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Paris, 17 February 2016

Dear Ms. Rössler,

With reference to your letter N°CLT/HER/WHC/303/15/66 dated on 28/7/2015, please find herewith the state of conservation Report of the Iraqi world heritage sites Ashur, Hatra and Samarra, prepared by the Iraqi State Board of Antiquities and heritage.

Thank you for your cooperation and best regards.

Best regards.

Prof. Mahmood Al-Mullakhalaf
Ambassador, Permanent Delegate
Permanent Delegation of Iraq
to UNESCO

Ms. RÖSSLER Mechtild

Director,

Heritage division & director of the world heritage center

Republic of Iraq
Ministry of Culture
State Board of Antiquities & Heritage
World Heritage Commission of Iraq



Hatra-Ashur- Samarra
State of Conservation Report

**Damage to the heritage of the country, is
damage to the soul of its people and its identity.**

Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO

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Important

State Board of Antiquities and Heritage(SBAH) is unable to do any restoration for the second consecutive year in the world heritage sites as a result of the fragile security

situation and the control militants of (Islamic State) locally known Daesh on Hatra and Ashur, Samarra became as advanced line of military operations in Salah Eddin province and some sites became a target for bombing after the warring parties occupied it , which was hit by severe damage.

So the report focused on the previous works of conservation and look whether current military operations impacted on the Outstanding Universal Value(OUV) (Authenticity/Integrity) and monitoring possible opportunities for strengthened towards upgrading sites due to listed on the list of world heritage on danger and that we should put and develop of theoretical plans now in protection , management and conservation and to start to execute after the end of crisis.

Where the State Party and International Community has undertaken with that.

Table of Contents

	Subject	Page
1-	Executive Summary	4
2-	Historical Background	5
3-	World Heritage Sites	6
4-	Hatra	6
5-	Historic Description	7
6-	Hatra within World Heritage	9
7-	Works of Preservation	9
8-	Ashur	10
9-	Ashur within World Heritage	10
10-	Samarra Archaeological City	11
11-	Samarra Archaeological City within World Heritage	12
12-	Recommendation	13

Hatra-Ashur- Samarra

State of Conservation Report

1-Executive Summary:

Control of Terrorist groups ,known ISIS on the world heritage sites in Iraq, Hatra and Ashur, As a result state party, the task of the SBAH has become increasingly difficult as the conflict has widened, and access to many sites has become challenging, if not impossible. Known access problems have been caused by armed men and blockades,

For Samarra archaeological city became as an advance line for military operations and sites there hit by severe damage. and all works of protection and preservation stopped in all sites, due to new situation, Iraq asked world heritage committee in its 39th session in Bon to add the site of Hatra on the world heritage list in danger, due to control ISIS troops on the site,

ISIS continues to bulldoze its way through the cultural heritage of Iraq, releasing a new propaganda video showing its fighters destroying Iraq's ancient Assyrian city of Nimrud (one of the sites on the tentative list since 2000)

The United Nations has previously described such deliberate cultural destruction as a war crime .

Key Words: SBAH, ISIS, Daesh , WHC, The Hague Convention.

Historical Background

Iraq's cultural heritage is rich and complex, dating back millennia. Home to a succession of empires, Iraq claims some of the earliest cities in human history, if not the earliest. Numerous historic sites of civilizations left their successive marks, including the Sumerians , Babylonians, Akkadians and the Assyrian, . They in turn were replaced by the Greeks, the Sassanians, the Persians, the Romans and the Arabs, many of whom chose Iraqi cities as their capitals., and the Ottoman Empire also made its mark. All these cultures co-existed and conflicted, forming something new and special found no-where else in the world.

Today Iraq has four UNESCO World Heritage Sites, the most recent of which was inscribed only in 2014 citadel of Erbil and other Hatra 1985 ,Ashur 2003, Samara Archeological city 2007 .

These sites alone represent at least two thousand years of history. Many more are on the tentative list for future consideration, and the list of national heritage sites is also impressive. The main authority responsible for the maintenance and preservation of archaeological heritage in Iraq is State Board of Antiquities and Heritage , and their regional departments. Throughout its existence, the SBAH has played a major role in safeguarding this heritage.

But on 15 March 2011, the “Arab Spring” sweeping the Middle East reached Syria, Tunisia, Egypt and there are emergence of extremist organizations swore enmity for cultural heritage such as ISIS where they captured on many historic sites in Syria and Iraq, Hatra and Ashur under their control.

World Heritage Sites

1-Hatra

World Heritage Committee Decision

Decision : 39 COM 7B.51

(Hatra (Iraq) (C 277rev)

The World Heritage Committee

1-having examined Document WHC-15/39.COM/7B.Add

2-Recalling Decision 25 BUR V.281, adopted by the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee at its 25th session (UNESCO, 2001)

3-Commends the State Party for its efforts to ensure the protection of the property in spite of the difficult prevailing situation

4-Expresses its great concern about the absence of information on the state of conservation of the property and requests the State Party to keep the World Heritage Centre informed of the evolution of the situation on the ground

5-Considers that the optimal conditions are not present anymore to ensure the conservation and protection of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property and that it is threatened by both ascertained and potential danger, in accordance with paragraphs 177 to 179 of the Operational Guidelines

6-Decides to inscribe Hatra (Iraq) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

7-Also requests the State Party, as soon as it is feasible and in close consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, to develop a set of corrective measures and a timeframe for their

implementation, as well as a Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR)

8-Further requests the State Party, as soon as the security conditions on the ground allow the responsible authorities to visit the site, to carry out a rapid assessment of the state of conservation of the property and to submit the results of this assessment to the World Heritage Centre, for ;review by the Advisory Bodies, prior to any action on the ground

9-Requests furthermore the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2016, an updated report, including a 1-page executive summary, on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 40th session in 2016.

Historic Description

Built in the third century B.C., Hatra was the capital of an independent kingdom on the outskirts of the Roman Empire. Its combination of Greek- and Roman-influenced architecture and Eastern features testify to its prominence as a trading center on the Silk Road. Hatra was named a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1985.

The World Heritage site of Hatra in Iraq has been inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger due to damage inflicted to the property by armed groups¹

**1-Graciela Gestoso Singer, ISIS War on Cultural Heritage and Memory,
University of Argentina**

In 2014, ISIS took over the site of the ancient ruined city of Hatra , using it to store weapons and ammunition, train fighters and execute prisoners.



Fig.1 Shows one terrorist of (ISIS) attacking an artefact with a sledgehammers

A spokesman for U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said reports that Hatra had been razed outraged him.

The destruction of Hatra marks a turning point in the appalling "strategy of cultural cleansing underway in Iraq," said UNESCO's Bokova and Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri, director general of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in a joint statement.

Hatra within World Heritage

1-	State Party	Iraq Governorate of Ninawa
2-	Name of the World Heritage Property	Hatra
3-	Geographical coordinates to the nearest second	N 35 35 17.016 E 42 43 5.988
4-	Date of Inscription on the World Heritage List in danger	1985
5-	Organization responsible for the preparation of the report	State Board of Antiquities and Heritage/World Heritage Commission of Iraq
6-	Date of the report	28/1/2016
7-	Criteria	(ii)(iii)(iv)(vi)

Source; World Heritage Centre, Access Date 15/1/2016

Works of Preservation

Due to its importance as the first Iraqi historic site inscribed on world heritage list(1985) our department sent many of technical mission to the site a lot of preservation woks have been done there, but it is not identical with site distance ,although we erected some infrastructure facilities and monitoring and alarm devices to move the site toward cultural tourism, but all these removed by the terrorists of Islamic State.

Ashur

As you know that Ashur inscribed on the world heritage list in danger in 2003 ,the year of the occupation of Iraq by coalition forces ,where Iraq became unstable, so few works have been done ,such as stop the river erosion by strengthening the jetty by protective cover, and erecting an iron cover over the royal cemetery, although all these work not identical with huge international obligations that must be done in the site in management, protection and conservation.

The influence of the military presence in the city in 2003 significantly clear . Now the city entirely occupied by ISIS troops.

Ashur within World Heritage

1-	State Party	Iraq Governorate of Salah ad Din
2-	Name of the World Heritage Property	Ashur (Qal'at Sherqat)
3-	Geographical coordinates to the nearest second	N35 27 32.004 E 43 15 34.992
4-	Date of Inscription on the World Heritage List /in danger	2003
5-	Organization responsible for the preparation of the report	State Board of Antiquities and Heritage/World Heritage Commission of Iraq
6-	Date of the report	28/1/2016
8-	Criteria	(iii)(iv)

Source; World Heritage Centre, Access Date 15/1/2016

Samarra Archaeological City

Samarra is located on the east bank of the middle Tigris in Iraq, 125 km north of Baghdad was the capital of the Abbasid caliphs.

Samarra expand to an occupied area of 42 km, one of the largest cities of ancient time, Samarra is now one of the largest archaeological site in the world ,and one of the great Islamic cities.

From the outstanding universal value of the city, we can say that Samarra and its importance lies in its being the only Islamic capital surviving still preserving its architecture and planning after the loss of the features of all Islamic capitals including the round city of Baghdad.



Fig. 2 Great Mosque with its height

(Sources; Department of Antiquities of Samarra)

The city still preserving its great mosque, Al-Malwyya mosque and Abu Daluf mosque with their unique minaret in their shapes, design and construction, which influenced the world at that time in their architecture and arts.

From the invention of the city we have distinguished glazed ceramics known as a luster ware, we can comparing this with Chinese porcelain.

Samarra Archaeological City has preserved its original plan and monuments, consequently we find that Samarra archaeological city is the unique and distinguished example of what was built as the capital of a large empire.

Samarra Archaeological City within World Heritage

1-	State Party	Iraq Governorate of Salah ad Din
2-	Name of the World Heritage Property	Samarra Archaeological City
3-	Geographical coordinates to the nearest second	N 34 20 27 .562 E 43 49 24.75
4-	Date of Inscription on the World Heritage List /in danger	2007
5-	Organization responsible for the preparation of the report	State Board of Antiquities and Heritage/World Heritage Commission of Iraq
6-	Date of the report	28/1/2016
8-	Criteria	(ii)(iii)(iv)

Source; World Heritage Centre, Access Date 15/1/2016

Note; Recent events have affected the city due to military operations in Salah ad Din governorate.



Fig,3 Painting Great Mosque walls

The most damage in the Great Mosque , mosque of Abu Daluf and dome of Salibia.

Recommendation

The tragedy of Iraq's lost heritage is undeniable. However, policy options are available for protecting and we propose the following-

1-Activate the international convention concerning protecting cultural property in the time of armed conflict such as the Hague convention of 1954, and its protocols ,after ratified by major powers.

2-The immediate priority is to halt ongoing looting. There are several options in this regard. First, Iraqi capacity to protect cultural sites must be strengthened. And we strongly urge the government of Iraq to strengthen the SBAH.

3- A mechanism should be established to allow foreign governments, international organizations, nongovernmental organizations and academic institutions to "adopt" archaeological sites by providing funding, training, equipment and maintenance .

4- We ask world heritage committee to send assessment missions to assess the damage happened in world heritage site such as Samarra as situation stabilized.