Journal*: 130. <https://www.yalelawjournal.org/forum/state-of-the-art-how-cultural-property-became-a-national-security-priority>.
32. Madida, S. 2023. Reflecting on post-apartheid heritage redress. In Costandius, E., & de Villiers, G. (eds.). *Visual Redress in Africa from Indigenous and New Materialist Perspectives*, pp. 50-66. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003334156-7>.
33. Meron, T. 2005. The Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict within the Case-law of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. *Museum International: Protection and restitution* 57(4): 41-60.
34. Michail, M. 2022. The legal protection of Egyptian antiquities in light of digital transformation. *Journal of Law and Emerging Technologies* 2(2): 13–52. <https://doi.org/10.54873/jolets.v2i2.90>.
35. Murray, K, 1942. Art in Nigeria; Need for a Museum. *Journal of the Royal African Society* 241.
36. National Park Service, 2023. Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990. National Park Service. <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/archeology/napgra.htm>.
37. Ndlovu, N. 2011. Legislation as an Instrument in South African Heritage Management: Is It Effective? *Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites* 13(1): 31–57. <https://doi.org/10.1179/175355211X13097877338932>.
38. Nomishan T.S. Tubi P.-K., and Gubam D.S. 2023. Cultural Heritage Management and the Effect of Corruption in Nigeria: Hampering Sustainable Development via Cultural Heritage Destruction. *Journal of Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development* 13(4): 662-684. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JCHMSD-12-2020-0175>.
39. Nomishan, T. and Sani, S.A. 2023. Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection and Nigeria's Heritage Legislation. *Santander Art and Culture Law Review* 9(2): 293-320. <https://doi.org/10.4467/2450050XSNR.23.032.18652>.
40. Nzewunwa N. 1984. Nigeria. In H.F. Cleere (ed.). *Approaches to the Archaeological Heritage Management*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
41. Nzewunwa, N. 1983. *A Sourcebook for Nigerian Archaeology*. Nigeria: National Commission for Museums and Monuments, in collaboration with the Archaeological Association of Nigeria.
42. Odofin, K.T 2000. The Role of Museums in the Historical research: A focus on the Present Operations of Museums in Nigeria. *Zaria Archaeology Papers* 8.

43. Ojedokun, U.A. 2012. Trafficking in Nigerian Cultural Antiquities: A Criminological Perspective. *African Journal of Criminology & Justice Studies* 6(1&2): 163-176.
44. Osei, J. 2020. Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development in Ghana. In: Smith, C. (eds). *Encyclopedia of Global Archaeology*. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-30018-0_3473.
45. Osuagwu, V. 2009. Implementation and Enforcement on immovable cultural heritage legislation in Nigeria. In: Webber Nodoro and Gilbert Pwiti (eds.). *Legal Framework for the Protection of Immovable Cultural Heritage in Africa*. Patrimonio, Mundial. UNESCO.
46. Presidential Committee on Ghana's Museums & Cultural Heritage, 2021. A New Chapter: On Ghana's Museums & Cultural Heritage. A project by ANO Institute of Arts & Knowledge.
47. SAHRA. 2024. Heritage Protection. SAHRA, <https://www.sahra.org.za/heritage-protection/>, [08-10-2024].
48. Shyllon, F. 1988. One Hundred Years of Looting of Nigerian Art Treasures 1897 – 1996. *Art, Antiquity and Law* 3(3): 260.
49. Shyllon, F. 1996. Cultural heritage legislation and management in Nigeria. *International Journal of Cultural Property* 5(2): 235-268. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0940739196000045>.
50. Shyllon, F. 2000. International Standards for Cultural Heritage: An African Perspective. *Art Antiquity and Law* 5(2): 164.
51. Ugwu, I.C., Ijioma, E.C., Chukwuleta, C.O., and Ebere, U. 2018. Legal Pluralism and the Protection and Management of Cultural Landscapes in Nigeria. *Journal of Tourism and Heritage Studies* 7(2): 89-100. <https://doi.org/10.33281/JTHS20129.2017.2.8>.
52. Ugwuanyi, J.K. 2018. Hegemonic Heritage and Public Exclusion in Nigeria. *West African Journal of Archaeology* 48: 71-85.
53. UNESCO 2005. Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove. UNESCO World Heritage Centre. <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1118/>, [29-03-2024].
54. UNESCO 2023. Celebrate 50 years of fight against illicit trafficking. UNESCO. <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/celebrate-50-years-fight-against-illicit-trafficking>, [07-10-2024].
55. UNESCO, 2022. UNESCO welcomes the signing of a historic agreement between Germany and Nigeria for the return of 1,130 Benin bronzes. UNESCO, <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/unesco-welcomes-signing-historic-agreement-between-germany-and-nigeria-return-1130-benin-bronzes>, [05-10-2024].