



STATE of PALESTINE

**State of Conservation Report (2024)
for**

HEBRON/AL-KHALIL OLD TOWN (Palestine) (C 1565)



Hebron-Palestine
January 2025

The State of Conservation Report (SoC) for the World Heritage Property (WHP): Hebron/Al-Khalil Old Town (C1565) was jointly prepared by the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee (HRC) and the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA).

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1. Executive Summary

This report addresses State of Conservation of the World Heritage Property Hebron/Al-Khalil Old Town and the concerns raised by the World Heritage Committee in its Decision 46 COM 7A.25. It also includes a submission of a revised version of the Statement of Outstanding Universal Values (SOUV) *Annex 1*, Desired State of Conservation for removal from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) *Annex 2*, and the Corrective Measures within a provisional timeframe *Annex 3*. This SOUV version has developed through consultations with UNESCO experts, and advisory bodies experts, complying with the World Heritage Committee's decision 42 COM/7A.Add.2. Consequently, the State Party would appreciate the formal adoption of this version by the World Heritage Committee during its upcoming 47th session in 2025.

The report affirms the ongoing commitment of the State of Palestine to preserve the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property. This commitment extends to maintaining the conditions of authenticity and integrity, as well as upholding the established protection and management system. Additionally, the report highlights the notable progress made in formulating the Management and Conservation Plan (MCP) under the International Assistance framework (*No IA2018-3007*).

The report provides a comprehensive overview of the initiatives implemented throughout 2024 to enhance the living conditions within the World Heritage Property. These efforts aim not only to improve the socio-economic well-being of the local community but also to foster greater awareness and appreciation of the property's cultural and historical significance. Additionally, the initiatives focus on promoting sustainable practices to ensure the long-term preservation and vitality of the property. Despite these positive endeavors, the property remains vulnerable to illegal actions and violations executed by the Israeli Occupying Power (IOP) including new plans, constructions new settlements and implementing illegal excavations. In addition to numerous violations against the local community which are affecting their freedom of movement and access to places of worship. These procedures are significantly detrimental to the authenticity and integrity of the WHP, Consequently, the State of Palestine expresses its desire to maintain the property "Hebron/Al-Khalil Old Town" on the **List of World Heritage in Danger**.

2. Response to the decision of the World Heritage Committee (Decision 46 COM 7A.25/Annex)

Para. 2 Recalling Decision 41 COM 8B.1, adopted at its 41st session (Krakow, 2017), which did not include a Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (SOUV), and noting that in compliance with Paragraph 154 of the Operational Guidelines, when deciding to inscribe a property on the World Heritage List, guided by the Advisory Bodies, the Committee adopts a SOUV for the property,

Par. 3 Taking note of a further-revised draft SOUV contained in the state of conservation report submitted by the State Party,

Para.4 Takes note of the consultations held between experts from UNESCO, the State Party and the Advisory Bodies, as well as the ongoing exchanges with regard to the revised draft SOUV, the draft Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) and the related corrective measures, and invites the State Party to continue its efforts to finalize the above documents;

Para.5 Decides to consider the examination of a draft SOUV for the property at its 47th session;

Para.6. Also takes note of the Management and Conservation Plan (MCP) for the property and requests that once the SOUV for the property is adopted and the DSOCR is finalized, the MCP be amended in collaboration with UNESCO and the Advisory Bodies;

The State of Palestine has been working diligently in the elaboration of MCP, within the framework of the International Assistance (No IA2018-3007), and direct technical support of UNESCO-Ramallah office. The main partners (Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA), Hebron Rehabilitation Committee (HRC), and Hebron Municipality (HM)), were very keen to involve the local community among other stakeholders to understand and document the OUV, and other associated values of the site through several meetings, surveys, and workshops alongside the whole work plan stages. In line with the contract signed with UNESCO-Ramallah office in May 2019, the final version of the MCP was submitted to the World Heritage Centre (WHC) by February 1, 2022, with consideration given to ICOMOS comments on the MCP from the Technical Review in June 2021. Subsequently, additional comments on the final MCP version submitted in May were received by the State Party from the ICOMOS Technical Review on February 23, 2023. The State Party affirms its dedication to addressing these comments, based on the Outstanding Universal Value (SOUV) specified in *Annex 1* attached to this report.

Par.7 Commends the State Party for the actions which are being taken to conserve significant attributes of the property, including conservation works at Al-Ibrahimi Mosque/The Tomb of the Patriarchs, restoration of Zahdeh Historic House, adaptive re-use of the AlSharabati Building as a community center, adaptive re-use of historic buildings, and rehabilitation of infrastructure at the Northern Entrance of the Old Town, and as well as for initiatives for socio-economic benefits and awareness-raising for the local community;

During the 2024 year, there have been notable accomplishments and initiatives in protecting, conserving and presenting the OUV of the WHP. Substantial progress have been made in terms of maintaining, comprehensive conservation and adaptively reusing abandoned buildings. This approach prioritizes minimal intervention while emphasizing community involvement, leading to the revitalization of buildings and spaces, and ensuring the preservation of OUV, integrity and authenticity.

The following conservation works took place in 2024:-

Conservation & Maintenance of Ibrahimi Mosque / The Tomb of the Patriarchs

The work was started in 1998 and continues to this day based on the comprehensive master plan 2015-2040, (further details on this plan could be accessed:

<https://www.hebronrc.ps/index.php/en/about/staratigic-pan>

The Conservation of this significant monument has been given special interest according to its distinctive OUV. During 2024, Hebron Rehabilitation Committee (HRC) carried out maintenance work in different areas inside and outside the mosque.





Figure1: Maintenance works of the Ibrahim Mosque/ The Tomb of the Patriarchs

Regular Maintenance of Historic Buildings

This project aims to improve the living conditions of the property's local community, and also guarantees the sustainability of Conservation as well as raising the local community's awareness towards the best practices for cultural heritage preservation. During 2024. About 190 apartments in different areas within the WHP boundaries were maintained. It's worth mentioning that part of this work is being carried out by the citizens themselves, using traditional materials provided by HRC, and under its direct supervision. This innovative approach highlights the critical role of collaboration and shared responsibility in the conservation of cultural heritage. It also places a strong emphasis on fostering local awareness through hands-on engagement and active participation, encouraging the community to take an active role in preserving and valuing their cultural legacy.







Figure 2: Regular Maintenance of historic buildings (before and after)

Conservation and Adaptive Reuse of Al-Jubeh house (Office of the Ministry of culture)

The project focuses on the Al-Jubeh building, a significant residential building located within the property zone of the World Heritage Property. This building showcases a distinctive architectural style that harmonizes with the traditional urban setting. The project involves conserving the building and reusing it as an office for the Ministry of Culture, aligning with the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee's strategy to encourage ministries to establish offices in the Old Town, thereby enhancing visitor activity in the property. The conservation approach prioritizes minimal intervention, employing traditional materials to adapt the building while preserving its authenticity. The HRC has been implementing this project since the beginning of 2024, funded by the Arab Monetary Fund through the Islamic Development Bank. The building is expected to open to the public at the beginning of 2025.



Figure 3: Al- Al-Jubeh Building (Before &After)

Conservation of Al-Jabari Historic House

The project focuses on an exceptional residential house located in the buffer zone of the World Heritage Property. This building exemplifies a unique architectural style that developed beyond the boundaries of the urban fabric, showing intricate details and high artistic value. The project includes restoring the house and providing essential facilities while ensuring minimal intervention to preserve its authenticity. The Hebron Rehabilitation Committee has been carrying out this project throughout 2024, with funding from the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency. The building's conservation has been completed, and it will be occupied by two families at the start of 2025.



Figure 4: Al-Jabari Historic House (Before & After). At the top: photographs of the front façade before and after conservation. In the middle: images of the back façade before and after conservation. At the bottom: photos illustrating the provision of facilities for the two apartments, achieved with minimal intervention to preserve the house's traditional architectural elements

Par.8 deplores the ongoing Israeli activities inside the Old City of Al-Khalil/Hebron, including construction of settlements, archaeological excavations, and demolition of commercial stores in Al-Hisbeh market and destruction of the arched and domed entrances at the historic bus station, which are illegal under international law and harmfully affect the authenticity and integrity of the site, and the subsequent denial of freedom of movement and freedom of access to places of worship, and asks Israel, the occupying power, to end all violations which are not in conformity with the provisions of relevant UNESCO conventions, resolutions and decisions; and further takes note with concern of the completion of an electric elevator in Al-Ibrahimi Mosque/The Tomb of the Patriarchs, which proceeded without preparation of Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) or notification to the World Heritage Centre in conformity with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, and which may affect the authenticity and integrity of the property;

Despite the efforts of the State of Palestine to manage and conserve the OUV, integrity and authenticity of the property, the property remains vulnerable to illegal actions and violations by the Israeli Occupying Power (IOP). These include the implementation of new plans to construct additional settlements, as well as expansions of the existing settlements and illegal archaeological excavations. In addition to numerous violations against the local community, which are affecting their freedom of movement and access to places of worship. These actions pose threats and/or cause damage to the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the World Heritage Property (WHP), including its physical attributes, as well as impacting its authenticity and integrity. Among the various Israeli occupation plans and actions, the following are particularly noteworthy:-

- **Sealing the doors of the old Municipality Building with welding**

On 8 May 2024, Israeli occupation forces have welded shut the doors of the old Municipality Building located inside the property , which is owned by the Hebron Municipality. This dangerous act is an assault aimed at seizing Palestinian property and a clear step to expand settlement outposts in the property, intending to empty it of its residents.



Figure 9: Sealing the doors of the old Municipality Building with welding by the Israeli occupation

- **Closure of the of the Ibrahimi Mosque/ The Tomb of the Patriarchs**

On October 9, 2024, The Israeli occupation power have closed the Ibrahimi Mosque/ The Tomb of the Patriarchs for four consecutive days without offering any justification. Additionally, they prevented the restoration team from accessing the mosque to carry out routine maintenance work. The closure of the Ibrahimi Mosque/ The Tomb of the Patriarchs to Palestinian worshippers not only violates religious rights but also poses serious concerns for the day-to-day management of the World Heritage property. By obstructing maintenance and restoration activities, the preservation of this significant historical monument is jeopardized. Additionally, these ongoing closures disrupt the natural connection between the mosque and other components of the property, weakening the integrity required to implement the conservation and management plan.

- **Interventions in the Ibrahimi Mosque/ The Tomb of the Patriarchs**

Although the maintenance and restoration of the Ibrahimi Mosque/ The Tomb of the Patriarchs falls under the jurisdiction and responsibility of the Ministry of Religious Endowment, Hebron Municipality and the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee, the mosque has recently witnessed a violation of this mandate. The occupying authorities infringed upon the local authorities by making technical changes inside the Ibrahimi Mosque/ The Tomb of the Patriarchs without consulting these entities. These changes included:

1. **Changing windows:** On 13 February 2024, Israeli occupation power have made severe alterations to two of the historical windows in the Ibrahimi Mosque/The Tomb of The Patriarchs, a revered site of immense cultural and religious significance and the most important attribute in the WHP. Israeli occupation power has undertaken the replacement of authentic wooden frames with modern aluminum frames at a Al- Anbar Hall in the Ibrahimi Mosque. This action not only disregards the importance and significance of this historical place but also undermines its cultural integrity and authenticity.
2. **Initiate the covering of the open yard in the Ibrahimi mosque/ The Tomb of the Patriarchs:** On 11 July 2024, The Israeli occupation power have erected iron bars and iron sheets to cover the courtyard in the Ibrahimi mosque/ The Tomb of the Patriarchs. This courtyard is considered the only open space in the mosque and the closure of this courtyard negatively affects the authenticity of this monument. Through the efforts of the local community, as well as national and international institutions, pressure was exerted on the Israeli side, leading to the halting of the project to cover the courtyard.
3. **Installation an electric cabinet:** On September 12, 2024, Israeli occupation power installed an electric cabinet in Al- ANBAR area inside the Ibrahimi mosque/The Tomb of The Patriarchs without any justification or technical necessity. This unjustified addition negatively affects the authenticity and the historical character of this sacred monument, thereby affecting the outstanding universal value of the World Heritage Property, with the Ibrahimi mosque being the primary attribute embodying this value.

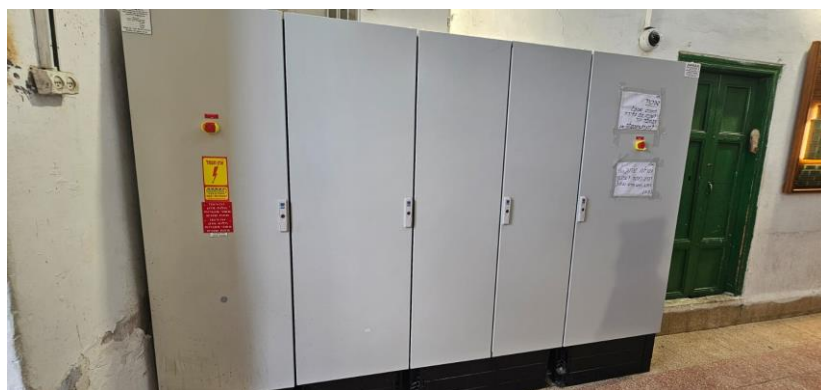


Figure 10: The electric cabinet which was installed n inside the Ibrahimi Mosque by the Israeli occupation

4. **Digging in front of the Ibrahimi Mosque/ The Tomb of the Patriarchs:** On November 3, 2024, The Israeli occupation forces dig in front of the Ibrahimi Mosque/ The Tomb of the Patriarchs, specifically near the electricity complex, where digging took place in an archaeological area containing layers dating back to the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods. This action leads to the destruction of archaeological remains that represent an important

phase in the history of the property, as these remains embody historical and archaeological values, in addition to their evidential value, as they play a crucial role in interpreting the town's history and in defining its Outstanding Universal Value. On another level, these excavations threaten the safety of the Ibrahimi Mosque and pose a risk to the stability of its structural integrity.



Figure 11: Digging in front of the Ibrahimi Mosque/ The Tomb of the Patriarchs

5. **Digging and extending sewage lines in the courtyards of the Ibrahimi Mosque:** On December 31, 2024, The Israeli occupation forces carried out excavations in front of the Ibrahimi Mosque/ The Tomb of the Patriarchs in order to extend sewage lines in the courtyards of the Ibrahimi Mosque. These excavations and extensions represent a flagrant violation of international law, as they are illegal and lack any objective or legal justification, indicating that these actions constitute a serious threat to the historical and religious structure of the Ibrahimi Mosque, as well as to its surroundings, which represents an integral part of the Palestinian cultural heritage



Figure 12: Digging and extending sewage lines in the courtyards of the Ibrahimi Mosque

Additionally, On December 9, 2024, the Israeli Occupation Authorities verbally notified the Director of Islamic Endowments of their intention to cover the open courtyard of the Ibrahimi Mosque /The Tomb of the Patriarchs. This proposed intervention poses a grave threat to the architectural integrity, environmental balance, and cultural heritage of this World Heritage Site, recognized for its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). The open courtyard is a defining feature of the mosque's traditional Islamic architecture, occupying 196 square meters in the northwest corner of the mosque. It is integral to the mosque's ecological, architectural, and spiritual functions. Following Islamic architectural principles, open courtyards are designed to provide natural ventilation and lighting, especially in monumental stone buildings like the Ibrahimi Mosque/The Tomb of the Patriarchs. Covering the courtyard would severely compromise the mosque's authenticity in terms of its functional, design, and visual attributes. The Nara Document on Authenticity (1994) underscores that authenticity must be assessed through attributes such as design, materials, use, function, and setting. Such intervention threatens the mosque's functional and design authenticity, as the courtyard's role in regulating ventilation and natural lighting is essential to the mosque's architectural and cultural identity. Covering the courtyard would disrupt these critical functions, reducing airflow and light while increasing humidity and temperature fluctuations. Such an intervention would violate conservation principles that prioritize the preservation of authentic uses and functions in heritage sites. In addition, openness to the sky is not merely aesthetic but a deliberate design choice that enhances spatial dynamics and spiritual symbolism. Covering the courtyard would sever this connection. As outlined in the Venice Charter (1964), conservation efforts must respect monuments' original design and historical narrative. Adding a cover would constitute an incompatible addition,

distorting the mosque's authentic design and undermining its OUV. Moreover, this action will cause environmental and structural risks to the mosque, including increased humidity from blocking ventilation and light, which threatens sensitive decorative elements such as painted surfaces, stonework, and the historic pulpit of Salah al-Din with irreversible damage. Additionally, adding a cover will impose extra weight on the historic structure, heightening structural stress and accelerating deterioration, in violation of the principles of minimal intervention and reversibility central to international conservation standards. The proposed intervention contravenes international conservation standards articulated in the Nara Document on Authenticity, the Venice Charter (1964), and the Burra Charter (1979). These frameworks emphasize preserving original attributes, minimizing intervention, and ensuring reversibility. Covering the courtyard would introduce permanent, irreversible changes that wear down the mosque's historical authenticity and cultural significance. The Ibrahimi Mosque's designation as a World Heritage Site underscores its OUV as a cultural, historical, and religious monument. Modifying its original fabric, such as covering the courtyard, constitutes a violation of its OUV and integrity, as defined in the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the 1972 World Heritage Convention.

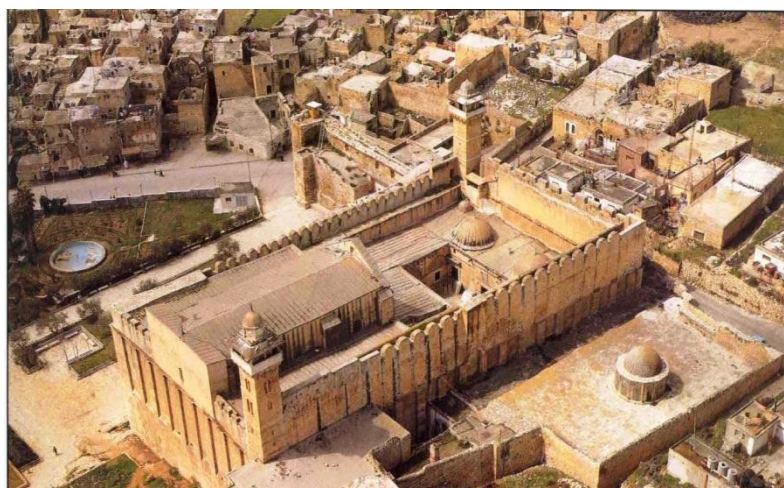


Figure 13: Al-Ibrahimi Mosque, showing the open courtyard, which serves as the only breathing space within the mosque

2.a. Progress achieved in implementing the corrective measures adopted by the World Heritage Committee

Corrective measures have not been formally adopted by the Committee; therefore, the State Party has sent another revised version of DSOCR, and the related corrective measures during September 2019, which is also attached to this report for ease of reference (*Annex2*).

2.b. Is the timeframe for implementing the corrective measures suitable? If not, please propose an alternative timeframe and an explanation of why this alternative timeframe is required.

A timeframe for the implementation of the proposed corrective measures has been set out (*Annex3*), however, it could be amended depending on the DSOCR, and the MCP which is being elaborated, to ensure that all indicators and their timeframes are specific and applicable.

According to the indicators and timeframe outlined in (*Annex3*), the Desired State of Conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR), are planned to be achieved within a period of 10 years. However, the first DSOCR, “Dismissing all of the Occupying Power’s plans and/or actions affecting the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the World Heritage Property (WHP) and its authenticity and integrity”, is not defined within this timeframe. Dismissal of the plans is largely dependent on actions and decisions taken by the IOP authorities, which are beyond the control of the State of Palestine.

2.c. Progress achieved towards the Desired State of Conservation for the removal of the property from the list of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR)

DSOCR have not been formally adopted by the Committee as mentioned before; however, the progress being achieved in the elaboration of MCP is an important key to ensuring adequate and effective safeguarding of the property and its inherent OUV, which is also considered an important corrective measure achieving the DSOCR, particularly section c (*Annex 2*).

3. Other current conservation issues identified by the State Party which may have an impact on the property’s Outstanding Universal Value

In parallel with conservation works, several activities were implemented during 2024, with the participation of the local community. These activities aimed at raising awareness of both tangible and intangible heritage among the local community, alleviating the pressures resulting from the occupation measures as well as encouraging commercial activities and initiatives, especially by women, to improve household income levels. Partners believe in the importance of such activities in promoting the perception of heritage, traditions, and customs, whilst its design targets a diverse group of people with different scopes, but ultimately encourages their pertinence to heritage, some of these activities are:

- **Heritage Day Festival: Celebrating Tradition and Community Initiatives**

A vibrant festival was held to celebrate Heritage Day, organized in collaboration with various institutions across the city. The event showed the traditional products for which the Old Town is renowned, offering visitors a glimpse into its rich cultural heritage.

A central focus of the festival was the celebration of local community initiatives, particularly those spearheaded by women. These initiatives highlighted the pivotal role of traditional crafts not only in preserving and sustaining heritage elements but also in improving the economic conditions of the community. By promoting the production and sale of traditional crafts, the festival underscored the dual impact of empowering local artisans and safeguarding intangible cultural heritage for future generations.



Figure 14: Part of the Heritage Day Festival

- **Children's Activities for Psychological Relief and Cultural Heritage Awareness**

A series of activities were organized for children with the dual purpose of alleviating stress caused by the ongoing Israeli occupation measures and providing psychological relief in a supportive environment. These activities also aimed to raise awareness among children about the significance of cultural heritage and the vital role of preserving it for future generations.

Through interactive workshops, storytelling sessions, and creative hands-on activities, children were introduced to the rich cultural traditions of their community while finding a safe space for emotional expression and healing. By integrating cultural education with psychological support, these initiatives not only helped address the children's immediate emotional needs but also fostered a sense of pride and responsibility toward their cultural heritage.





Figure 15: Stress relief and awareness activities for children in the WHP

- **Awareness-Raising Workshop and Community Engagement Initiatives in Hebron**

The Hebron Rehabilitation Committee organized an awareness-raising workshop focused on the violations perpetrated by the Israeli occupation against cultural heritage within the property. The workshop targeted individuals and institutions within the local community, aiming to inform them about the ongoing threats to their heritage and to encourage collective action for its protection.

In addition to the workshop, the Committee held several meetings with members of the local community to discuss their pressing needs and concerns. These meetings served as a platform for dialogue, enabling community members to actively participate in shaping the projects proposed for implementation during the year. This collaborative approach aimed to foster a sense of ownership, ensuring that the community's voices and priorities are central to the preservation and sustainable development of their cultural heritage.





Figure 16: At the top: A segment of the workshop addressing occupation violations against cultural heritage within the World Heritage Property. At the bottom: Highlights from meetings with the local community.

- **Participation in the "We Are Site Managers International Symposium"**

The Site Manager of the World Heritage Property participated in the inaugural *We Are Site Managers International Symposium*, held from 1 to 5 March 2024 in George Town Heritage City, Penang, Malaysia. The event brought together over 160 prominent World Heritage Site managers and heritage professionals representing 37 countries.

As the first symposium of its kind, this landmark gathering provided a dynamic platform for participants to discuss, debate, and address the issues, challenges, and opportunities faced by Site Managers within the framework of the 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. By fostering meaningful exchanges of experiences, insights, and strategies, the symposium contributed significantly to the global dialogue on the sustainable management and preservation of World Heritage properties.



Figure 17: Part of the participation of the site manager in the "We Are Site Managers International Symposium"

4.Future Issues Identified by the State Party

Under paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, the following table outlines future potential major projects intended to be implemented within the Property, buffer zone, and/or corridors or other areas, with careful consideration for their impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Property:

No.	Title of the project	funds
1.	Maintenance of historical buildings	Secured
2.	Conservation of historical buildings	Secured
3.	Conservation of single historical buildings	Secured
4.	Preventive conservation of historical buildings	Not Secured
5.	Rehabilitation and reuse of water cisterns in historical houses	Not Secured
6.	Empowering women's communities and supporting small women's initiatives	Not Secured
7	Updating and completing the Management and Conservation Plan database to include data for the buffer zone.	Not Secured
8	Implementing activities to support the Ibrahimi Mosque / The Tomb of the Patriarchs and document violations related to it, including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Conducting lectures on violations committed by the IOP;- Preparing brochures or posters highlighting the architectural elements inside the Ibrahimi Mosque/ The Tomb of the Patriarchs.- Organizing photography competitions for university and school students to spotlight the architectural elements within the Ibrahimi Mosque/ The Tomb of the Patriarchs.- Preparing documentation of parts of the Ibrahimi Mosque/ The Tomb of the Patriarchs using modern technologies such as photogrammetry, 360-degree photography, or other techniques.	To be Secured

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 WH center's Information System.

6. Conclusion

In 2024, the State of Palestine, in partnership with stakeholders and international collaborators, has actively worked to protect and sustainably manage the World Heritage Property, ensuring the preservation of its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). A key priority has been the implementation of the Management and Conservation Plan (MCP), with the ultimate goal of removing the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Nevertheless, the World Heritage Property continues to face significant and persistent threats due to Israeli occupation policies and actions, which jeopardize its OUV, integrity, and

authenticity. These challenges remain the primary obstacles to the sustainable development and long-term stability of the property.

While notable progress has been achieved in enhancing the conservation status of the property, the **State of Palestine reaffirms the need to maintain Hebron/Al-Khalil Old Town on the List of World Heritage in Danger.** This decision reflects the urgency of addressing the ongoing threats to the property and reinforces the commitment to ensuring its continued protection and preservation as a site of global cultural significance.

7. Signature of the Authority

This State of Conservation Report for the World Heritage Property "Hebron/Al-Khalil Old Town" (C1565) was prepared by the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee and the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, in close collaboration with various stakeholders and partners. The report provides a comprehensive assessment of the current status, conservation efforts, achievements, and challenges facing the property. Through collective efforts and cooperation, the State of Palestine is committed to ensuring the sustainable development and conservation of the WHP and its Outstanding Universal Value.

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

Annex 1: Revised Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (SOUV)

Hebron/Al-Khalil Old Town Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief Synthesis

Hebron/Al-Khalil Old Town is one of the oldest living cities and spiritual centers in the world. Its numerous ancient, well preserved, monuments and buildings bear witness to a rich and prosperous past, through a series of successive and imbricated civilizations from very early antiquity until modern times. The World Heritage Property constitutes an important part of the continuous fabric of the present city that dates back to at least the Mamluk and Ottoman periods (13th – 20th century AD). The property is surrounded by a protective buffer zone comprised of the foothills around the Hebron/Al-Khalil valley and of archaeological remains that include Tell Rumeida.

The old town expanded on three hills and into the valley around Al-Ibrahimi Mosque/ The Tomb of Patriarchs monumental complex, which is an outstanding and multi-layered example of architecture illustrates significant stages in human history and is one of the main elements that shaped the Hebron/Al-Khalil Old Town. Traditions, religious and spiritual beliefs have been the foundation of the town's cultural character for many centuries as the site is revered by three monotheistic religions. Thanks to its location along one of the main commercial routes in the region, the town became a meeting place for different faiths and cultures, with socio-economic and cultural exchange occurring throughout the centuries. The Outstanding Universal Value of Hebron/Al-Khalil Old Town is demonstrated by its existence as an exceptionally complete and well-preserved example of exceptional urban and vernacular architectural elements which reflect characteristics inspired by the human values of Hebron/Al-Khalil's people. The main attributes of Outstanding Universal Value can be observed within the limits of the old town, including the Ibrahimi Mosque/The Tomb of Patriarchs monumental complex, Suqs, Khans, Zawiyas, Maqams, Takiyya, and Hammams, the traditional quarters and the ahwash (plural of hosh), as well as the town's historical setting, and its design.

Criterion (ii): Hebron/Al-Khalil Old Town represents an outstanding example of a community built around the interchange of human values. Since its creation, the Al-Ibrahimi Mosque/The Tomb of Patriarchs monumental complex has been a source of great inspiration to surrounding communities and to their social, religious, and spiritual values. The site has been in continuous religious use since the early Roman Period to this day.

The main roads of the town connect the different quarters in Hebron/Al-Khalil to Al-Ibrahimi Mosque/The Tomb of Patriarchs monumental complex. The relation with the prophet Ibrahim and the presence of Al-Ibrahimi Mosque/The Tomb of Patriarchs monumental complex has attracted pilgrims from around the world, making Hebron/Al-Khalil a meeting place for a great variety of faiths, ethnicities, and cultural backgrounds. This intermixing has led to a high degree of socio-economic and cultural exchange throughout the centuries reflected in the many public

buildings of the property and beyond, including Suqs, Khans, Zawiyas, Maqams, Hammams, and the Takiyya.

In the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods, Hebron/Al-Khalil became a significant centre of Sufism. Sufis, who came from different cultural backgrounds, found a promising environment in the vicinity of Al-Haram Al-Ibrahimi, and subsequently Sufi zawaya (sing. zawiya) were built throughout the city's quarters and become one of their distinguishing features.

For more than a millennium, the Takiyya's tradition (Hospice- free kitchen) of the Hebron/Al – Khalil influenced the whole region as evidenced in early historic accounts from the 9th century AD presented in the Takiyya of this day. Similar charitable institutions were later established in Jerusalem, Istanbul, Damascus, and Cairo.

Criterion (iv): Hebron/al Khalil Old Town is an outstanding example of an urban district which has remarkably preserved historical fabric. It has also preserved the morphology and residential typologies dating back to the Mamluk period, all of which contribute to the visual and structural integrity of the cityscape. The residential neighborhoods of the old town were built in a hosh system. The hosh system is a congregation of separate room units or groups of rooms clustered around several small courtyards. They are found in different locations and levels, which have organically evolved into distinctive tree-shaped residential structures.

The continuity of buildings on the outer edges of the town made it difficult to access the town and created an effective defense system of "rampart houses". These included hidden nooks and circuitous alleyways that played a protective role against intrusions. This system can still be observed clearly within the old town in the road system and urban structures, which are perfectly preserved to this day.

Criterion (vi): The Hebron/Al-Khalil's Old Town is one of the holiest cities in the world for three monotheistic religions. For centuries, Hebron/Al-Khalil was a town in which prophets visited, lived, and were buried. Traditions and religious beliefs for the three monotheistic religions, have been its cultural foundation and the source of enduring values carried from one generation to the next. Furthermore, the prophet Ibrahim/Abraham's spirit of generosity and hospitality has been and continues to be deeply ingrained into the traditions of Hebron/Al-Khalil. A key attribute of these traditions is the prophet Ibrahim/Abraham's Takiyya (Hospice), established before the 9th century AD, which has continued until today to offer meals to the poor and visitors.

In the Mamluk period, 13th century AD, Hebron/Al-Khalil became a significant centre of Sufism. Sufis found a promising environment in the vicinity of Al-Haram Al-Ibrahimi and, subsequently, sufi zawaya (sing. zawiya) were built throughout the city and have become one of its distinguishing features.

Statement of Integrity

After the Roman and Byzantine periods, the original city moved from Tell Rumeida to the valley adjacent to Al-Ibrahimi Mosque/The Tomb of Patriarchs monumental complex, and became the focal point of the town and strongly influenced its development. The boundaries of the property

correspond to the boundaries of the continuous fabric of Hebron/Al-Khalil Old Town, during the Mamluk period.

Hebron/al Khalil Old Town has remarkably preserved its Mamluk historical urban fabric as well as the morphology and residential typologies of Hara and ahwash (plural of hosh). These create an intricate network of alleys, which is influenced by the location of Ibrahimi Mosque/Tomb of Patriarchs that connects the various neighborhoods in the old town and contributes to the visual and structural integrity of the cityscape. Al-Ibrahimi Mosque/The Tomb of Patriarchs monumental complex has been a source of great inspiration to the three monotheistic religions and to the surrounding communities and their social, religious, and spiritual values. It has been in continuous religious use since early Roman period to this day. The importance of this sacred place is evident in the town's structure. Whilst Hebron/Al-Khalil Old Town has never been protected by town walls, its limits are well marked by the topography and the "rampart houses" built on the town's external perimeter, some of which have survived to this day.

The property is very vulnerable due to the political situation. The Israeli settlement activities and procedures inside the property and in its buffer zone are illegal under the international law, including ongoing excavations, works, construction of private roads for settlers, military and mobility restrictions, and roadblocks, inside the Old City of Al-Khalil/Hebron, which harmfully affect the integrity of the site. Nevertheless, efforts are made by the State of Palestine to mitigate any adverse effects of development and/or neglect to the integrity of the property.

Statement of Authenticity

The morphological configuration of the old town and the spatial organization of the urban fabric, dating back to the Mamluk and Ottoman periods have remained mostly unchanged, and the main distinctive attributes have been retained. The authenticity of the urban structure and of the buildings, quarters and hoshes have also remained intact. The property has retained its use and function which are attested in a number of public buildings, such as Al-Ibrahimi Mosque/The Tomb of Patriarchs complex, zawiya's and hammams dating back to the Mamluk period. Function is strongly demonstrated through the continued maintenance, conservation and veneration of the property's attributes that are observed within its limits, most notably, the monumental site of Al-Ibrahimi Mosque/The Tomb of Patriarchs. The spirit of generosity and hospitality of the prophet Ibrahim/Abraham has been and continues to be deeply instilled into the traditions of Hebron/Al-Khalil through its Takiyya (Hospice) which continues to offer meals to the city's poor and visitors. Conservation efforts made in the old town since the mid-1990s have, to a great extent, preserved the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value, and contributed to continuity of uses. These efforts led to a return of the inhabitants and an effective urban regeneration of the old town. The use of traditional materials and techniques in these restoration operations has contributed to the protection of the authenticity of the old town and in the reactivation of craftsman trades.

Protection and management requirements

Hebron/Al-Khalil Old Town possesses a high level of legal protection, both at the national and local levels. At the national level, it is protected by the law on Tangible Cultural Heritage (No. 11, 2018) for the protection, conservation and management of tangible cultural heritage in

Palestine, as well as by the Jordanian law (No. 79, 1966) on building and zoning of towns, villages, and buildings. At the local level, protection of the property is based on the municipal physical master plan for the city of Hebron and the “Hebron's Old City: Preservation and Revitalization Master Plan 2015-2040”, a strategy to manage and conserve the old town’s urban planning, infrastructure, education, tourism, public health, economy, social development, and other important sectors. As per the law on Tangible Cultural Heritage (No. 11, 2018), the property is managed by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities in close cooperation with the Ministry of Awqaf, Hebron Municipality, Hebron Rehabilitation Committee, and the local community. The local community involvement is made through workshops, seminars, in order to enhance the current management and state of conservation of the property , the above mentioned partners are closely cooperating in preparing the Management and Conservation Plan, in order to establish an effective management system and maintain the Outstanding Universal Value, authenticity, and integrity of the property.

Notes: At the time of the nomination evaluation, ICOMOS could not visit the property therefore the statement of integrity and authenticity and the protection and management requirements could not be assessed on the ground. In addition, at the moment of inscription of the property, the aim for a comprehensive vision for the management of the property is made more difficult by the constraints imposed by Israel, the occupying Power, on zone H2 in the old town.

Annex 2: Desired State of Conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR)

The State of Palestine is committed to the removal of Hebron/Al-Khalil from the World Heritage list in danger. Therefore, the stakeholders have diagnosed and assessed the factors affecting the WHP in order to develop the most appropriate and plausible plans and actions to achieve the Desired State of Conservation, as well as key Corrective Measures to be adopted by the World Heritage Committee for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR), as follows:

- A. Dismissing all of the Occupying Power's plans and/ or actions affecting the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the World Heritage Property (WHP) and its authenticity and integrity.
- B. Mechanisms are in place to ensure that any development plans in the property, the buffer zone and the setting do not negatively affect the OUV of the property.
- C. Adoption of an integrated effective Management and Conservation Plan for the WHP.
- D. Achieving appropriate conservation and safeguarding of the WHP's OUV, its physical attributes, integrity and authenticity.

2. B. Proposed Corrective Measures to achieve the DSO CR

A.1 Take all possible measures to obtain the dismissal of all of Occupying Power plans and actions that affect the OUV of the property including building settlements, destruction of parts of the architectural and urban fabric, illegal excavations, separation barriers, access blocks and street closures.

A.2 Dismiss all of the Israeli Occupying Power illegal regulations imposed on the local Palestinian authorities which hinder the maintenance and conservation of the property.

B1. Develop and promulgate bylaws and urban regulations to protect the historic environment of the WHP, its physical attributes, integrity and authenticity.

B2. Develop a process for strategic and heritage impact assessments for all significant planning and development projects in the property, its buffer zone, and its setting.

C1. Preparation and implementation of a Comprehensive and integrated Management and Conservation Plan for the WHP that involves all concerned stakeholders with emphasis on the local community.

C2. Develop and implement an efficient practical management and monitoring system based on the best practices for the WHP.

D1. Implement conservation projects to enhance the quality of the historic environment of the WHP and improve the socio-economic status and the living conditions of the local community.

D2. Enhance the capacity building of practitioners, institutions, networks and communities to work together towards effective conservation and management of the WHP.

D3. Conduct a comprehensive inventory and documentation of the physical attributes of the WHP's OUV used to assess their State of Conservation and generate an integrated database system for the WHP.

Annex 3: The Indicators and Timeframe for Implementation of the DSCOR and Corrective Measures

	DSOCR & Corrective Measures (CM)	Indicators	Rationale	Method of Verification	Timeframe of CM	Timeframe of DSOCR
A	<p>Dismissing all of the Occupying Power's plans and/ or actions affecting the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the World Heritage Property (WHP) and its authenticity and integrity. Related Corrective Measure(s):</p> <p>A1. Take all possible measures to obtain the dismissal of all of the Occupying Power plans and actions that affect the OUV of the property including building settlements, destruction of parts of the architectural and urban fabric, illegal excavations, separation barriers, access blocks and street closures.</p> <p>A.2 Dismiss all of the Israeli Occupying Power illegal regulations imposed on the local Palestinian authorities which hinder the maintenance and conservation of the property.</p>	<p>A1. A final and binding decision by Israel dismissing the plans and/or actions affecting the attributes of the WHP's OUV.</p> <p>A2. A final and binding decision by Israel dismissing illegal regulation imposed on the Palestinian authorities which hinders the maintenance and conservation of the property.</p>	<p>The WHP is currently threatened by several of Israel's/the Occupying Power's plans and actions that may irreversibly affect the property's OUV.</p> <p>The Occupying Power must dismiss all plans and actions including building settlements, destruction of parts of the architectural fabric, illegal excavations, separation barriers, access blocks, or any other actions that may negatively affect the OUV of the property.</p>	<p>A1.1 binding Israeli decision is adopted and no subsequent plans and/or actions might affect the OUV.</p> <p>A1.2 Barriers, blocks, and closures are removed.</p> <p>A1.3 Free circulation and movement throughout the WHP.</p> <p>A2 Binding Israeli decision is adopted and no subsequent plans and/or actions might affect the OUV.</p>	<i>No specific date</i>	<i>No specific date</i>

B	<p>Mechanisms are in place to ensure that any development plans in the property, the buffer zone and the setting do not negatively affect the OUV of the property.</p> <p><i>Related Corrective Measure(s):</i></p> <p>B1. Develop and promulgate bylaws and urban regulations to protect the historic environment of the WHP, its physical attributes, integrity and authenticity.</p> <p>B2. Develop a process for strategic and heritage impact assessments for all significant planning and development projects in the property, its buffer zone, and its setting.</p>	<p>B1. Endorse and implement bylaws and regulations in accordance with the tangible cultural heritage law (No 11. 2018), as well as the local government regulation and bylaws in line with the above law.</p> <p>B2. Process of the Impact Assessment is established and adopted by related authorities.</p>	<p>Effective bylaws are needed to ensure the protection of the property at the national and local levels.</p> <p>Ensure that all significant planning and development projects do not negatively affect the OUV of the property.</p>	<p>B1.1 monitoring that the bylaws are endorsed</p> <p>B1.2 monitoring of the effective implementation of the endorsed bylaws</p> <p>B2.1 Monitoring of the establishment and adoption of the process of Impact Assessment by the related authorities.</p> <p>B2.2 Monitoring of significant planning and development projects using the above assessment tools.</p>	2021- 2028	2029
					2021- 2024	
					2022- 2028	
					2022- 2028	

C	<p>Adoption of an integrated effective Management and Conservation Plan for the WHP.</p> <p><i>Related Corrective Measure(s):</i></p> <p>C1. Preparation of a Comprehensive and integrated Management and Conservation Plan for the WHP that involves all concerned stakeholders with emphasis on the local community.</p> <p>C2. Effective implementation of the management and conservation plan.</p>	<p>C1. Preparation and endorsement of the MCP.</p> <p>C2. Monitoring the effective implementation of the MCP.</p>	<p>Preparation of an MCP for the WHP is urgently needed to ensure the sustainability of the OUV, and to preserve its authenticity and integrity, which had been facing various threats and challenges.</p>	<p>C1.1 Adoption of the MCP by all relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>C2.1 Effective Implementation of the management and conservation plan.</p> <p>C2.2 Implementation of assessment and monitoring strategies and activities as per the MCP action plan.</p>	<p>2020- 2023</p> <p>2021- 2024</p>	
	<p>Achieving appropriate conservation and safeguarding of the WHP's OUV, its physical attributes, integrity and authenticity.</p> <p>Related Corrective Measure(s):</p> <p>D1. Implement conservation projects to enhance the quality of the historic environment of the WHP and improve the socio-economic status and the</p>	<p>D1. Implementing conservation projects and related social programs to safeguard the WHP including maintenance projects for vulnerable parts of the WHP, such as Qaytoun Quarter.</p>	<p>Although conservation program of the Hebron/Al-Khalil Old Town has been in effect since 1996, further efforts are needed to improve the quality of the historic environment, the socio-economic status and</p>	<p>-Monitor conserved attributes of the WHP.</p> <p>-Regular evaluation of conservation program.</p> <p>-Evaluation of training program.</p> <p>-Regular Evaluation of economic program and incentives.</p> <p>- Evaluation of the</p>	<p>2022 -2028</p>	<p>2029</p>

	<p>living conditions of the local community.</p> <p>D2. Raise awareness about the WHP and its OUV and Enhance the capacity building of practitioners, institutions, networks and communities to work together towards effective conservation and management of the WHP.</p> <p>D3. Conduct a comprehensive inventory and documentation of the physical attributes of the WHP's OUV used to assess their State of Conservation and generate an integrated database system for the WHP.</p>	<p>D2.1 Developing programs to raise awareness about the WHP and its OUV.</p> <p>D2.2. Improving conservation and management capacity-building by conducting a number of technical training programs.</p> <p>D2.3 Establishing economic incentives for the local community.</p> <p>D3.1Developing and implementing documentation and inventory projects for generating a database for the management of attributes of the WHP.</p> <p>D3.2Establishing and executing conservation guidelines.</p>	<p>living conditions of the local community, raise awareness about the WHP and its OUV, and enhance capacity building of professionals working for the property.</p>	<p>documentation and database system.</p>		
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