# DISASTER MANAGEMENT PLANNING IN THE TIMES OF WAR:
## The Case of the Middle East's Libraries and Archives

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Previously when we used the words "Disaster Management Plan", we were referring to natural disasters. In the Middle East and North Africa, disaster management planning is not limited to natural calamities, but also considers man made disasters such as armed conflict and terrorism as well. Damage to archives and libraries during wartime can have a grave impact on our understanding of human history. The only way to prepare for unforeseen threats such as armed conflicts is to plan for long term preservation.

## INTRODUCTION

The recent history of the Middle East libraries and archives has featured events that have destroyed its collections of great importance. The man-made disasters, such as long term armed conflict afflicting the region including the war in Iraq and violence in Egypt is the biggest challenge that libraries and archives are facing.

## AIM

To understand what libraries and those who are in charge have done before, as well as during and after, the events of disaster.
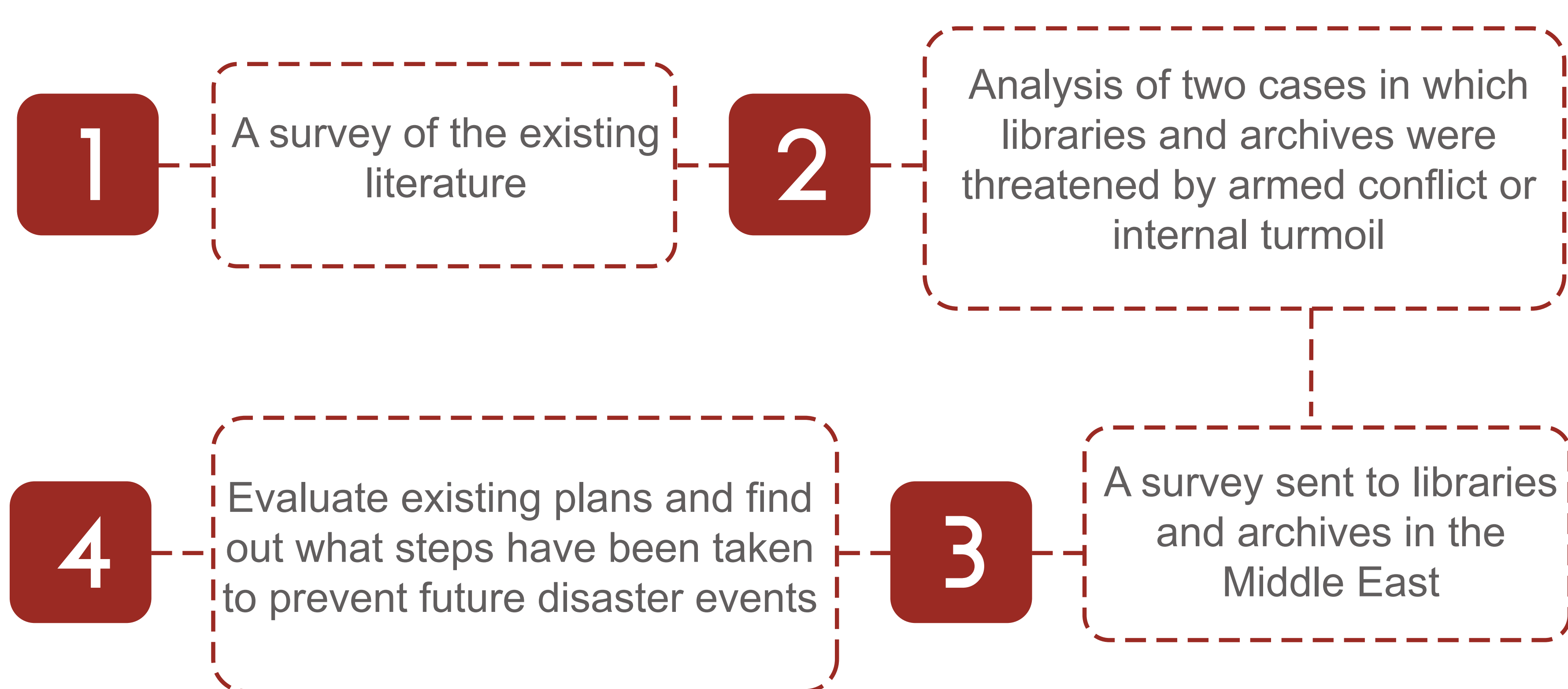
## MAIN QUESTIONS

-Do Middle East Libraries and Archives have disaster management and recovery plans?
-What is the plan?
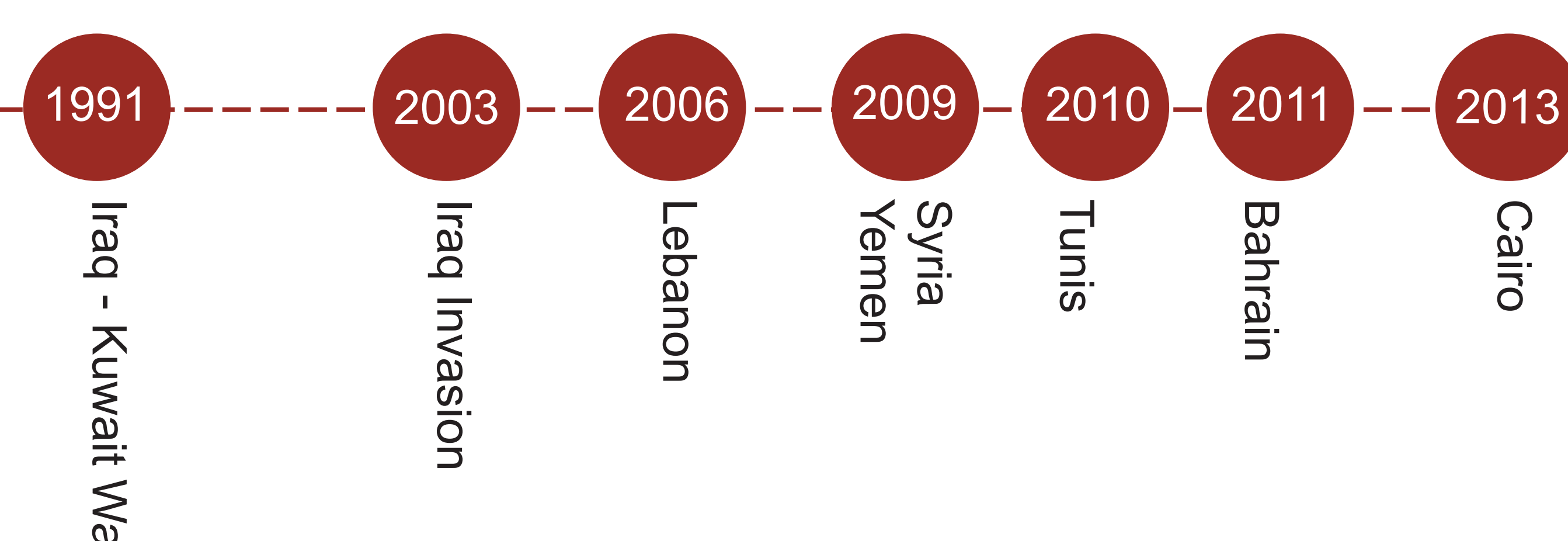-Was it applied when needed during a time of armed conflict? -If not, why was it not applied?

## WHAT DO WE MEAN BY DISASTER MANAGEMENT?

Disaster management: "a set of written procedures prepared in advance by the staff of a library to deal with an unexpected occurrence that has the potential to cause injury to personnel or damage to equipment, collections, and/or facilities sufficient to warrant temporary suspensizon of services (flood, fire, earthquake, etc.)." - The Online Dictionary for Library and Information Science
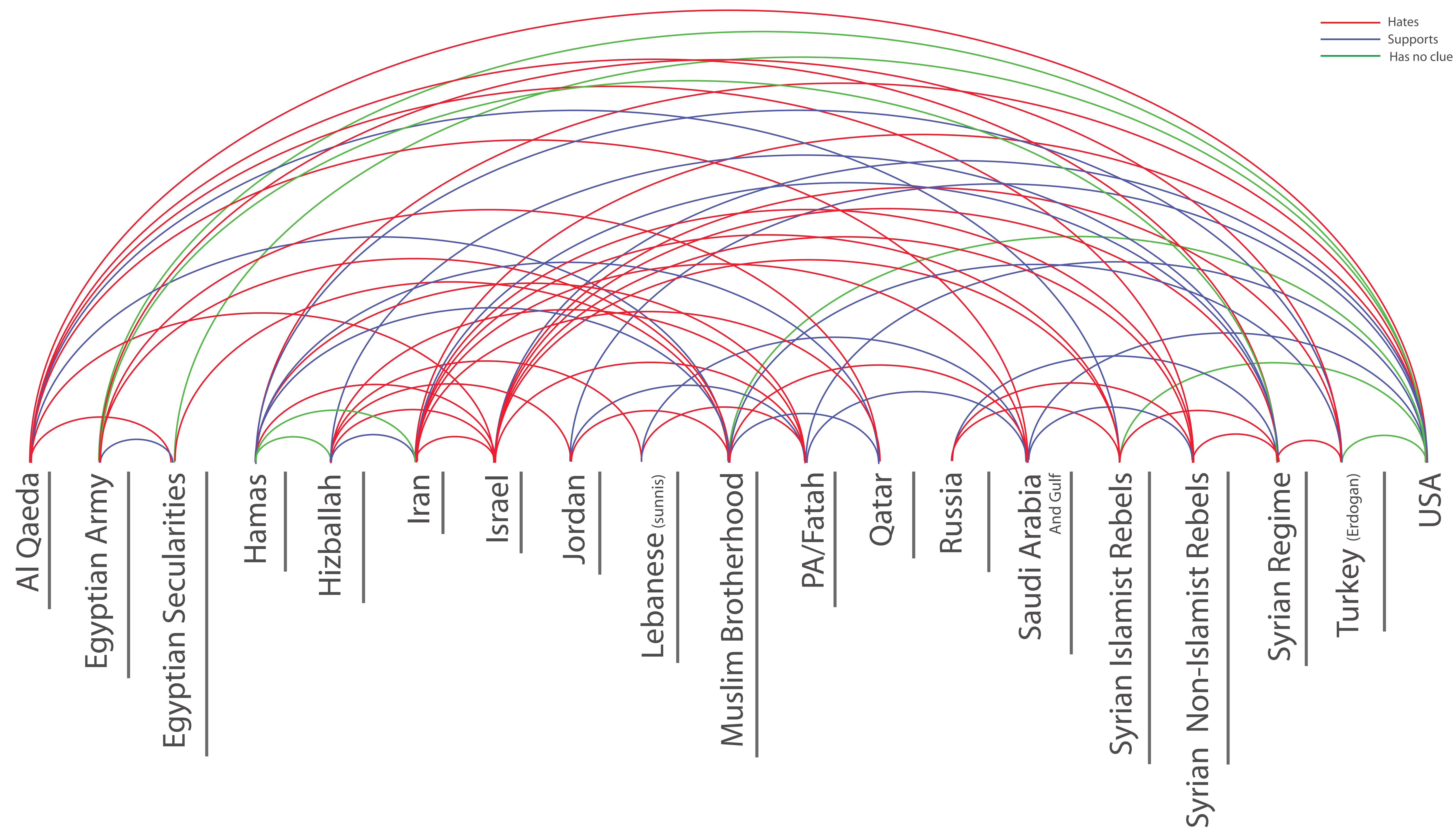
## METHODS

**1** A survey of the existing literature

**2** Analysis of two cases in which libraries and archives were threatened by armed conflict or internal turmoil

**4** Evaluate existing plans and find out what steps have been taken to prevent future disaster events

**3** A survey sent to libraries and archives in the Middle East

## SITES OF CONFLICT

- **1991** Iraq - Kuwait War
- **2003** Iraq Invasion
- **2006** Lebanon
- **2009** Syria Yemen
- **2010** Tunis
- **2011** Bahrain
- **2013** Cairo

## A GUIDE TO MIDDLE EAST

Legend:
- Hates (red)
- Supports (blue)
- Has no clue (green)

Al Qaeda, Egyptian Army, Egyptian Secularities, Hamas, Hizballah, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Lebanese (sunnis), Muslim Brotherhood, PA/Fatah, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia (And Gulf), Syrian Islamist Rebels, Syrian Non-Islamist Rebels, Syrian Regime, Turkey (Erdogan), USA

## WHY DO WE NEED TO PROTECT THESE LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES?

The disasters that have occurred in regards to libraries and archives have affected our shared knowledge and memory. Libraries and archives in Middle East were established long time ago and the armed conflict creates disasters can threaten the history, culture and identity of not only contemporary Middle Eastern cultures but the many nations that have existed or have occupied this region. Damage to archives and libraries during wartime can have a grave impact on our understanding of human history.

## HISTORY OF LIBRARIES

### IN EGYPT

• KING RAMSES II (1303 BC - 1213 BC) established a library housing over 20,000 papyrus scrolls
• PROTLEMY I (323 - 283 BC) established the Library of Alexandria
• HOUSE OF WISDOM - established in Medieval Cairo
• EGYPTIAN NATIONAL LIBRARY - established in 1870
• NATIONAL PUBLIC LIBRARY - founded in 1870

### IN IRAQ

• Symerian Period Clay Tablet (4000 BC)
• Assyrian Period 20,00o tablets Royal Classification System
• HOUSE OF WISDOM - was established in Medieval Islam
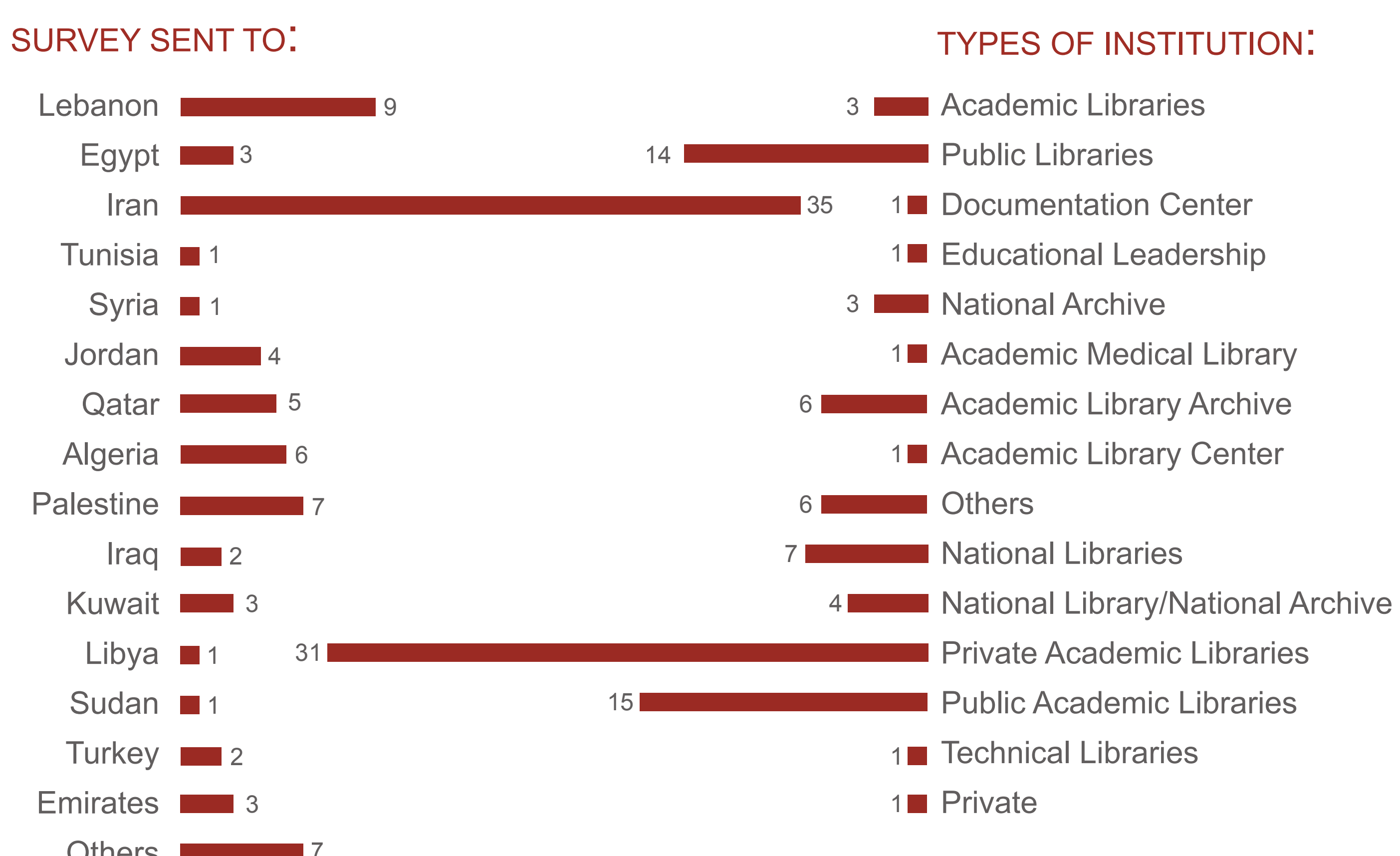• Dar al -Kutub wa al-Wathaaqiq was found in 1924

## CASE STUDY

**1** IRAQI NATIONAL LIBRARY AND ARCHIVE
• Founded in 1920 in Baghdad
• Became National Library in 1959
• Contained 12 million documents
• Collection suffered three fires in 2003 invasion
• 60% of Monarchy documents was destroyed

**2** INSTITUT D'EGYPTE
• Founded in 1798 in Cairo
• In 1880 was renamed to Institut d'Egypte
• In 1959 was moved to Alexandria
• In 2011 was burnt in public uprising
• 30-40,000 books and manuscripts were rescued by civillian action

## SURVEY

After scanning the literature of DMP in time of war, s survey was sent to head librarians, archivists, librarians in 168 institutions in the Middle East, Turkey, and Afghanistan. The following graph shows the information collected upto now.

### SURVEY SENT TO:

| Country | Count |
|---|---|
| Lebanon | 9 |
| Egypt | 3 |
| Iran | 35 |
| Tunisia | 1 |
| Syria | 1 |
| Jordan | 4 |
| Qatar | 5 |
| Algeria | 6 |
| Palestine | 7 |
| Iraq | 2 |
| Kuwait | 1 |
| Libya | 31 |
| Sudan | 1 |
| Turkey | 2 |
| Emirates | 3 |
| Others | 7 |

### TYPES OF INSTITUTION:

| Type | Count |
|---|---|
| Academic Libraries | 3 |
| Public Libraries | 14 |
| Documentation Center | 1 |
| Educational Leadership | 1 |
| National Archive | 3 |
| Academic Medical Library | 1 |
| Academic Library Archive | 6 |
| Academic Library Center | 1 |
| Others | 6 |
| National Libraries | 7 |
| National Library/National Archive | 4 |
| Private Academic Libraries | 1 |
| Public Academic Libraries | 15 |
| Technical Libraries | 1 |
| Private | 1 |

## RESULTS

- OTHER 3
- ON PREP 8
- DON'T KNOW 10
- YES 24
- NO 54

## CONCLUSION

Based on the data collected from both surveys from Middle Eastern countries and from countries with ancient history, one finds that these countries need to work on preparing disaster management plan in order to save their cultural heritage.