Over 19,000 pieces of stolen artwork found   –   11th May, 2020

Level 0

World police found over 19,000 bits of stolen art. Interpol, national police forces, and customs officers found an ancient gold mask that is over 600 years old. They also found very old jewellery and ancient coins. A lot was stolen from museums. Thieves took some art treasures while countries were fighting wars.

Police arrested 101 traffickers across the world. They found the art and the thieves online. Interpol said the number of arrests and objects shows how big this problem is. It said every country with a long history could be a target. It said international criminal networks are trafficking the stolen art.

Level 1

World police worked to find lots of missing art. Detectives from Interpol and national police forces, and customs officers found over 19,000 bits of art. These include an ancient gold mask that is over 600 years old, a carved Roman lion, and centuries-old jewellery and ancient coins. Many items were stolen from museums. Many were taken from countries at war. Thieves took art treasures while countries were fighting civil wars or wars against other countries.

The police arrested 101 traffickers across the world. Police officers spent a long time online to find the art and the thieves. Interpol spoke about the size of their search. It said: "The number of arrests and objects shows the scale and global reach of this illicit trade....Every country with a rich heritage is a potential target....Organised crime has many faces." It said international criminal networks are trafficking the stolen art.

Level 2

World police worked together to find lots of missing art. Detectives from Interpol, Europol, national police forces and customs officers found more than 19,000 items of artwork. These include an ancient Colombian gold mask that is over 600 years old. There was also a carved Roman lion, and centuries-old jewellery and ancient coins. Many items the police recovered were stolen from museums and archaeological sites. Many were taken from countries at war. The thieves took cultural treasures while countries were fighting civil wars or wars against other countries.

The police arrested 101 art traffickers in Spain, Colombia, Latvia, Afghanistan and Turkey. Police officers spent a long time checking online marketplaces to find the art and the thieves. Interpol spoke to journalists about the size of the operation. It said: "The number of arrests and objects shows the scale and global reach of the illicit trade in cultural artefacts....Every country with a rich heritage is a potential target....Organised crime has many faces. The trafficking of cultural goods is one of them. It is not a glamorous business run by...gentlemen forgers, but by international criminal networks."

Level 3

Police from around the world have worked together to find lots of missing art. The detectives were from Interpol, Europol and many national police forces. The World Customs Organization also helped with the search. The police officers found more than 19,000 items of artwork. These include an ancient Colombian gold mask that is over 600 years old. There was also a carved Roman lion, centuries-old jewellery, and thousands of ancient coins. Many of the items the police recovered were stolen from museums and archaeological sites. A lot of them were taken from countries at war. The thieves took cultural treasures while countries were in a mess because of fighting civil wars or wars against other countries.

The police arrested 101 art traffickers around the world. The art thieves were from Spain, Colombia, Latvia, Afghanistan and Turkey. Interpol said they spent a long time monitoring online marketplaces to find the art and the thieves. Interpol's secretary-general Jürgen Stock spoke to journalists about how big the operation was. He said: "The number of arrests and objects shows the scale and global reach of the illicit trade in cultural artefacts, where every country with a rich heritage is a potential target." Interpol added: "Organised crime has many faces. The trafficking of cultural goods is one of them. It is not a glamorous business run by flamboyant gentlemen forgers, but by international criminal networks."