



State of Conservation Report (2021)
for
Palestine: Land of Olives and Vines – Cultural Landscape
of Southern Jerusalem, Battir –
Palestine (1492)



Bethlehem, Palestine
January 2022

The State of Conservation Report (SoC) for the World Heritage Property (WHP) **Palestine: Land of Olives and Vines: Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir (1492)** was prepared by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities in close cooperation with other related stakeholders.

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Table of Contents | 3 |
| 1. Executive Summary..... | 4 |
| 2. Response from the State Party to the World Heritage Committee (WHCom) Decision 44 COM 7A. 17. | 5 |
| 2. a & c Progress achieved in implementing the Desired State of Conservation and Corrective Measures adopted by the World Heritage Committee..... | 8 |
| 2. b. Timeframe for Implementation of the Corrective Measures | 14 |
| 3. Other Current Conservation Issues | 14 |
| 3.1 Conservation interventions of the Cultural Landscape..... | 15 |
| 3.2 Enhancing the Physical Situation in and around the WHP | 17 |
| 4. Future Issues Identified by the State Party | 18 |
| 5. Public access to the State of Conservation Report..... | 19 |
| 6. Conclusion | 20 |
| 7. Signature of the Authority..... | 20 |
| 8. Figures | 21 |

1. Executive Summary

Palestine: Land of Olives and Vines – Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir, Palestine (Ref. 1492) was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2014 following an emergency nomination, in accordance with criteria (iv) and (v), and immediately on the List of World Heritage in Danger, after it was acknowledged that the landscape was threatened by emerging and intensifying socio-cultural and geo-political transformations with the potential to cause irreversible damage to the site’s authenticity and integrity—citing specifically the start of construction of an Israeli “Wall” that may isolate local farmers from fields they have cultivated for centuries.

The Statement of Outstanding Universal Value adopted by the World Heritage Committee (Decision 39 COM 8B.52), the State of Palestine subsequently prepared the Desired State of Conservation Report (DSOCR) and Key Corrective Measures, which were adopted by the World Heritage Committee (Decision 39COM7A.29) as necessary for the removal of the Property from the List of World Heritage in Danger. In 2016, the State of Palestine also prepared the timeline for the implementation of the corrective measures, which was adopted by the World Heritage Committee (Decision 41COM7A.43). In 2019 the Management and Conservation Plan (MCP) was adopted by the World Heritage Committee (WHCom) and endorsed by all key Palestinian stakeholders to ensure adequate respect and effective safeguarding of the Property and its inherent Outstanding Universal Value (OUV).

This State of Conservation Report presents a response to the WHCom from the State Party of Palestine to requests made at the 44th Session of the Committee (Decision 44 COM 7A.17). It also reports the progress in achieving the Desired State of Conservation (DSOCR) and corrective measures undertaken by all relevant stakeholders throughout 2021. The primary corrective measures focus on eliminating or significantly ameliorating the imminent threat posed by an Israeli plan to construct a Wall adjacent to the Property, which, if implemented, would cause irreversible damage to the site’s authenticity and integrity. Following the inscription of the Property, the Israeli High Court of Justice on 4 January 2015 decided to freeze construction of the Wall. However the court stated that the decision was largely based on budgetary considerations and the state maintains the right to build the Wall in the future. Although these developments are considered positive steps towards achieving permanent protection of the Property.

This report includes several Israeli violations committed in the WHP during 2021, and other factors that are still threatening the quality of the landscape at a visual, ecological, socio-economic, and cultural levels. The State of Palestine is committed to implementing the corrective measures adopted by the WHCom, especially those aiming to conserve the cultural landscape in line with international standards, prevent abandonment and forestation of existing agricultural terraces, and engage the local communities live within the WHP.

In light of the above, and in spite of the positive developments achieved since the inscription of the Property on the World Heritage List, Palestine wishes to retain **the Property “Palestine: Land of Olives and Vines – Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir” on the List of World Heritage in Danger.**

2. Response from the State Party to the World Heritage Committee (WHCom) Decision 44 COM 7A. 17.

Para. 3 Commends the State Party for its efforts to improve the state of conservation of the Property and to implement the corrective measures to achieve the desired state of conservation for the removal of the Property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR), and in particular concerning the restoration of the irrigation System.

The proposed plans for achieving the Desired State of Conservation and the corrective measures for the removal of the WHP from the List of World Heritage in Danger respond to the presence of jeopardizing elements that justified the initial inscription of the site on the World Heritage in Danger List, and the factors that are presently affecting the Property.

The Property is threatened by various external and internal circumstances that are actively damaging the quality of the landscape and threatening its long-term viability at various visual, ecological, socio-economic, and cultural levels. However, the State of Palestine is committed to promote and implement the corrective measures adopted for this property, especially those aiming to conserve and manage the Property in line with international standards.

The state of conservation of the Property is affected by several factors, which have contributed to the deterioration of the physical situation throughout the WHP. This deterioration is mainly related to the lack of appropriate water and sewage networks in the village of Battir, and lack of enough financial resources allocated for conservation of the WHP's attributes.

Although the Israeli Occupying Power is currently applying several restrictions and constrains that prevent farmers from restoring their agricultural terraces and watchtowers inside the WHP, committed stakeholders and the local community, including the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA), Battir Municipality, Beit Jala Municipality, Hussan Village Council, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment Authority, work together to implement the WHP's Management and Conservation Plan (MCP).

To ensure an appropriate state of conservation for the cultural landscape, the operational management system is put in place to effectively manage the entire WHP. The endorsed MCP sets out the main management and conservation objectives, strategies and actions needed for successful conservation and protection of the WHP, as well as identifies the specific measures and programs that should be implemented. Several conservation interventions were implemented during 2021, or are planned to achieve the corrective measures, which are presented briefly in this report.

It is worth noting that enhancement of the physical situation of the Property and achievement of an appropriate state of conservation is not only based on internal socio-cultural factors, but also on external geo-political factors.

Para. 4. Requests the State Party to allocate the necessary resources to ensure the operationalization of the management System and the implementation of the Management Conservation Plan (MCP), and urges the State Party to adopt in the meantime alternatives to ensure that the Steering Committee and a working group are established and given a mandate for decision-making and for implementing the MCP;

The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities assigned a Site Manager for the WHP to follow up the implementation of the MCP in close cooperation with various partners and stakeholders, especially Battir Municipality, Beit Jala Municipality, and Hussan Village Council.

As per the management system approved, the Site Manager coordinates, supervises, and monitors all activities and interventions in cooperation with the steering and site management committees. Several meetings and workshops were held to follow up, review and update the management and conservation plan. The Site Manager effectively follows-up all projects and activities implemented or planned within the Property, as well as violations occurred within the WHP and its boundaries, which are reported monthly.

Para. 5. Also urges the State Party to continue seeking the required funds to undertake the development of a sufficient sewage System as a priority;

The State Party is prioritizing efforts toward implementation the corrective measures to achieve the Desired State of Conservation for the Removal of the Property from the List of World Heritage in Danger. It tries to find effective solutions for the most urgent environmental problems affecting the WHP, such as water and soil pollution as a result of the lack of a sewage system. As mentioned in the previous SoC report, a project proposal with a budget estimate of US\$25 million was prepared. It will put in place an adequate sewage system for the Bethlehem Western Villages including vast parts of the WHP; however the project is still delayed due to its high costs.

The Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (WSSA), Battir Municipality, Hussan Village Council, Ministry of Local Government, and the Joint Service Council continue developing temporary mechanisms to mitigate the problem until the required funds are secured. For instance, the related Municipal Councils forbid the construction of new houses without sealed septic tanks, and provide inhabitants with low-cost sewage tanks to empty collected sewage water every few weeks in nearby sewage stations in Bethlehem. Moreover, the Water and Sewage Unit in the Joint Service Council manages the sewage water in the Bethlehem Western Villages, and imposes penalties on homes without having sealed septic tanks.

Para. 6. Encourages the State Party to develop a land-use plan and related bylaws to avoid uncontrolled urban growth within the Property and its buffer zone, with the full involvement of the municipalities and local communities.

MoTA works, in close cooperation with the responsible authorities and local communities, to develop a land-use plan and relevant regulations to avoid uncontrolled urban growth within the Property and its buffer zone. In this context, a project for developing a detailed urban plan and special building bylaws for specific identified areas in the buffer zone of the WHP is being finalized. It is funded and supervised by the UNESCO Ramallah Office through its regular

budget, and implemented by the Center of Cultural Heritage Preservation (CCHP) and the Planning Center of An-Najah National University.

The main objective of this project is to strengthen the existing legislations and regulations for the effective conservation and protection of the cultural landscape, Battir old town, archaeological remains, and ultimately the physical attributes of the WHP in line with its endorsed Management and Conservation Plan.

The specific objectives of the project are as the following:

- Develop detailed urban plan (DUP) and urban bylaws for specific areas in the WHP that allow for urban development to be compatible and homogenous with overall context of the towns and the conservation objectives of the WHP.
- Regulate interventions inside Battir old town specifying where construction of new buildings or small additions is allowed and/or prevented.
- Approve the developed bylaws as part of a detailed urban plan in the framework of an existing land-use plan by the relevant authorities including the Higher Planning Council in Palestine.
- Equip Battir Municipality and Hussan Village Council with well-defined management tools to facilitate addressing urban transformations in the WHP.

This project will be ended and the bylaws will be endorsed by May 2022.

Para. 7. The committee Takes note with concern of the reports about ongoing illegal constructions and other developments and transformations within the Property and its buffer zone.

The Site Manager and the Site Management Committee follow up all illegal acts, constructions and developments that occur within the WHP and/ or within its buffer zone, especially the Israeli Occupation violations, including bulldozing agricultural lands and roads within the boundaries of the Property, continuous attacks of Israeli settlers and their attempts to establish illegal settlement outposts, and the planned industrial zone inside the buffer zone of the Property as reported in the previous SoC report .

The State Party denounces continuous threats and violations of the Israeli Occupying Power that are harmfully affecting the authenticity and integrity of the WHP, and not in conformity with the provisions of relevant UNESCO conventions, especially the 1972 and 1954 Conventions, as detailed in section 2a &b / DSOCR# 1 of this report.

Para. 8. The Committee requests the State Party to inform the World Heritage Center of any proposed plans for major restoration or new construction projects that may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the Property, in accordance with paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, prior to making any decisions that may be difficult and irreversible.

The Site Manager, in cooperation with the WHP's Management Committee, oversees, monitors, and manages all actions, projects, and activities taken place within the Property, ensuring that any project planned or implemented is in line with the objectives and strategies of the WHP's MCP. As per the new law for Tangible Cultural Heritage (No 11, 2018), appropriate HIA and/or EIA impact assessments shall be conducted prior to the implementation of any significant intervention or proposed development within the WHP.

In the event that any future major intervention or new construction projects are developed which might affect the OUV of the Property, the State Party is committed to inform the WHC with any new project or intervention that might have a significant impact on the WHP and its OUV.

2. a & c Progress achieved in implementing the Desired State of Conservation and Corrective Measures adopted by the World Heritage Committee.

DSOCR #1: Dismissal of plans to build a “Wall” along the Property, or within its surroundings.

CM 1.1 Agreement to dismiss plans to build a “Wall” along the Property, or within its surroundings,

On 9 July 2004, the International Court of Justice, in an advisory opinion, stated that, “the construction of the wall being built by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, and its associated régime, are contrary to international law,” and is therefore considered illegal; adding that the “Wall” may refer to any barrier whether it is a physical wall or a fence.

A clearly-defined, binding decision in accordance with Article 6, Section 3, of the World Heritage Convention (1972), which states, “Each State Party to this Convention under takes not to take any deliberate measures which might damage directly or indirectly the cultural and natural heritage referred to in Articles 1 and 2 situated on the territory of other States Parties to this Convention” is still required at this time. As noted in previous SoC reports, the geo-political context in which the Property lies—namely, the direct and indirect effects of illegal building of settlements on surrounding hills and the proposed illegal construction of the “Wall”—is considered the most significant threat to the authenticity and integrity of the Property.

On 4 January 2015, the Israeli High Court of Justice froze plans for the construction of the “Wall” adjacent to the Property. This concluded a three-year legal battle in response to petitions submitted by the village of Battir and supported by the State of Palestine, in cooperation with Friends of the Earth Middle East. The decision came after the Israeli government chose not to re-authorize a 2006 plan to erect a three kilometer stretch of the “Wall,” and subsequently revealed that the plan was not a high security or budgetary priority. The decision of the Israeli High Court of Justice was taken after the site was inscribed on the World Heritage List and on the List of World Heritage in Danger during the 38th session of the World Heritage Committee. Although this is a positive move towards protecting the site and its authenticity and integrity, threats resulting from the construction of a “Wall” along the Property remain valid until a binding decision is adopted by Israel stipulating that no “Wall” shall ever be constructed in or around the site. The decision must secure the long-term protection of the site and its settings.

Moreover, illegal construction of settlements on surrounding hills is negatively affecting the visual and ecological quality of the landscape. To a significant degree, these factors are related to direct acts by the Israeli Occupation Authorities and should be also dismissed upon a binding

decision ensuring the protection of the Property. Such acts are progressively subjugating and effectively annexing both the territorial area and the inhabitants of Battir, and thus severely threaten the integrity of the WHP's landscape and the sustainability of its ecological and environmental equilibrium, in addition to preventing the local community from maintaining their agricultural lands in the areas that are close to the settlements.

Main Israeli Occupying Power Violations during 2021

The Israeli Occupation violations have continued inside of the WHP during 2021. The following Israeli Occupation plans, among other actions, are affecting the WHP's OUV as well as its physical attributes and their authenticity and integrity:-

1. On 10 March 2021, the Israeli Occupation Authorities issued a new settlement plan (plan No. 1/3/426) to expand Beitar Illit settlement in the western part of the WHP, and to confiscate an area of 404 dunums of Palestinian lands belonging to the villages of Wadi Fukin and Hussan, west of the WHP (<https://bit.ly/35As0G3>). The plan aims to change the character of land use, from agricultural land to land for the construction of settlement units and the construction of roads, gardens industrial zone, commercial centers, public services, and car parking lots. The new settlement plan (No. 1/3/426) is linked to another settlement plan (No. 19/1/426) announced by the Israeli Occupation Authorities on 10 February 2020 (<https://bit.ly/3Gci2HB>). It includes establishment of a large Israeli industrial zone to the north of the Beitar Illit settlement on a total area of 633 dunums from the lands of Hussan, Wadi Fukin and Al-Qabo. The planned industrial zone spreads across a mountainous topographic area that crosses the water drainage. This terrain has high environmental value, with its southwestern side located in the domain of Wadi Jam'a's drainage basin, which is on the buffer zone of the WHP and intrudes into its core zone (*see figure 1*).
2. As mentioned in the previous SoC reports, since 2019, a new tunnel and a new bypass road for Israeli settlers (Road 60) in the eastern part of the WHP, near Beit Jala, and directly within the core zone of the WHP are being constructed. This construction might destroy significant parts of the WHP landscape, which is characterized by agricultural terraces, watchtowers, water springs, and olive oil presses, affecting the WHP Outstanding Universal Value, its integrity, and authenticity (*see figure 2*).
3. As mentioned in previous SoC reports, on 17 November 2020, a group of illegal Israeli settlers established a new illegal settlement outpost inside the WHP in the Wadi al-Makhrour area. In 2021, the settlers expanded this settlement and destroyed more agricultural lands, causing serious impact on the OUV of the WHP, its authenticity and integrity (*see figure 3*).
4. On 4 April 2021, the people of Battir confronted a group of illegal settlers, supported by Israeli soldiers, and prevented them from bulldozing lands in the "al-Khamar" and "al-Qusayr" areas, northeast of the town of Battir. The settlers pitched tents and setup caravans in an attempt to establish a new illegal settlement outpost inside the WHP (*see figure 4*).

5. On 10 August 2021, the Israeli Occupation Authorities destroyed and bulldozed a paved road (1.5 km long and 5 meters wide), its concrete shoulders and retaining walls, and uprooted trees in Karm Hadidion area, located east of Battir town within the boundaries of the WHP. This project was funded by the Islamic Development Bank, at a cost of NIS650, 000 (*see figure 5*).
6. On 11 July 2021, illegal Israeli settlers set fire to the benches and other installations in the Khamar area, located in east of Battir town and inside the WHP.
7. On 9 November 2021, the Israeli Occupation Power destroyed 70 olive plants by incendiary pesticides in an area of 3 dunums in Marah Medawar area, located east of the town of Battir within the boundaries of the WHP.

As this DSOCR, “**Dismissal of plans to build a “Wall” along the Property, or within its surroundings,**” is not defined within the adopted timeframe, and is largely dependent on actions and decisions by the Israeli Occupation Authorities, which are beyond the control of the State of Palestine, no progress has been achieved. In contrast, many violations have been recorded as previously stated, which could cause harmful and irreversible negative impacts and serious detrimental effects on the Outstanding Universal Value of the WHP and its integrity, authenticity, and distinctive characteristics.

We kindly ask WHCom to take all possible measures to oblige the Israeli Occupying Power to stop such violations and to conserve the agricultural terraces and the WHP’s land-use patterns.

DSOCR #2: Adequate conservation of the agricultural terraces and their associated components, including watchtowers and dry-stone walls throughout the Property.

CM 2.1 Implementation of projects to restore an appropriate state of conservation for the agricultural terraces and their components, including the watchtowers and dry-stone walls throughout the Property.

The stakeholders recognize their role in achieving an appropriate state of conservation of the various components of the Property, including agricultural terraces and their components, and have been working tirelessly on implementing several projects to achieve this corrective measure. In 2021, the key stakeholders have implemented many projects within the WHP as the following:

a) Restoration and rehabilitation project of the landscape and historical buildings in Battir (Phase II)

This project was funded by the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) through the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and implemented by the Jerusalem Old City

Revitalization Program - Al Taawon. It started in March 2021 and ended in August 2021 at a cost of US\$74,468.79. It included the following:

- Restoration and construction of dry-stone walls and agricultural irrigation canals (*see figure 6*), as the following:
 - Restoration and rehabilitation 394m² of dry-stone walls.
 - Construction 145m² of new dry-stone walls.
 - Rehabilitation 403m long of agricultural irrigation canals.
 - Building 116m long of new irrigation canals.

- Restoration of the Seven Widows quarter, (Phase II), (*see figure 7*).

This project started in October 2020 and ended in August 2021 at the cost of US\$84,752.64. It rehabilitated 4 old rooms, a kitchen, a bathroom and their roofs, as the following:

- Paving old floors with tiles that suit the needs of the building, replacing damaged plaster, and treating walls from moisture effect.
- Roof insulation works, stone slab paving, exterior wall cladding, building stone sheds and installing handrails.
- Rehabilitation of the infrastructure for restored spaces (electrical and mechanical works).
- Installing metal doors and windows.
- Rehabilitation of the Site Manager's office of the WHP in Battir Municipality Building.

- Preparing a technical guide in Arabic and English for the construction and rehabilitation of traditional dry-stone walls and architectural structures.

The aim of the guide is to provide technical guidance for the construction and rehabilitation of dry-stone walls and architectural structures (watchtowers) according to scientific standards and the principles of compatible conservation, and the traditional local experiences in accordance with international standards. The guide includes practical steps that help concerned authorities, technicians and farmers understanding the scientific and practical framework for the maintenance and rehabilitation of dry-stone walls in a simplified and understandable manner. It was prepared in July 2021 at a cost of US\$ 21,500.

b) Rehabilitation of Watchtowers in al-Makhrour Area (*see figure 8*).

Based on the results of field survey of watchtowers in al-Makhrour area, related international standards, and the overall goals of the MCP for the WHP, a joint MoTA-CARITAS project was implemented to achieve some conservation measures. During summer 2021, twenty watchtowers were rehabilitated at a cost of US\$60,000.

The project took into account the importance of conserving and revitalizing agricultural terraces through engaging all stakeholders, especially the landowners, CARITAS-Jerusalem, MoTA, and Beit Jala Municipality.

c) Rehabilitation Project of ‘Ain Jamm’a Spring and its Pool (*see figure 9*).

Battir Municipality rehabilitated ‘Ain Jamm’a’s Pool in August 2021 at a cost of US\$7550, under the supervision of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. This project funded by Agricultural Relief, and ENI CBC MED Programme through CISP and Palestinian Heritage Trail (PHTrail). The main aim of this project is to promote the site as a tourist destination and a marketing point for local agricultural products and handicrafts. It included the following:

- Cleaning the site from wastes, cements, and removing the old metal fence surrounding the pool.
- Installing new metal and wooden fences.
- Painting the wooden fence with waterproof paint.
- Paving stone tiles around ‘Ain Jamm’a’s pool

d) Rehabilitation Project of ‘Ain Al- Hawiya Square in Hussan (*see figure 10*).

Hussan Village Council rehabilitated the square in front of ‘Ain al-Hawiya Spring in August 2021 at a cost of US\$3750. It included cleaning the surrounding area, installing a big metal umbrella and tiling the spring’s courtyard with stone tiles.

According to the timeframe, this DSOCR and its related corrective measures will be completed by 2024. The State of Palestine is working to secure required funds to achieve the DSOCR as planned.

DSOCR #3: Adequate restoration of the irrigation system and the development of a sufficient sewage system to protect water quality on the Property.

CM 3.1: Implementation of a project to restore traditional irrigation systems

CM 3.2: Implementation of a project to put in place an adequate sewage system to protect water quality on the Property

- The water canals rehabilitation project was completed in 2021, with a length of 403m, in addition to reconstructing new irrigation canals with a length of 116m. This project started in March 2021 and ended in August 2021.
- Regular water quality inspections, cleaning, and maintenance are done every year for the springs, water canals, and collection pools within the WHP.

As mentioned in the previous SoC reports, the only progress achieved towards putting in place an adequate sewage system was the establishment of the Water and Sewage Unit in the Joint Service Council. It is responsible for the management of sewage water within the Property, seeking required funds to put in place an adequate sewage system to protect water quality, and imposing penalties for those who drain sewage water into non-sealed septic tanks.

Further actions, activities, and projects are planned to take place in 2022 in order to achieve this DSOCR and its related corrective measures. Additional efforts shall be made to secure required funds to put in place an adequate sewage system and to achieve the corrective measures by the year 2023.

DSOCR #4 :Protection methods in place for the Property and its buffer zone

CM4.1 :Preparation, approval, and implementation of an MCP for the Property

CM4.2: Development and implementation of an active system of management that involves local communities and stakeholders

The Management and Conservation Plan (MCP) for the Property was developed and approved by MoTA and all related partners in 2019. A Site Manager for the World Heritage Property was assigned in 2020. He supervises and coordinates all activities, changes, and issues within the WHP, particularly these related to the OUV, its attributes, integrity, and authenticity, ensuring that all projects and activities are implemented in line with the MCP and its action plan.

As mentioned in the previous SoC reports, MoTA also developed a new institutional structure that includes a “General Directorate for the World Heritage”, which aims to provide a comprehensive management system for all inscribed world cultural heritage sites in Palestine. Its main responsibilities are to conserve, manage, valorize, and promote inscribed World Heritage Properties, as well as to ensure effective implementation of their MCPs. This Directorate is also responsible for forming and executing the Operational Management Systems setup for the WHPs that involves all key stakeholders, local communities, and private sector led by Site Managers, and Steering and Site Management Committees.

This DSOCR and its related corrective measures were completed in 2021 as scheduled in the timeframe.

DSOCR #5: Adoption of a management plan and monitoring system, and a sustainable management structure in place

CM5.1: Preparation of a set of indicators for monitoring the Property and implementation of a monitoring system

CM5.2: Development of protection methods for the Property and its buffer zone

Regular monitoring of the implementation of the Management and Conservation Plan is crucial to ensure the improvement of its effectiveness and potential for success. A monitoring system was established to undertake the regular monitoring of the World Heritage Property and its Buffer Zone. It is led by the Site Manager and implemented in cooperation with the Site Management Committee. The monitoring system takes into account a number of key indicators for measuring the state of conservation of the Property, as well as reviews progress in implementing the MCP’s objectives, strategies, and actions. It also contributes to protect the attributes of the WHP in cooperation with the WHP’s local community through conservation and maintenance works undertaken in conformity with international standards.

A set of monitoring indicators were developed, covering the five themes of the MCP, namely the management and planning, conservation and protection, tourism and visitor management, engagement of local community and public awareness, and infrastructure and accessibility. Each key monitoring indicator defines its characteristics, its responsible entity, and the frequency by which it shall be measured.

For example, one of the main threats that affects the WHP is the urban growth in and around the cultural landscape. Hence further monitoring, coordination, joint planning, and interference by the Management Committee and the Site Manager is required to avoid uncontrolled urban expansion and development. To this end, a land-use plan and a bylaw are being developed to address this problem.

In 2021, UNESCO-Ramallah Office in cooperation with MoTA initiated a project to prepare a detailed urban plan and a system of provisions for the preservation of the historical fabric and individual historical buildings in the buffer zone of the WHP. The project is implemented by the CCHP, and the Planning Center of An-Najah National University, in cooperation with Battir Municipality, Hussan Village Council, and the Ministry of Local Government. The system aims to provide appropriate protection to the historical fabric of Battir and individual historical buildings, as well as organize new construction, new additions, demolition, consolidation, preservation, and reuse of the historical buildings in the WHP's buffer zone (*see figure 16*).

According to scheduled timeframe, this DSOCR and its related corrective measures were planned to be completed by 2021. The first corrective measure (CM5.1) was achieved in 2021 as scheduled; however, the second corrective measure (CM5.2) is planned to be achieved during the second quarter of 2022, as the project of land-use plan and its bylaws have not been finished yet due to the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions.

2. b. Timeframe for Implementation of the Corrective Measures

The State of Palestine prepared the timeframe for the implementation of the corrective measures, which was adopted by the World Heritage Committee (Decision 41 COM 7A.43). As mentioned in the previous SoC report and after reviewing the timeframe, the key stakeholders of the WHP recommended in favor of preserving the timeframe as it was previously defined, due to a lack of appropriate funds and resources allocated for the Property, in addition to the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions that cause additional delay in the implementation of certain projects and activities as scheduled in the MCP action plan. It is worth noting that the timeframe was adequately integrated within the MCP's objectives, strategies, and action plan, but further revision is needed now.

In spite of the fact that the Desired State of Conservation for the Removal of the Property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) and related corrective measures are planned to be achieved within a period of 10 years, the first DSOCR, "Dismissal of plans to build a 'Wall' along the Property, or within its surroundings," is not defined within the known timeframe, as it is largely dependent on actions and decisions by the Israeli Occupation Authorities, which do not fall under the jurisdiction of the State of Palestine, and is therefore undeterminable at this time.

3. Other Current Conservation Issues

In addition to the projects and activities related to the DSOCR and corrective measures mentioned in this report and in the previous SoC reports, the following activities were carried off in 2021. They are divided into two categories: (1) conservation interventions of the cultural landscape, and (2) the enhancement of the physical situation within and around the Property.

3.1 Conservation interventions of the Cultural Landscape

The following table includes other efforts and activities implemented in 2021 towards conserving and enhancing the Cultural Landscape.

| <i>Projects and Activities</i> | <i>Date</i> | <i>Budget</i> | <i>Lead Partner(s)</i> | <i>Brief Description</i> |
|---|-------------------|---------------|--|--|
| A field visit to the WHP | November 10, 2021 | N/A | UNESCO Ramallah Office in cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities | The visit was organized by the UNESCO Ramallah Office, in close cooperation with MoTA and Battir Municipality. for international institutions, including the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the British Council and other international entities. The aim of the visit was to assess the impact of ongoing Israeli violations and expansion of settlements on the WHP. |
| Improving the cultivation of Battiri Eggplants | May 2021 | US\$12,000 | Battir Municipality | This activity organized to urge farmers to plant more than 14,000 eggplants during the last season (Spring-Summer). The Battir Municipality purchased improved seedlings and sold them to farmers at half price. Subsequently, most of the crops were sold to the WHP's visitors. |
| Organizing an awareness activity to the students of Battir's schools | September 2021 | US\$2500 | Battir Municipality, Jerusalem Old City Revitalization Program– | An awareness activity was organized for the schools of Battir to raise awareness of school students on the importance of their |

| | | | | |
|--|--------------|---|--|--|
| | | | Taawon, and MoTA | historical heritage, and how it should be preserved. |
| Strengthen capacities for effective land management, and agricultural practices | 2020-2023 | US\$57,000 | Land Research Center | This project aims to enhance the capacity building of farmers to ensure effective land management, improve agricultural practices, and strengthen capacities to confront climate change and promoting environmentally friendly solutions, focusing on women, youth and marginalized communities. This project was implemented by Battir Municipality in cooperation with Battir's Schools. |
| Rehabilitation of the Site Manager's office of the WHP | October 2021 | Carried out within the framework of the restoration and rehabilitation project of the landscape and historical buildings in Battir (Phase II) | funded by the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) through the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and implemented by the Jerusalem Old City Revitalization Program - Al Taawon | The office of the Site Manager was rehabilitated and equipped inside Battir Municipality to facilitate his work, ensure effective implementation of the MCP, and follow up any activity or project implemented within the WHP and its buffer zone. |
| Installation of direction panels for tourists within the WHP (see figure 11) | 2021 | Self-financing from Battir Municipality | Battir Municipality | The direction signs installed within the WHP to direct the WHP's visitors making them away from the railway and farmers' land plots. |

| | | | | |
|--|---------------|------------|--|--|
| Increasing the productivity of the land, obtaining products and protecting the environment. | 2019-2021 | | Palestine Institute for Biodiversity and Sustainability and the Palestine Museum of Natural History / Bethlehem University | 25 farmers were assisted and provided with water tanks, pumps, equipment (axe, phallus, and ground comb), drip barbecue, various seedlings, etc. |
| Developing Public Service Center in Battir Municipality building (see figure 12) | November 2021 | US\$52000 | Municipal Development and Lending Fund (MDLF) | The municipality rehabilitated a public service center in the municipality building |
| Olive seedlings activity | February 2021 | US\$2,000 | Bethlehem Governorate | More than 300 olive trees were distributed to farmers to strengthen their steadfastness in their lands within the WHP. |
| Organize a Battiri eggplant festival. (see figure 14) | August 2021 | US\$10,000 | Battir Municipality | A two-day festival was organized to encourage farmers selling their products and handcrafts to the WHP's visitors. |

3.2 Enhancing the Physical Situation in and around the WHP

As mentioned in the previous SoC reports, negative impacts resulted from the weak infrastructure of Battir town. Since the inscription of the site on the World Heritage List, various stakeholders have sought to enhance this situation through multiple interventions, including rehabilitation of abandoned traditional buildings inside the historic center of Battir for reuse as community or tourist facilities; improvement of the socio-economic status of the local community; and improvement of the infrastructure, especially roads networks, water supply networks, and management of solid waste. The following table includes the 2021 efforts towards enhancing the physical situation of the WHP.

| Projects and Activities | Date | Brief Description |
|---|---------------------------|--|
| Construction of a power line and rehabilitation of Karam Hadidoun Road <i>(see figure 13)</i> | July-August/ 2021 | The project installed an electricity line and rehabilitated the Karm Hadidoun Road with a length of 2,100 m. It was funded by the Ministry of Local Government with a budget of US\$ 194,000. |
| Karm Hadidoun road construction <i>(see figure 13)</i> | 2021 | This road was constructed by Battir Municipality at a cost of US\$14,000. |
| Rehabilitation of the internal water networks of Battir | 2020 -2021 | The project rehabilitated the internal water networks of Battir. It was funded and implemented by the Palestinian Water and Sewage Authority at a cost of US\$ 940,000. |
| Rehabilitation of retaining stone walls of Battir's main streets <i>(see figure 15)</i> | March 2021 | This project rehabilitated the retaining stone walls of the main street in the Al-Jarn area and Aqabat Al-Mashmesh. It was funded and implemented by Battir Municipality at a cost of US\$ 2200. |
| Building retaining walls | June 2021 | Retaining walls were built at the beginning of Karm Hadidoun Road, with a length of 17 meters. This project was funded and implemented by Battir Municipality at a cost of US\$ 5.300. |
| Rehabilitation of the second floor of Battir's Public Library | June - September/ 2021 | Rehabilitation of the second floor of Battir Public Library. This project was funded and implemented by the Battir Municipality at a cost of US\$7500. |
| Changing the old street lighting units | October 2021 | Changing the old street lighting units to new LED lighting units. This project was funded by Battir Municipality at an amount of NIS22, 000. |

4. Future Issues Identified by the State Party

In conformity with paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, the following table describes future potential major restorations, alterations and/or new construction(s) intended to be implemented within the Property, buffer zone and/or corridors or other areas, where such developments may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the Property.

| Projects and Activities | Date | Brief Description |
|---|---|--|
| Implementation of the Management and Conservation Plan | Some projects and activities were implemented during 2021; however more efforts will be made to continue implementing projects and activities in 2022 | The Site Manager in cooperation with the Steering and Site Management Committees will follow up the implementation of the MCP and will make more efforts to secure funds needed to implement the MCP's action plan. |
| Bus parking lot and visitor interpretation Centre | 2022 | This proposed project aims to establish a bus parking lot, visitor interpretation center, and two prepay toilets within Battir village to serve the WHP visitors. <i>It will be Funded by the German Government with a total budget of US\$50,000.</i> |
| Establishment of a sewage network | <i>Pending funding</i> | This proposed project aims to establish a sewage network for the Battir village. |
| Wastewater treatment plant for Battir and Hussan | <i>Pending advice of the WHCom and funding</i> | This plan aims to construct a wastewater treatment plant to treat the sewage discharged from the villages of Battir and Hussan, and to promote the reuse of treated wastewater in the area. It will be established in the buffer zone of the WHP. The treatment plant will contribute to resolving underground water pollution, which is causing severe damage to the springs and irrigated crops. A Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) shall be undertaken and subsequently submitted to the WHC prior to implementation of the project. |

5. Public access to the State of Conservation Report

The State Party agrees that the full State of Conservation Report can be made publicly available via the World Heritage center's Information System.

6. Conclusion

As explained in this State of Conservation Report, the State of Palestine conducted several projects and activities during 2021 to preserve and sustainably develop the WHP and its Outstanding Universal Value, with the aim of achieving the desired state of conservation and its specific corrective measures to be removed from the List of World Heritage in Danger. These projects and activities included rehabilitating parts of agricultural terraces, rehabilitating traditional trails, enhancing community participation in conservation and management of the WHP, and raising public awareness of WHP's Outstanding Universal Value.

The endorsed Management and Conservation Plan for the WHP has been implemented since the beginning of 2020, and its operational management system is put in place. The steering and site management committees are in place and meet in regular basis. Threats arising from the plans of the Israeli Occupying Power are still in place threatening the WHP and its OUV, including the construction of a “wall” along the Property, the construction of new illegal settlements in or around the Property, the planned industrial zone, and the new bypass roads. These threats remain in effect until a binding decision is issued, in accordance with Article 6 Section 3 of the World Heritage Convention (1972) by the relevant Israeli Authorities. It is critical to the long-term stability, integrity and authenticity of this WHP that this threat is disrupted by binding action.

Despite the significant achievements and positive efforts of various stakeholders in enhancing the state of conservation of the WHP and its surroundings, The State of Palestine wishes to retain the Property, ***“Palestine: The Land of Olives and Vineyards - The Cultural Landscape of South Jerusalem, Battir,” on the List of World Heritage in Danger.***

7. Signature of the Authority

This State of Conservation Report (SOC) for the World Heritage Property (WHP) Palestine: Land of Olives and Vines: Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir (1492) was prepared by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities in close cooperation with other related stakeholders.



Dr. Ahmed Rjoob
Director General of the World Heritage
Focal Point of the World Heritage Convention



8. Figures

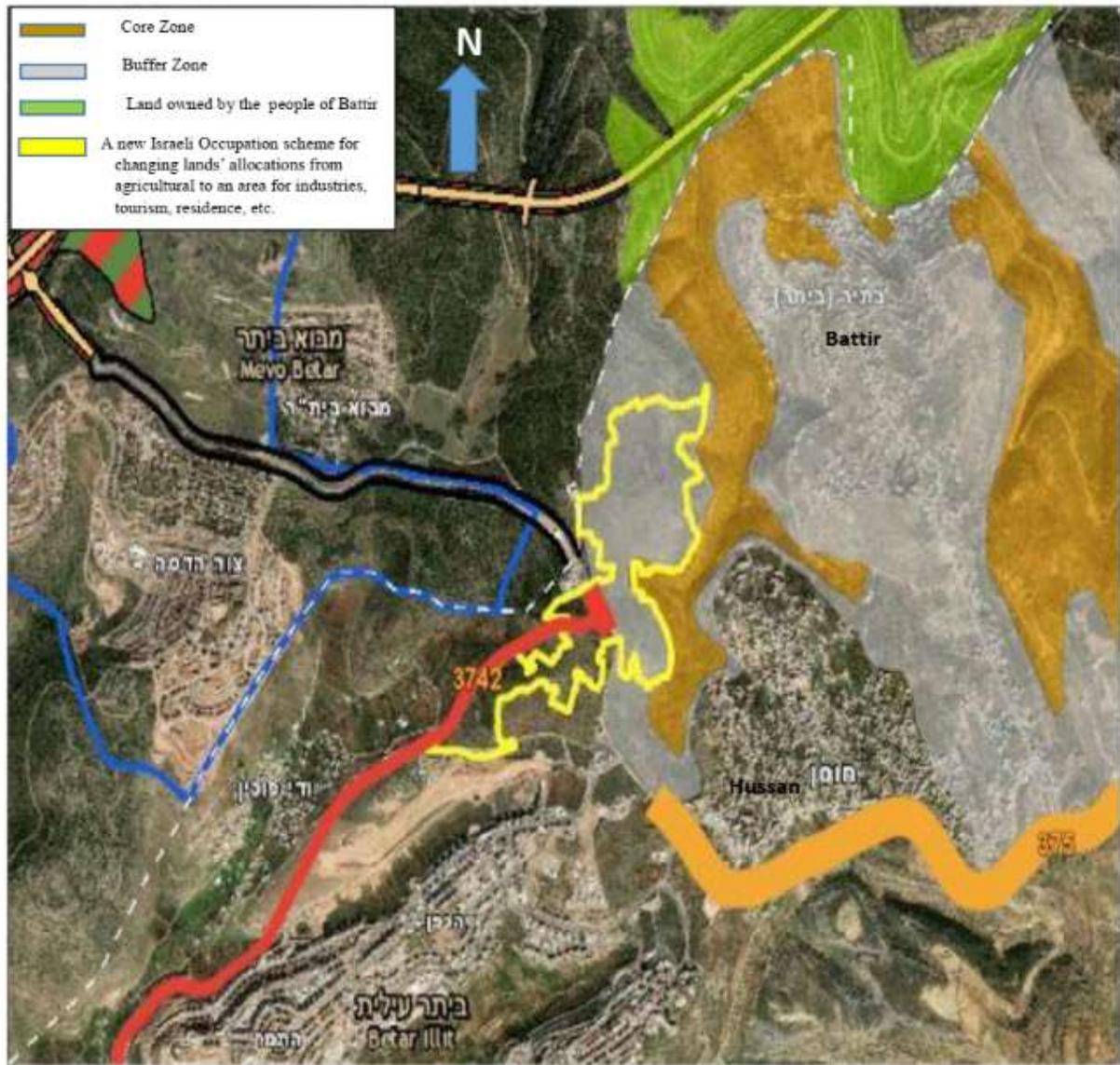


Figure 1: Location of the illegal Israeli Occupation industrial zone in the WHP



Figure 2. The new tunnel and new bypass road (Road 60)



*Figure 3:- The colonial-settlement at the al- Makhrour area inside the WHP
2019 and 2021*



Figure 4:- A group of illegal Israeli Settlers setup new settlement outpost inside the WHP



Figure 5:- Israeli Occupying Authorities destroyed and bulldozed a paved road in Karm Hadidion area within the boundaries of WHP



Figure 6:- Rehabilitation of Agricultural Irrigation Canals and Dry-stone Walls in the WHP



Figure 7:- Restoration of the Seven Widows Quarter, the second phase, before and after

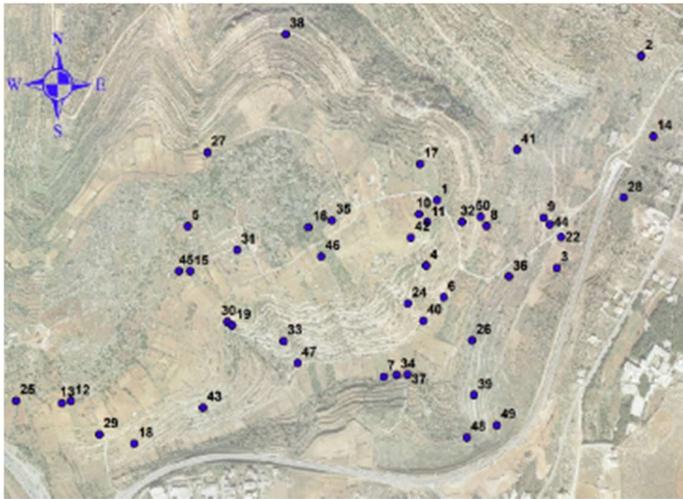


Figure 8:- Renovation Project of Watchtowers in al-Makhrou Area



Figure 9:- Rehabilitation Project of 'Ain Jamm'a Spring and its Pool



Figure 10:- Rehabilitation Project of 'Ain Al- Hawiya Square in Hussan



Figure 11:- Direction Panels for Tourists within the WHP



Figure 12:- Rehabilitation of the Public Service Center



Figure 13:- Rehabilitation of Karm Hadidoun Road



Figure 14:- The Fifth Battiri Eggplant Market and Hawakir Honey in Battir



Figure 15:- Rehabilitation of Dry- stone Walls in the WHP.



Figure 16:- Workshops during Detailed Urban Plan and Special Building Regulations Project