

Italy Returns Pieces Belonging to Ecuador's Cultural Heritage



Rome, October 2 (teleSUR-RHC) -- Ten archaeological artifacts and a terracotta wind instrument dating back to the pre-Hispanic period were returned Wednesday to Ecuador by the Tutelary of Cultural Heritage of the Italian Police.

These pre-Colombian archaeological goods were recovered by the Italian police in the Italian cities of Monza and Turin. Ecuadorian Ambassador to Italy Juan Holguín received the South American pieces in Rome.

Ansalatina reported that some of the pieces found include a small flute adorned with anthropomorphic drawings and pieces of an iguana in relief. A bird dating back to the Bahia civilization from the sixth century, three complete statues, heads and two goblets were also found.

A total of 4,000 recovered pieces will be returned to Ecuador from Genoa this week. They will become property of the Institute of Cultural Heritage. The ambassador said that thousands of such pieces were found and returned in 2014.

Italian police Colonel Luigi Cortellessa said the search for stolen artifacts never ends. In a press release, the Ecuadorian embassy stated that the Italian government has provided "much appreciated assistance" in recovering the pieces and "protecting our cultural heritage," reinforcing both countries' commitment to

identifying, locating, and recovering cultural assets “affected by illicit trafficking.”

Artifacts trafficking represents the third most lucrative illicit crime after drug and weapons smuggling, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

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