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# World Heritage

# 44 COM

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UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC  
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CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF  
THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Extended forty-fourth session

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16 – 31 July 2021

**Item 7A of the Provisional Agenda: State of conservation of the properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger**

## SUMMARY

In accordance with Section IV B, paragraphs 190-191 of the *Operational Guidelines*, the Committee shall review annually the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger. This review shall include such monitoring procedures and expert missions as might be determined necessary by the Committee.

This document contains information on the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger. The World Heritage Committee is requested to review the reports on the state of conservation of properties contained in this document. The full reports of Reactive Monitoring missions requested by the World Heritage Committee are available at the following Web address in their original language:  
<http://whc.unesco.org/en/sessions/44COM/documents>

All state of conservation reports will also be available through the World Heritage State of conservation Information System at the following Web address:  
<http://whc.unesco.org/en/soc>

**Decision required:** The Committee is requested to review the following state of conservation reports. The Committee may wish to adopt the draft Decision presented at the end of each state of conservation report.

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## **CULTURAL PROPERTIES**

### **ARAB STATES**

#### **10. Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls (site proposed by Jordan) (C 148 rev)**

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1981

Criteria (ii)(iii)(vi)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger 1982-present

Threats for which the property was inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger

(cf. Document CLT 82/CH/CONF.015/8)

"[...] the situation of this property corresponds to the criteria mentioned in the ICOMOS note and, in particular, to criteria (e) (significant loss of historical authenticity) and (f) (important loss of cultural significance) as far as "ascertained danger" is concerned, and to criteria (a) (modification of juridical status of the property diminishing the degree of its protection), (b) (lack of conservation policy) and (d) (threatening effects of town planning) as far as "potential danger" is concerned. [...]"

Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger

Not yet drafted

Corrective measures identified

Not yet identified

Timeframe for the implementation of the corrective measures

Not yet established

Previous Committee Decisions see page <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/148/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 1 (in 1982)

Total amount approved: USD 100,000

For details, see page <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/148/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount granted: approximately USD 5,000,000 (since 1988)

Previous monitoring missions

February-March 2004: World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM mission; from September 2005 to May 2008: 6 experts missions within the framework of the elaboration of the Action Plan for the Safeguarding of the Cultural Heritage of the Old City of Jerusalem; February-March 2007: special World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM mission sent by the Director-General of UNESCO for the issue of the Mughrabi ascent; August 2007, January and February 2008: missions for the application of the Reinforced Monitoring Mechanism; March and December 2009: World Heritage Centre missions; December 2013, October 2014, February 2015 and June 2015: project missions not carried out

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- High impact research / monitoring activities
- Housing
- Natural risk factors
- Management systems/management plan; lack of planning, governance and management processes
- Alteration of the urban and social fabric

- Impact of archaeological excavations
- Deterioration of monuments
- Urban environment and visual integrity
- Traffic, access and circulation; effects arising from use of transportation infrastructure

*Illustrative material* see page <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/148/>

*Current conservation issues*

On 19 February 2020, a joint report was provided to the World Heritage Centre by the States Parties of Jordan and Palestine, which is available at: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/148/documents/>. The report covers the period from 2017 to 15 April 2019, while providing earlier information as well. It can be summarized as follows:

- Concerning Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Al-Sharif and its surroundings, a number of concerns were outlined in the report, including increased intrusions between 2017 and 2018, lack of coordination with the Jordanian Jerusalem Awqaf, access restrictions, prevention of conservation and renovation works carried out by the Jordanian Jerusalem Awqaf, the closure of buildings, and damage to the structure and furniture of Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Al-Sharif;
- The report provides an update on excavations, and tunnelling around Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Al-Sharif, mainly focusing on underground works in the area between Silwan and the Western Wall. According to the report, excavations have also impacted the Umayyad palaces south of Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Al-Sharif, the area of Bab Al-Amoud/Damascus Gate inside the property, as well as the area of the Qishla building and Bab Al-Khalil/Jaffa Gate;
- The report also provides examples of violations against Christian churches and holy sites since 1967, with a focus on incidents in the past years. It also presents information on transformations and changes in relation to streets, sites and buildings, and on touristic projects that are planned or underway, including the cable car project, demolitions, and construction projects, particularly at Al-Buraq Plaza;
- Between 2016 and 2019, several projects and activities were accomplished by the Jerusalem Jordanian Awqaf and the Hashemite Fund for the Restoration of Al-Aqsa. These include conservation, restoration and renovation work at several features and elements of Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Al-Sharif, particularly at the Dome of the Rock, Qibli Mosque, Marwani mosque, Sabil Qaitbai, Sabil Qasem Basha, Bab Al-Silsileh Mutawada' and the exterior ladder of the Dome of the Rock;
- In accordance with the agreement signed between UNESCO and the Norwegian Government in December 2011 on the project, entitled "Ensuring the Sustainability of the Centre for Restoration of Islamic Manuscripts of the Haram al Sharif in Jerusalem", UNESCO has deployed its assistance to build the Centre's staff capacities in the preservation of Islamic manuscripts. Since the outset of the project in 2011: 14 learning modules were implemented, with over 1,538 hours of training on conservation and restoration techniques, in addition to study tours to restoration centres in Amman, Paris and Florence carried out in 2013. Ten staff of the Centre have been granted permanent positions by Jordan. The Centre currently enjoys a restoration and conservation laboratory with essential equipment, facilities and materials, that were provided under the project. Moreover, UNESCO conducted seven monitoring and consultation missions during the project implementation period, between 2011 and 2015, contributing thus to its effective and efficient execution. Committed to building the long-term sustainability of the Centre and to consolidating the acquired skills, the Government of Norway renewed its support to UNESCO in 2020 for a new phase of the project aiming at making the Centre fully operational and autonomous through the restoration of the premises and the elaboration of a long-term conservation and management strategy. Its implementation modalities are being finalized.
- The report also provides recommendations, including the establishment of a monitoring mechanism that documents and raises awareness regarding threats to the World Heritage property.

Since the 43rd session of the World Heritage Committee, the Secretariat received several letters from the Permanent Delegations of Jordan and Palestine to UNESCO (2 July 2019), from ICOMOS Palestine (3 July 2019), from the Arab Group at UNESCO (5 July 2019), from the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC) (9 July 2019), and from the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific

Organization (ALECSO) (9 July 2019), regarding excavations and tunneling projects that could have an impact on the integrity of the World Heritage property of the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls. The Secretariat invited the State Party of Israel to provide information, and stating that should this development be verified, it would be of utmost importance to analyze their potential impacts on and consequences on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), integrity and authenticity of the World Heritage site.

The Permanent Delegations of Jordan and Palestine to UNESCO expressed concerns in letters regarding developments related to the building of a cable car (18 December 2019), the installation of scaffolds and ongoing excavations at the property (22 January 2020), plans for the construction of an elevator and a tunnel leading to Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al Haram Al Sharif (10 July 2020), and the reported destruction of the historic stairway and the walls of the Al-Yousifieh Islamic Cemetery, which is located next to the property (9 February 2021). In addition, the Permanent Delegation of Palestine to UNESCO expressed concerns regarding plans for the installation of a Ferris wheel overlooking the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls (21 July 2020). The Secretariat followed up with the State Party of Israel, requesting the relevant information.

Following subsequent reports regarding the approval and commencement of experimental drilling connected to the construction of a train route and underground station next to the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls, the Secretariat addressed two letters to the State Party of Israel on 10 March and 22 May 2020, mentioning both the train and cable car projects. Through the letters, it was underlined that, should these developments be verified, it would be of utmost importance to analyze their potential consequences and effects on the OUV, integrity and authenticity of the property, and urged the State Party of Israel, in the meantime, to refrain from any actions that may have an impact on the property's OUV. On 17 June 2020, Israel provided a reply, informing that, in order to safeguard the World Heritage property, tentative plans for a project to access the Old City of Jerusalem by railway were suspended. Regarding the project to build a cable car over the Old City of Jerusalem, it was reported that an order nisi was issued by the High Court of Justice of Israel on 23 February 2021 compelling the State to provide explanations on a series of issues related to it.

A letter was received on 18 March 2021 from Israel regarding the World Heritage Site "Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls", in response to the Secretariat's inquiry about reported excavations undertaken by the Israeli authorities at Al-Buraq Plaza and near the Mughrabi Gate of the Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Al-Sharif. Israel informed the Secretariat that according to its Antiquities Authority, no excavations had been carried out near the Mughrabi Gate and that, therefore, the foundations of the Al-Aqsa Mosque were safe and intact.

Furthermore, in May 2021, letters were received from the Chairperson of the Arab Group to UNESCO (11 May and 31 May 2021) and the Permanent Delegation of Palestine to UNESCO (11 and 17 May 2021), addressing the situation of East Jerusalem, including Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Al-Sharif. The Secretariat followed up with the State Party of Israel, requesting the relevant information.

### **Draft Decision: 44 COM 7A.10**

*The World Heritage Committee,*

1. *Having considered document WHC/21/44.COM/7A.Add.2 and the Annex attached to this decision,*
2. *Recalling its previous decisions concerning the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls,*
3. *Decides that the status of the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls relating to the World Heritage List remains unchanged as reflected in Decisions **43 COM 7A.22** and **43 COM 8C.2** of its last session.*

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## ANNEX

### The World Heritage Committee

#### 44th session of the Committee (44 COM)

#### Item 10: Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls (site proposed by Jordan)

*The World Heritage Committee,*

1. *Having examined Document WHC/21/44.COM/7A.Add.2,*
2. *Recalling the relevant provisions on the protection of cultural heritage including the four Geneva Conventions (1949), the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (1954) and its related protocols, the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970), the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972), the New Delhi UNESCO Recommendation of 1956 concerning excavations undertaken in occupied territories, the inscription of the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls at the request of Jordan on the World Heritage List (1981) and on the List of World Heritage in Danger (1982) and related recommendations, resolutions and decisions of UNESCO,*
3. *Reaffirming that nothing in the present decision, which aims at the safeguarding of the authenticity, integrity and cultural heritage of the Old City of Jerusalem on both sides of its Walls, shall in any way affect the relevant United Nations resolutions and decisions, in particular the relevant Security Council resolutions on the legal status of Jerusalem, including United Nations Security Council resolution 2334 (2016),*
4. *Also reaffirming the importance of the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls for the three monotheistic religions,*
5. *Reminding that all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, which have altered or purport to alter the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, and in particular the "basic law" on Jerusalem, are null and void and must be rescinded forthwith,*
6. *Further recalling the 20 decisions of the Executive Board: 185 EX/Decision 14, 187 EX/Decision 11, 189 EX/Decision 8, 190 EX/Decision 13, 192 EX/Decision 11, 194 EX/Decision 5.D, 195 EX/Decision 9, 196 EX/Decision 26, 197 EX/Decision 32, 199 EX/Decision 19.1, 200 EX/Decision 25, 201 EX/PX 30.1, 202 EX/Decision 38, 204 EX/Decision 25, 205 EX/Decision 28, 206 EX/Decision 32, 207 EX/Decision 38, 209 EX/Decision 24, 210 EX/Decision 36, and 211 EX/Decision 33, and the 10 World Heritage Committee decisions: **34 COM 7A.20, 35 COM 7A.22, 36 COM 7A.23, 37 COM 7A.26, 38 COM 7A.4, 39 COM 7A.27, 40 COM 7A.13, 41 COM 7A.36, 42 COM 7A.21 and 43 COM 7A.22,***
7. *Regrets the failure of the Israeli occupying authorities to cease the persistent excavations, tunneling, works, projects and other illegal practices in East Jerusalem, particularly in and around the Old City of Jerusalem, which are illegal under international law and reiterates its request to Israel, the occupying Power, to prohibit all violations which are not in conformity with the provisions of the relevant UNESCO conventions, resolutions and decisions;*

8. *Also regrets the Israeli refusal to implement the UNESCO request to the Director-General to appoint a permanent representative to be stationed in East Jerusalem to report on a regular basis about all aspects covering the fields of competence of UNESCO in East Jerusalem, and reiterates its request to the Director-General to appoint, as soon as possible, the above-mentioned representative;*
9. *Stresses again the urgent need to implement the UNESCO reactive monitoring mission to the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls, and invites the Director-General and the World Heritage Centre, to exert all possible efforts, in line with their mandates and in conformity with the provisions of the relevant UNESCO conventions, decisions and resolutions, to ensure the prompt implementation of the mission and, in case of non-implementation, to propose possible effective measures to ensure its implementation;*
10. ***Decides to retain the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls on the List of World Heritage in Danger.***

## **16. Hebron/AI-Khalil Old Town (Palestine) (C 1565)**

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2017

Criteria (ii)(iv)(vi)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger 2017-present

Threats for which the property was inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger

The State Party outlined a series of threats in the nomination file, but none were specified by the World Heritage Committee at the time of inscription

Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger

Draft submitted by the State Party following expert meeting in Paris in December 2018, in accordance with Decision **42 COM 7A.28**. Currently under review

Corrective measures identified

Draft submitted by the State Party following expert meeting in Paris in December 2018, in accordance with Decision **42 COM 7A.28**. Currently under review

Timeframe for the implementation of the corrective measures

In progress

Previous Committee Decisions see page <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1565/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 1 (2018)

Total amount approved: USD 60,000 (USD 30,000 under International Assistance and USD 30,000 under the World Heritage Fund budget line dedicated to properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger)

For details, see page <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1565/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount granted: USD 375,400 from the Government of Sweden for physical rehabilitation

Previous monitoring missions

N/A

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Absence of Statement of Outstanding Universal Value at the time of inscription

- Management systems/management plan: Need of a management plan

*Illustrative material* see page <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1565/>

*Current conservation issues*

On 28 January 2020, the State Party submitted a report on the state of conservation of the property, an updated version of which was submitted on 29 January 2021. Both reports are available at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1565/documents/>, and present the following information:

- The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA), Hebron Municipality (HM), and Hebron Rehabilitation Committee (HRC) remain committed to safeguarding the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property;
- Following a meeting in Paris in December 2018 and further consultation with UNESCO and the Advisory Bodies, a revised draft retrospective Statement of OUV (SOUV), a proposed Desired state of conservation for removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR), and related draft corrective measures were submitted to the World Heritage Centre;
- Progress has been made towards the elaboration of a Management and Conservation Plan (MCP), within the framework of International Assistance under the World Heritage Fund. A draft MCP has been submitted to the World Heritage Centre and is subject to a technical review;
- Works to improve the physical condition of the property and the socio-economic conditions for the local community progressed in 2019, but were curtailed in 2020 owing to COVID-19 lockdown and restrictive measures. Projects include the ongoing conservation and maintenance of the Al-Haram Al-Ibrahimi/Tomb of Patriarchs, rehabilitation of infrastructure, maintaining archways in the Old Town's centre, and the adaptive use of significant buildings as an interpretation centre and a tourism promotion centre;
- According to the reports, the property remains vulnerable owing to ongoing illegal activities, with more than 800 violations reported in 2019. Plans for a new Israeli settlement in the old vegetable market (Al-Hisba) within the property, requiring the removal of the historic market building and numerous shops, thereby affecting the urban pattern of the Old Town, are beyond the State Party's control. Other inappropriate developments include excavations of Al-Zatrai house. At the Al-Haram Al-Ibrahimi/Tomb of Patriarchs, conservation works are prevented by military orders, and an inappropriate electric elevator is proposed;
- Efforts have been directed towards preparing a management mechanism to control future large scale development or major restoration, in line with the recently-endorsed Tangible Cultural Heritage law, which prevents any new construction inside the property, and requires Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for any major restorations.

In addition, UNESCO received several letters from the State Party concerning potential threats to the property and the above-mentioned activities, including land confiscation, plans to construct an elevator at Al-Haram Al Ibrahimi/Tomb of the Patriarchs, prevention of conservation work, demolition and other transformations. The Secretariat followed up with the State Party of Israel, requesting the relevant information.

The State Party considers that the property should remain on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

*Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM*

The State Party has submitted to the World Heritage Centre a revised proposed retrospective SOUV, which has been prepared in accordance with the process adopted through Decision **42 COM 7A.28**. The adoption of the SOUV by the Committee is required for the finalization and consideration of the draft DSOCR and draft corrective measures. Furthermore, the SOUV is a fundamental foundation for the MCP.

The MCP project is welcome, as is the State Party's commitment and submission of a draft document for technical review, but the MCP must be informed by an adopted SOUV, and its finalization should progress in close collaboration with the World Heritage Centre, the UNESCO Ramallah Office and the Advisory Bodies.

The efforts of the State Party to undertake activities for the conservation and management of the property, and for socio-economic promotion, are welcome and should be encouraged.



The Tangible Cultural Heritage Law and requirements for HIAs and EIAs for major restoration projects within the property are also welcome. The scale and extent of illegal activities, the proposed construction of a new settlement in the old vegetable market (Al-Hisba) within the property, and other transformations, excavations and projects, such as the planned electric elevator at Al-Haram Al-Ibrahimi/Tomb of Patriarchs represent potential threats to the OUV of the property. In accordance with Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*, details of any significant conservation and development project should be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, and before making any decisions that would be difficult to reverse.

Any action that would cause damage to the property and its OUV should be avoided by all parties and all possible measures to protect the property should be taken, in particular to refrain from physical damage, prevention of conservation projects, and inappropriate new development projects within the property and its buffer zone.

It is recommended that the property remain on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

### **Draft Decision: 44 COM 7A.16**

*The World Heritage Committee,*

1. *Having considered Document WHC/21/44.COM/7A.Add.2 and the annex attached to this decision,*
2. *Recalling Decisions **42 COM 7A.28**, and **43 COM 7A 29**, adopted at its 42nd (Manama, 2018) and 43rd (Baku, 2019) sessions respectively,*
3. *Decides that the status of **Hebron/Al-Khalil Old Town** relating to the World Heritage List remains unchanged as reflected in Decision **41 COM 8B.1** of the World Heritage Committee.*

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### **ANNEX**

#### ***The World Heritage Committee 44th session of the Committee (44 COM)***

1. *Having considered Document WHC/21/44.COM/7A.Add.2,*
2. *Recalling Decision **41 COM 8B.1**, adopted at its 41st session (Krakow, 2017), which did not include a 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 Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (SOUV) for the property,*
3. *Taking note of a preliminary proposed SOUV contained in the state of conservation report submitted by the State Party,*
4. *Takes note of the consultations held between experts from UNESCO, the State Party and the Advisory Bodies, to discuss the proposed Statement of Outstanding Universal*

*Value (SOUV), the proposed Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR), and the related corrective measures, as well as the proposed Management and Conservation Plan for the property, and invites the State Party to continue its efforts to finalize the above documents;*

5. *Decides to consider the examination of a draft SOUV for the property at its 45th session in 2022;*
6. *Deplores the ongoing Israeli excavations, works, construction of private roads for settlers and of a Wall inside the Old City of Al-Khalil/Hebron 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 also takes note of reports regarding new planned projects including an electric elevator;*
7. *Commends the State Party for the actions which are being taken to conserve significant attributes of the property;*
8. *Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, for review by the Advisory Bodies, detailed information on current conservation and development projects, particularly projects which have potential adverse impact on heritage, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines;*
9. *Also requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2022**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 45th session in 2022;*
10. ***Also decides to retain Hebron/Al-Khalil Old Town (Palestine) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.***

**17. Palestine: Land of Olives and Vines – Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir (Palestine) (C 1492)**

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2014

Criteria (iv)(v)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger 2014-present

Threats for which the property was inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger

- Potential construction of a separation fence (wall)
- Abandonment of terraces and afforestation
- Impact of socio-cultural and geo-political transformations

Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger  
Adopted; see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/6245>

Corrective measures identified

Adopted; see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/6245>

Timeframe for the implementation of the corrective measures

Adopted, see page <http://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/6989>

Previous Committee Decisions see page <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1492/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 1 (in 2016)

Total amount approved: USD 30,000

For details, see page <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1492/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

N/A

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Potential construction of a separation fence (wall)
- Abandonment of terraces and afforestation
- Impact of socio-cultural and geo-political transformations
- Changes in traditional ways of life and knowledge system
- Identity, social cohesion, changes in local population and community
- Invasive/alien terrestrial species
- New constructions within the property's boundaries

Illustrative material see page <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1492/>

Current conservation issues

On 28 January 2020, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report and an updated version was submitted on 29 January 2021. Both reports are available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1492/documents> and present progress in a number of conservation issues previously addressed by the Committee, as follows:

- The Management Conservation Plan (MCP) has been finalised, translated into Arabic and disseminated among local actors and communities. In October 2019, it was co-signed by key stakeholders;
- The proposed management structure is not yet in place, and neither the Steering nor the Site Management Committees have been set. The Directorate of the World Heritage Sites in Palestine coordinates and ensures the implementation of the MCP until the management system is operational. Regular coordination meetings and workshops were held and planned for implementing projects and activities;
- Progress is made towards the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) by implementing corrective measures:
  - *Dismissal of plans to build a "Wall" along the property, or within its setting:* Plans to build a "wall" throughout the property remain suspended. The definitive dismissal of these plans is essentially beyond the State Party's control,
  - *Adequate conservation of the agricultural terraces and their associated components, including watchtowers and drystone walls throughout the property:* Implementation of projects to preserve biodiversity, rehabilitate agricultural lands, traditional and hiking paths and dry-stone walls has continued. A training workshop was conducted on rehabilitation of dry-stone walls rehabilitation,
  - *Adequate restoration in place of the irrigation system and the development of an adequate sewage system to protect water quality in the property:* Projects have been prepared for the rehabilitation of the traditional irrigation system. Water quality inspections and maintenance are carried out regularly. Efforts have been deployed to improve the sewage system, but the necessary funds (USD 25 million) have not yet been secured. The responsible authorities have adopted temporary measures, such as banning the construction of new houses without sealed septic tanks and providing inhabitants with low-cost tanks that need to be discharged periodically at sewage stations,

- The project to improve the water supply network in Battir (USD 200,000) has been undertaken, while the execution of a wastewater treatment plant project awaits funding and the implementation of a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) to be submitted to the World Heritage Centre,
- *Protection in place for the property and its buffer zone, and, Management plan and a monitoring system adopted and sustainable management system in place:* A monitoring system has been developed within the MCP and will be implemented once the management system is effective;
- Other activities include festivals, capacity building, rehabilitation, cleaning and awareness raising;
- The State Party's January 2021 report confirms that main activities have continued, though the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has affected ongoing and planned activities. The tourism sector has been heavily hit, resulting in a dramatically-reduced income for local inhabitants. However, a positive aspect is the return of farmers to cultivate the land.

Further, the State Party reports on several threats with a negative impact on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, including:

- "Urban growth within and around the property;
- Illegal construction of Israeli settlements, in the property and on surrounding hills, setting up of pitched tents for the establishment of a new settlement, demolition of drystone walls, houses and rest areas in the property and its buffer zone, the cutting of olive trees, prevention of recovery projects;
- Planning by the Israeli Occupation Authorities for a 632.87-acre industrial zone, covering part of the buffer zone".

The State Party wishes to retain the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

#### *Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM*

Throughout 2019 and 2020, the State Party demonstrated progress in implementing the necessary measures to achieve the DSOCR and to respond to the recommendations of the World Heritage Committee. The 2021 report confirms the State Party's commitment, while admitting that the COVID-19 pandemic has slowed down processes and activities.

The MCP has been finalised but the envisioned management system, which is crucial for effective management, is not operational yet. In particular, it is urgent to establish the Steering Committee and an implementation working group, involving decision-makers from the local authorities and, in the working group, technical staff from the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MOTA), the municipalities and any other relevant institution. It is recommended that the Committee request the State Party to allocate the necessary resources for a site manager and, in the meantime, implement alternatives, such as creating a joint office with MOTA and staff from the municipalities and other relevant ministries, in order to ensure the coordinated and synergic operationalisation of the MCP. This system can build upon the recently-achieved endorsement of the MCP by all stakeholders and upon the management/coordination meetings that have been held with the municipalities and should continue on a regular basis in the future.

Maintenance and rehabilitation projects for attributes of the agricultural landscape, awareness-raising initiatives and local product promotion have been or are being implemented despite limitations and unfavourable conditions. Temporary alternatives and measures have been enacted to counter the lack of funds to improve the sewage system; however, the solution adopted – low-cost tanks – requires close monitoring of the modalities and regularity of the periodic discharge of these tanks at sewage stations and should be considered a short-term solution. It is recommended that the Committee urge the State Party to continue seeking funds for the improvement of the sewage system as a priority.

The envisaged elaboration of a land-use plan and related bylaws is crucial to avoid uncontrolled urban expansion: the plan should be prepared with the full involvement of the municipalities and the local communities to ensure that its goal and provisions are appropriate.

UNESCO received a letter from the Secretary-General of the Palestine Liberation Organization (on 5 September 2019) and two letters from the Permanent Delegation of Palestine to UNESCO (on 10 October 2019 and 18 June 2021) regarding violations and illegal constructions undertaken in and near

the property. The Secretariat followed up with the State Party of Israel, requesting the relevant information.

The return to agriculture is a positive sign and is to be supported so as to ensure that farming continues after the pandemic emergency.

It is recommended that the Committee request the State Party to inform the World Heritage Centre of any proposed plans for major restoration or new construction projects that may affect the OUV of the property, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*, before making any decisions that would be difficult to reverse.

In order to monitor progress with the implementation of the corrective measures in relation to the actual state of conservation of the property, it is crucial that this progress is measured against the inventories carried out during the preparation of the MCP that show the current assessed situation on the ground.

It is recommended that the property be retained on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

### **Draft Decision: 44 COM 7A.17**

*The World Heritage Committee,*

1. *Having examined Document WHC/21/44.COM/7A.Add.2,*
2. *Recalling Decision **43 COM 7A.30** adopted at its 43rd session (Baku, 2019),*
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;*
4. *Requests the State Party to allocate the necessary resources to ensure the operationalisation 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;*
5. *Also urges the State Party to continue seeking the required funds to undertake the development of a sufficient sewage system as a priority;*
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;*
7. *Takes note with concern of the reports about ongoing illegal constructions and other developments and transformations within the property and its buffer zone;*
8. *Also requests the State Party to inform the World Heritage Centre of any proposed plans for major restoration or new construction projects that may affect the OUV of the property, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*, before making any decisions that would be difficult to reverse;*
9. *Further requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2022**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 45th session in 2022;*

10. **Decides to retain Palestine: Land of Olives and Vines – Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir (Palestine) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.**