

Name of World Heritage property	State Party	ID number
<i>Old City of Sana'a</i>	<i>Republic of Yemen</i>	<i>C 385</i>

STATE PARTY'S REPORT ON THE STATE OF CONSERVATION OF THE OLD CITY OF SANA'A, YEMEN – INSCRIBED ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST IN DANGER

GOPHCY– March 2016

DECISIONS ADOPTED BY THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE AT ITS 39TH SESSION (BOON, 2015), CONCERNING THE OLD CITY OF SANA'A

The World Heritage Committee,

1. **Having examined** Document WHC-15/39.COM/7B,
2. **Recalling Decision** 38COM 7B.58, adopted at its 38th session (Doha, 2014),
3. **Notes with great concern** that the Old City of Sana'a continues to be vulnerable owing to the deterioration security situation in Yemen , in combination with ongoing social change, threats of inappropriate development and continuing lack of organizational support and resources for both heritage management initiatives and physical conservation projects ;
4. **Commends the State Party** for the preparation of the draft 'National Strategy for the Preservation of the Historic Cities, Sites and Monuments 2016 – 2020' and the proposal for a complementary Action Plan to be developed during 2015;
5. **Requests the State Party** to ensure that the National Strategy Action Plan addresses the current situation of the Old City of Sana'a and includes provisions for completion of the proposed Conservation Plan, cultural Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) of the proposed water and sewerage rehabilitation project, building conservation, local community awareness and a strategy for attracting international support;
6. **Expresses its appreciation** for the previous support to the Old City of Sana'a by the German Agency for international Cooperation (GIZ), and expresses its regret at the termination of the capacity building project for the Old City of Sana'a in December 2014;
7. **Encourages the State party** to seek further international assistance , specifically directed at capacity building for the General Organization for the Preservation of Historic Cities of Yemen (GOPHCY), so that it may re-engage and respond to the growing conservation needs of the Old City of Sana'a and other World Heritage properties in Yemen;
8. **Also requests** that the State Party maintain a moratorium on new development or new construction, pending completion of the proposed Conservation Plan and, where appropriate, project-specific heritage impact assessments;
9. **Further requests** that prior to proceeding with the proposed rehabilitation of the water and sewerage project, the State party prepare a HIA, which includes assessment of impacts on Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), in line with the relevant ICOMOS guidelines and to submit a copy of the HIA to the World Heritage Centre prior to making any decisions that would be difficult to reverse, in accordance with paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines;

10. **Requests furthermore** the World Heritage Center and the Advisory Bodies to advise on the proposal for a complementary Action Plan for the National Strategy for the Preservation of the Historic Cities, Sites and Monuments 2016 – 2020' to be developed during 2015;
11. **Reiterates its previous** call to the international community to support the State Party, in co-operation with the World Heritage Center and the Advisory Bodies, in any way possible for priority conservation, management measures and capacity building programmes, as soon as the security situation in Yemen improves;
12. **Also decides** to inscribe the old city of Sana'a Yemen, on the World Heritage List in Danger;
13. **Also requests** the State Party, as it is feasible and in close consultation with the World Heritage Center and the Advisory Bodies, to develop a set of corrective measures and a timeframe for their implementation, as well as a Desired State of conservation rot the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR);
14. **Reiterates its request** to the State to invite a Joint World Heritage Center/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission to evaluate the State of conservation of the property and identify measures needed to reverse the decay and ensure the conservation and protection of the property, as soon as the security situation allows;
15. **Requests moreover** that the State Party submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2016, a report on the state of conservation of the property and on the steps taken to implement the recommendations above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 40th session in 2016.

1. Executive summary of the report

Since 2011 Yemen under intense unrest, which led to outbreak of armed conflict ended to agreement of national dialogue conference under regional and international auspices.

Before ending of the national dialogue conference, early in 2015 broke out the newest armed conflict, it led to more deterioration of the security, political and economic situation in the country.

Safety and socio- economic status have collapsed ,at that time suffer and welter dominated in Yemen.

Up to now, more than 60 heritage sites, (monuments, archaeological sites and cities) have been damaged.

One of the most important sites has been targeted, was the old city of Sana'a (World Heritage Site In Danger),via two raids ,the first one in June 2015 Al-Qasimi neighborhood ,then second one in September 2015 more than a hundred historic buildings have been damaged (from complete destruction to partial destruction and diverse degrees of damage).

The large explosions resulting of bombing the mountains near the old city caused as well physical damages to many of the historic buildings within the old city of Sana'a as a result of vibrations during the explosions mentioned.

Despite of scarce resources and lack funds GOPHCY has conducted some of emergency activities in coordination and support from UNESCO Doha technical studies and documenting of the most possible accessible sites affected during this war.

In coordination with UNESCO Doha and ICCROM Athar ,three workshops have been elaborated in Amman, Cairo and Tunis, in which some of Yemeni experts participated the objective was, to raise the capabilities of team from GOAM and GOPHCY to first aid intervention during the crises and conflicts.

UNESCO Doha in coordination with UNESCO in Paris, held an experts meeting , who worked in Yemen, the aim was to discuss the status of Yemeni heritage during this arm conflict, the outcome were emergency matrix to implement some urgent actions, to help protection the Yemeni heritage, but this matrix is still ink on paper yet.

Moreover ,GOPHCY implements some actions of emergency and first aid action in Al-Qasimi in coordination and consultation of UNESCO Doha Office , World Heritage Centre , ICCROM and ICOMOS. We take this opportunity to appreciate this help.

In 2014, GOPHCY with financial and technical support of GIZ to prepared a draft of the **National Strategy for the Preservation of the Historic Cities, Sites and Monuments** (2016 -2020) , thanks to the GIZ. Nonetheless, the ongoing war

and arm intervention of the coalition forces and due circumstances , state has been unable to implement the Action plan for 2015. (negative impacts of political, economic and acute shortage of resources), the actions have been postponed until situation allowed. Support of World Heritage Centre, as well from the global concerned community, for promotion, revision according to the results of the promotion, prepare technical proposals and fundraising activities, in line with the financial and institutional capacities. It is the crucial supportive requirement for preservation of Yemeni built culture heritage.

In 2013, MOC-GOPHCY submitted a technical assistant request to the World Heritage Committee ,to update and develop inventory of built up and open areas in the old city of Sana'a ,that had been done in 2006 with the generous support of the World Heritage Centre , World Heritage Fund , Social Fund for Development and the Yemeni government, as a steps towards preparation of conservation plan, maintain the recommended scheme of World Heritage Committee at its meeting in 2001 and 2003.

The request adopted small estimated amount of 29,300 US dollars in 2014 to carry the proposed activates , Regardless of signing the contract with Doha UNESCO office, processing working team and contracting the local team to get the task done, **but** so far no response from UNESCO - Doha.

The state party is insisted to have it deserved assistance, adopted by the committee, to be able to start implementing the activates, and continue to pay dues to the rest of the work is done, it is hard time in Yemen, it is time to support any activates concern Yemeni world heritage protection.

In light of the difficult conditions experienced by Yemeni people , because of the war, lack of resources, the international community , and competent international organizations especially the World Heritage Centre , has to call, for urgent international combing to support the protection of cultural heritage in Yemen. The GOPHCY core expert team, could carry out the necessary studies and documentation ambulatory activities ,if we could overcome the current lacks the resources particularly the finance . State party need of urgent support to finance the work of processing in preparing the technical and financial proposals for postwar plan. Eager to more support in the field of training and rehabilitation during this period.

The state party like to acknowledge ICCROM Sharjah and UNESCO Doha for their exerted effort in supporting the Yemeni competencies teams and experts in the field of urgent intervention to preserve the heritage during conflicts. Moreover, the state party , ask to pay more attention to set of large training programme, for GOPHCY staff in different field of heritage protection, as long as international experts are unable to visit Yemen in this time.

We urgently suggested to think of an international Conference for promotion of world cultural heritage, which exposed destruction ,to raise awareness to support the implementation of the necessary protection processes and maintenance.

Our thanks and appreciation to the German government on the permanent support to Yemen in heritage protection, and its willingness to continue this support.

We thank UNESCO Doha and ICCROM Athar for the support hoping to be continuing in the generous and timely manner, prompt without bureaucratic delays, Mainly in these difficult conditions experienced in Yemen.

Our thanks and appreciation to the Director General of UNESCO Dr. Irina Bokova for her support and solidarity ,as well to all the expertise who are in solidarity of Yemeni heritage.

2. Response from the State Party to the World Heritage Committee's Decision, paragraph by paragraph

- 2.1. The old city of Sana'a as well ,the metropolitan capital city of Sana'a have been severely damaged by coalition airstrike, Alqasimi and Alfolihi two neighborhoods in the old city of Sana'a have been bombarded by airforce that caused, distraction and damage of more than a hundred historical buildings (eight of them totally distracted). Moreover , lack of resources due to the conflict and daily airstrike shillings lead to more deterioration of security situation in the country , Definitely, during this situation, ministry of culture (MOC) and GOPHCY don't have ability to take any stringent and corrective measures for conservation process. for any heritage management initiatives and physical conservation projects, the interventions limited to humanitarian and first aid actions.
- 2.2. The war is the main reason of lacking of resources, that prevented the implementation of any action concerning the National Strategy during 2015.
- 2.3. The draft National Strategy Action Plan has addressed the current situation of the Old City of Sana'a including provisions for completion of the proposed Conservation Plan, cultural Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) of the proposed water and sewerage rehabilitation project, building conservation, local community awareness and a strategy for attracting international support. Actually we are relying to WHC support in revision of the draft strategy and promoting as well fundraising. MOC and GOPHCY take step forwards in the conservation plan and local community awareness by requesting international assistance since 2014 thank to WHC, who approved and adopted the two request for Sana'a **no IA2014-2665** and Zabid **noIA2014-2664** ,but unfortunately up to now no action taken although, GOPHCY had signed the contract with UNESCO Doha, last year, as will the other commitment with local expert in the country are prepared and ready to start the work, we appreciate your support to advance this subject , we believe it is the right time to implement this activities.
- 2.4. GOPHCY ,despite the situation in Yemen is doing its best to communicate with many regional and international concerned organizations to seek further assistance, most of who assured the future cooperation. We would like to express our thanks to ATHAR- ICCROM and UNESCO Doha for their assistance in building capacity of some Yemeni experts from GOAM and GOPHCY, in first aid interventions for culture heritage during conflicts and crisis. GOPHCY is really in urgent needs for farther support , technical

assistance and staff capacity building to upgrade their skills, to re-engage and respond to the growing conservation needs of the Old City of Sana'a and other World Heritage properties in Yemen particularly in this arm conflict critical situation;

- 2.5. In this war situation, none of any development projects is running, they have been terminated in the country because of that. Concerning the proposed water and sewerage rehabilitation project in the old city of Sana'a it is currently postponed, the sponsor and financier is Arabic fund for development and the Sana'a municipality ,before the war study phase has been initiated without any real cooperation and collaboration with GOPHCY , as we have informed you then .therefore we urge you to support GOPHCY to send an official letter from WHC to the Arabic fund for development confirming that GOPHCY should be the main player or partner in all stage of the project , as it is legislatively the responsible authority for preservation of the world culture heritage sites in Yemen according to its strategy and WH convention for any further steps, insisting for your request that ,prior to any activities, in close collaboration with GOPHCY finalized the study phase, which includes assessment of impacts on Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), in line with the relevant ICOMOS guidelines and to submit a copy of the HIA to the World Heritage Centre prior to making any decisions that would be difficult to reverse, in accordance with paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines.
- 2.6. The state party still waiting for the World Heritage Center and the Advisory Bodies to advise on the proposal for a complementary Action Plan for the National Strategy, since we have provided them with the draft of the Strategy, which been attached with the last year report. We appreciate if you could assist to speed up the process.
- 2.7. The state party, is in urgent need of international community support, actually, we are depending too much in the role of the World Heritage Center, and Advisory Bodies, to assist the state party in any way possible for priority conservation, management measures and capacity building programmes as well funding emergency interventions, that should be taken during this period of time , since most of the world culture heritage sites and tentative listed once of Yemen are facing severe deterioration, due to the continuous arm conflict and airstrikes nowadays. The local staff and experts could implement any necessary actions, if there is a serious and generous support from the international communities and organizations.
- 2.8. The state party is relying in WHC and international organization to give hands to overcome this unfair war , to avoid any farther damages of the culture heritage. Meanwhile, the old city of Sana'a as well the other culture heritage sites in Yemen are in real danger. We believe, that a Symposium should be organized in the near future, by WHC calling for International Campaign for the Safeguarding of the Old City of Sana'a. It would brought a comprehensive support.
- 2.9. We consider that, it is urgently important , to get the possible consultation and support of the World Heritage Center and the Advisory Bodies, to develop a set of emergency and corrective measures with a timeframe for their implementation, as well as a Desired State of conservation rot the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

- 2.10. Since this moment the state party, offers a certain open invitation to Joint World Heritage Center/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission to evaluate the State of conservation of the property and identify measures needed to reverse the decay and ensure the conservation and protection of the property, as soon as they will, we can send it officially, attached with this report.

3. Status of the Preparation of an Urban Conservation Plan

- 3.1. Following the 2001 Bureau decision, a request of International Assistance “to enable the preparation of a comprehensive Safeguarding Plan for the Old City of Sana’a” was submitted by us to the World Heritage Centre in 2003. The need for an Urban Conservation and Development Plan for the Historic City of Sana’a was widely acknowledged, as stated by us in the above mentioned request for assistance to the UNESCO/WHC in 2003. The preparation and establishment of such a plan did not only require a vision for the future of the Sana’a architectural heritage and historic fabric, but also the elaboration of a consistent strategy (draft of which been prepared in cooperation of GIZ in 2014) to protect, rehabilitate and develop the Old City and the other surrounding historic settlements, as a cultural and socio-economic asset in the context of the Greater Sana’a expanding urban area.
- 3.2. As a precondition for the establishment of the Urban Conservation Plan, there was a need for preparing the inventories of the built-up structures and open spaces in the Old City, first phase was finalized in 2006. That has been carried out (under the aegis of delegated UNESCO/WHC Experts), by a local team at GOPHCY-CATS (funded by WHC/UNESCO, SFD and GOPHCY). Unfortunately, UNESCO did not succeed in funding the finalisation of the Plan and it was impossible to have it financed through the national budget, due to the financial problems faced by our country where since 2011, all the investment budget were blocked.
- 3.3. During this first phase of the project, teams were trained in surveying and inventorying techniques. The training-on-the-job approach succeeded in partially strengthening the technical expertise of the staff involved.
- 3.4. Unfortunately, the lack of financial means stand against implementation of the second phase of the inventory towards preparation of conservation plan.
- 3.5. MOC and GOPHCY, applied in 2013 for the international technical assistance from WHC , in 2014 WHC adopted the request **no IA2014-2665** ,the work plan was submitted, and contract has been signed with UNESCO Doha, after this long procedure, we have shocked from unofficial information from UNESCO Doha, that says no proceed yet in this matter or it is terminated. This project is the important priority towards better conservation and management of old city of Sana’a ,as well improved capacities of GOPHCY staff through intensive on-the-job training, therefore we need your imperative help to release this fund that we can start working in updating inventory , the team is ready , the GIS

local expert have signed the contract with GOPHCY 6 months ago .again we insist to have this deserved assistance .it is a serious step ,we long time have been waiting for it, towards safeguarding and the preservation of the Old City of Sana'a.

4. Other current conservation issues identified by the State(s) Party(ies) which may have an impact on the property's Outstanding Universal Value

- 4.1. As we regularly report you , since March 2015 ,since the coalition forces started their raids in Yemen, many of culture heritage sites have been affected. The old city of Sana'a was targeted twice ,first time was in June 2015 (Al-qassimi neighborhood ,17 historical buildings have been damaged and destroyed), then in October 2015 the target was Alfolihi neighborhood more than 100 historical buildings have been damaged one building has been totally destroyed). According to very limited fund available ,the team of experts in GOPHCY has implemented a first aid interventions in Al-qassimi with close assistance of UNESCO Doha, Athar ICCROM ,then we get some advice and remarks from WHC, and ICOMOS. Due to lack of fund the activates have been terminated, the situation in both sites almost remain the same, except the documentation and technical study and some works have been carried out in A-lqassimi. GOPHCY is trying to get some funds to continue the emergency Safeguarding measures. If no appropriate action wouldn't be taken in time ,the deterioration is escalated. Urgent funds and assistance are required.

5. In conformity with paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, please describe any potential major restorations, alterations and/or new construction(s) within the protected area (core zone and buffer zone and/or corridors) that might be envisaged.

- 5.1. The proposed water and sewerage rehabilitation project within the old city of Sana'a was postponed. The sponsor and financier is Arabic fund for development and the Sana'a municipality ,before the war ,study phase has been initiated without any real cooperation with GOPHCY.
- 5.2. GOPHCY is a bet worried about any progress of that project without the HIA, which should be carried out with close cooperation and participation of GOPHCY experts , we also consider, that consultation of WHC and ICOMOS is essential.

6. Public access to the state of conservation report

State Party ,doesn't mind to upload the report for public access.

Signature Of The Authority