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World  
Heritage  
Centre

# REPORT OF THE UNESCO RAPID ASSESSMENT MISSION TO THE WORLD HERITAGE “SITE OF PALMYRA”

## SYRIAN Arab Republic

23–27 April 2016



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

On 12 April 2016, the 199th session of UNESCO's Executive Board unanimously adopted a Decision regarding UNESCO's role in "safeguarding and preservation Palmyra and other Syrian World Heritage sites", (see <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002443/244379e.pdf>). Following this Decision, the UNESCO Director-General decided to dispatch a UNESCO Rapid Assessment Mission to Palmyra to assess the damages and identify emergency measures at the site and at the museum. This report was also prepared to respond to the World Heritage Committee Decisions on Palmyra since its inscription on the World Heritage List in Danger in 2013. In addition, a joint World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS, ICCROM mission will take place in Palmyra, as requested by the World Heritage Committee, as soon as the security conditions allow.

The mission visited the museum and the archaeological site. The mission noted the important damages at the Museum building, the evacuation of most of its collections to a safe location before the occupation of the site, and the intentional destruction of the remaining artefacts at the museum including the Lion Statue of Athena at the entrance of the museum.

The mission asserted the deliberate destructions that were reported by aerial images and propaganda images when the site was inaccessible, namely the destruction of Cella of the Temple of Baal-Shamin, the Cella and surrounding columns of the Temple of Ba'al and the Triumphal Arch. The mission examined the remaining attributes of the site, mainly the grand monumental colonnaded street, with its covered side passages and subsidiary cross streets, the major public buildings, the Amphitheatre, the Tetrapylon, and the Agora, and several other attributes, and noted that they still stand and offer a strong testimony of Palmyra's urban layout, also in relation with the surrounding desert and oasis landscape. However, the mission could not access the necropolises and the Citadel referred to as Fakhr-al-Din al-Ma'ani Citadel. The funerary towers and the temple of Bel could only be seen from a distance, as demining operations were still underway.

In mid-April 2016, the DGAM staff undertook a damage assessment of the site and the museum, identified some first-aid measures, documented the damages with aerial photos and 3D scanning, and conducted rapid interventions for the safeguarding of the museums objects.

The mission highlighted that the UNESCO actions in relation with the Palmyra World Heritage site should be part and parcel of the United Nations (UN) humanitarian, security and peace building response. As such, coordination and joint planning with the UN Resident Coordinator's office and the UN Country team are crucial.

The mission also saw temporary military camps, and roads, which have been established within the property and its buffer zone, and noted that these have an impact on the environment and the archaeological remains, due to excavation works, and potential chemicals or heavy machinery used.

The rapid damage assessment of the destroyed attributes and structures shows that a certain percentage of the stones after intentional explosions (to be detailed in future studies and extensive field work) were in fairly good shape, in view of future considerations related to potential anastylosis projects. The mission concluded that some of Palmyra's most important attributes have been destroyed and that the destruction and situation at Palmyra as an iconic classical site is a severe blow on the Syrian people and the international community. The mission noted that the remaining attributes of the property still offer a strong testimony of Palmyra's urban layout, and its relationship with the surrounding desert and oasis landscape, and that the Palmyra museum collections have been stored in safe locations.

The mission team noted that the museum requires urgent emergency consolidation and securing of its building (structure, ceiling, windows and openings), completing the evacuation of damaged items and fragments, continuing the emergency inventorying and documentation, and proceeding with the sorting and reassembly of fragments in order to progress with the

conservation and restoration of the artefacts. As highlighted repeatedly by the World Heritage Committee decisions (37COM 7B.57, 38COM 7A.12, 39COM 7A.32, and 39COM 7A.36), under the current conflict in Syria, the mission reiterated that only damage assessment, first aid and emergency measures can be conducted in Palmyra<sup>1</sup>.

Palmyra, which bears very strong symbolic values for Syrians, can be harnessed, to foster dialogue and reconciliation, as well as technical and academic cooperation.

The mission also recommended actions to address the requirements of the World Heritage Committee including the submission by the State Party of a Minor Boundary Modification, and the elaboration of a Management Plan.

**The Mission recommends that the following recovery measures be taken for the protection and restoration of Palmyra, and the follow-up World Heritage Committee Recommendations as follows:**

**I. Management**

Preparation of a comprehensive and integrated management plan to include the boundaries of the property, its proposed buffer zone and desert landscape views and connectivity;

Avoid irreversible actions, such as urban encroachment, impact on the landscape, infrastructure works in archaeological areas, military use of the site, etc. during the process of the management plan preparation.

**II. Boundaries**

Bring to the attention of the 40th session of the World Heritage Committee for review and adoption the boundaries of the property and buffer zone established by the DGAM in 2012.

**III. Future Rehabilitation Plans for the modern city/ Preventing urban encroachment**

In the framework of humanitarian relief, need for coordination with the international humanitarian entities and the national authorities in charge of necessary rehabilitation interventions at the city, to ensure compatibility with the World Heritage status of the archaeological site and its buffer zone.

**IV. International coordination**

Need for coordinated and concerted actions; UNESCO to continue ensuring coordination with the UN system, national and international stakeholders.

**V. Commemoration and Interpretation**

Need to consider elements related to this memory, for both commemoration and interpretation on site and at the Museum at a later stage.

**VI. Recovery measures**

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<sup>1</sup> The World Heritage Committee urged “the State Party to safeguard damaged properties through minimal first aid interventions, to prevent theft, further collapse and natural degradation, and refrain from undertaking conservation and reconstruction work until the situation allows, for the development of comprehensive conservation strategies and actions that respond to international standards in full consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies”.

Continue to abide by the World Heritage Committee decisions by limiting interventions at the property to damage assessment, first aid and emergency measures during the current conflict in Syria.

Harness Palmyra's very strong symbolic values for Syrians to foster dialogue, reconciliation, technical and academic cooperation, through an inclusive, consultative and participatory process.

**The Mission recommends the following specific technical measures be taken at the archaeological site:**

Short term

- Systematic documentation and assessment of all damage incurred
- Defining the first-aid measures, and their order of priority,
- Immediate action to avoid any impacts on the archaeological remains and the environment, by military camps and roads that have been established within the property and its buffer zone
- Refraining from any action that can further damage the World Heritage property of Palmyra through military activity or infrastructure

Medium term

- Gathering of documentation, archives, and studies in an exhaustive manner, involving all relevant expertise, archaeological missions, historians, restorers, and conservationists who have studied the site before the conflict
- Elaboration of a comprehensive approach and an overall conservation plan for Palmyra after the end of the conflict, to achieve international standards and high-quality scientific methods, and establish an inclusive and participatory process.
- Adopt an overall approach, according to international conservation charters and standards, in full consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies;
- Submit all recovery plans prior to their implementation for endorsement by the World Heritage Committee.
- Convene the experts and entities, who are specialised and competent in the study of Palmyra, and technical experts in the area of conservation, to take part in future recovery plans.

Long term

- Conduct the restoration project(s) in Palmyra through extensive field work by archaeologists and restorers for sorting and reassembling the existing fragments, to enable decision-making in terms of restoration and anastylosis.
- Ensure extensive capacity building programmes and on-the-job training for Syrian professionals throughout future projects.

In general, the mission recommends that all short, medium and long-term activities related to the recovery measures at the archaeological site, be coupled with capacity building and on-the-job training of national experts, professionals and technicians.

**The Mission recommends the following specific technical measures be taken at the Museum:**

Short term

- Systematic documentation of all damage incurred (collections, museum storage, museum building) to be completed with detailed descriptions and photographs and by compiling emergency inventory forms;
- Pursue the securing of damaged items by completing their evacuation, numbering of all large and small fragments and reassembling of fragments in appropriate boxes;
- Undertake emergency consolidation and securing of the museum building (structure, ceiling, windows and openings).

#### Mid term

- Restore damaged statues, busts and objects taking into account priorities in terms of value;
- Securing the restored items in safe locations, with appropriate packing in adequate climatic conditions;

#### Long Term

- Restore the museum building and eventually conceive an extension for new exhibition and/or storage areas;
- When full recovery is achieved, consider rethinking the museology approach eventually, by adding to the visitors' experience an exhibition space dedicated to Palmyra and its museum as places of memory.

In general, the mission recommends that all short, medium and long term activities related to the Museum and to its collections, be coupled with capacity building, and on-the-job-training of national experts, professionals and technicians.

### **VII. Other international legal instruments**

- Reiterate the call upon all parties associated with the conflict in Syria and the international community, in particular the neighbouring countries of Syria, to ensure effective measures for the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural objects, in line with the UN Security Council Resolution 2199.
- Encourage the full implementation of the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and urge Syria to ratify the Second Protocol.
- Refrain from constructing or using military structures in or in the vicinity of the World Heritage property, or from undertaking any activity likely to make Palmyra a military target, or inflicting physical damage to the archaeological site.
- Raise the awareness of the military troops present at the site, on its cultural values and on the mitigation measures they should observe.

### **VIII. Funding**

Call upon the international community on the need to support the Palmyra recovery actions with significant human and financial resources, through a concerted and coordinated process, in close consultation with UNESCO, and in line with the guidelines to be adopted by World Heritage Committee.

As soon as the security conditions allow, UNESCO will send an international team of experts, to further work on the detailed damage assessment with the DGAM team, and a joint WHC/ICOMOS/ICCROM Reactive Monitoring mission, as per the World Heritage Committee decisions since 2013. UNESCO will also support all efforts in preparing recovery plans for the Palmyra World Heritage site and its museum.

## **1 BACKGROUND TO THE MISSION**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Based on Decision **39 COM 7A.36** adopted by the World Heritage Committee (Bonn, June 2015) at its 39th session, concerning the state of conservation of the World Heritage property “Site of Palmyra”, the key objective of the UNESCO Mission was to assess issues related to the state of conservation of this property following conflicts and intentional destruction. Subsequently, the 199th session of UNESCO’s Executive Board unanimously adopted a Decision regarding UNESCO’s role in “safeguarding and preservation Palmyra and other Syrian World Heritage sites”, (see <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002443/244379e.pdf>).

Following this Decision the Director General decided to dispatch the UNESCO Mission. The Terms of Reference (TOR) and the composition of the Mission can be found in Annex I.

It should be noted that the joint reactive monitoring mission requested by the World Heritage Committee, to be carried out by the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM, will be conducted as soon as the security situation allows, and UNESCO will send an international team of experts, to further work on the detailed damage assessment in due course.

### **1.2 Inscription history and World Heritage values**

The property was first inscribed in 1980 as a cultural site under criteria (i), (ii) and (iv). In 2013 Palmyra was included on the List of World Heritage in Danger because of destruction and ascertained as well as potential threats consequent to the armed conflict in Syria which had started in March 2011. The Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property (DSOC) from the List of World Heritage in Danger was, however, not yet drafted due to the inaccessibility of the site. No official World Heritage mission to the site took place since 2003. The list of all missions is included in Annex IV.

In 2010 the Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value of the property was adopted by the 34th session of the World Heritage Committee with Decision **34 COM 8E** as follows:

#### **Adoption of retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value**

##### **Brief synthesis**

An oasis in the Syrian desert, north-east of Damascus, Palmyra contains the monumental ruins of a great city that was one of the most important cultural centres of the ancient world. From the 1st to the 2nd century, the art and architecture of Palmyra, standing at the crossroads of several civilizations, married Graeco-Roman techniques with local traditions and Persian influences.

First mentioned in the archives of Mari in the 2nd millennium BC, Palmyra was an established caravan oasis when it came under Roman control in the mid-first century AD as part of the Roman province of Syria. It grew steadily in importance as a city on the trade route linking Persia, India and China with the Roman Empire, marking the crossroads of several civilisations in the ancient world. A grand, colonnaded street of 1100 metres' length forms the monumental axis of the city, which together with secondary colonnaded cross streets links the major public monuments including the Temple of Ba'al, Diocletian's Camp, the Agora, Theatre, other temples and urban quarters. Architectural ornament including unique examples of funerary sculpture unites the forms of Greco-roman art with indigenous elements and Persian influences in a strongly original style. Outside the city's walls are remains of a Roman aqueduct and immense necropolises.

Discovery of the ruined city by travellers in the 17th and 18th centuries resulted in its subsequent influence on architectural styles.

Criterion (i): The splendour of the ruins of Palmyra, rising out of the Syrian desert north-east of Damascus is testament to the unique aesthetic achievement of a wealthy caravan oasis intermittently under the rule of Rome from the 1st to the 3rd century AD. The grand colonnade constitutes a characteristic example of a type of structure, which represents a major artistic development.

Criterion (ii): Recognition of the splendour of the ruins of Palmyra by travellers in the 17th and 18th centuries contributed greatly to the subsequent revival of classical architectural styles and urban design in the West.

Criterion (iv): The grand monumental colonnaded street, open in the centre with covered side passages, and subsidiary cross streets of similar design together with the major public buildings, form an outstanding illustration of architecture and urban layout at the peak of Rome's expansion in and engagement with the East. The great temple of Ba'al is considered one of the most important religious buildings of the 1st century AD in the East and of unique design. The carved sculptural treatment of the monumental archway through which the city is approached from the great temple is an outstanding example of Palmyrene art. The large scale funerary monuments outside the city walls in the area known as the Valley of the Tombs display distinctive decoration and construction methods.

#### Integrity (2009)

All the key attributes, including the main colonnaded street, major public buildings and funerary monuments, lie within the boundary. The tower tombs and the citadel are vulnerable to minor earthquakes and lack of conservation. Since the time of inscription, the population of the adjacent town has increased and is encroaching on the archaeological zone. Although traffic has increased, the main road that passed through the site has been diverted. Increased tourism has brought pressure for facilities within the property.

#### Authenticity (2009)

The key attributes display well their grandeur and splendour. However, the setting is vulnerable to the encroachment of the adjacent town that could impact adversely on the way the ruins are perceived as an oasis closely related to their desert surroundings.

#### Protection and management requirements (2009)

The site was designated a national monument and is now protected by the National Antiquities law 222 as amended in 1999. A buffer zone was established in 2007 but has not yet been submitted to the World Heritage Committee.

The regional strategic action plan currently under preparation is expected to provide guidelines to expand and redefine the site as a cultural landscape, with respect to the transitional zones around the archaeological site, the oasis and the city.

There is an on-going need for a conservation and restoration plan to be developed that addresses fully the complex issues associated with this extensive multiple site and will allow for coordinated management, clear priorities and a cultural tourism strategy and address the issues of expansion of the nearby town.

### **1.3 Integrity/authenticity issues raised at time of inscription**

The World Heritage Committee at the time of the inscription in 1980 made a specific comment as follows: *“recommends that the necropolises and the remains of the Roman aqueduct which are situated outside the fortified walls should be included in the protected zone. The Committee draws attention to the hotel facilities on the site which should not, in its opinion, be further extended.”* This is an indication that tourism development and associated infrastructure was already an issue to be addressed by the site management as early as 1980 to maintain the integrity and authenticity of the World Heritage property.



#### **1.4 Examination of the State of Conservation by the World Heritage Committee**

The state of conservation of the property was examined by the Committee at its sessions in 1994, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2013, 2014, and 2015 respectively.

Prior to the occupation of Palmyra by Armed Extremist Groups, the State Party reported minor damages at the site, consequent to combats within the property and its adjacent oasis. In 2013, the reported damages included the looting of sculptures from the unexcavated tombs especially in the South east and South west of the site, illegal excavations with heavy equipment, looting of foundations stone blocks from the Camp of Diocletian for their use as barriers for roads. The antiquities authority buried the entrances of the underground tombs before the end of 2010 (approximately the beginning of the events) in order to protect them from theft. But unexplored tombs in the Valley of the tombs and in the Southwest and Southeast Necropolis (passage-graves or underground tombs), were exhumed and looted. Damages from bullets and mortars impact to the Western façade of the Ba'al Temple, opening of new trails through the oasis and also from the North West of the cemeteries area to the southern slope of the Fakhr-al-Din al-Ma'ani Citadel (founded in the XIIIth century by the Mameluks), were also reported.

In 2014, combats in the palm groves near the Temple of Ba'al have resulted in several damages as reported by the State Party below:

- Holes from shells and bullets in the southern and eastern walls of the Temple, and in the wall of the wood warehouse adjacent to the guesthouse;
- The collapse of two columns of the southern portico of the Temple;
- Bullet and shelling traces on the southern, western and northern walls of the Temple, and the column in the north-eastern corner of the portico of the fence of the Temple;
- Traces of burning on the southern and eastern walls, on the lintel of the eastern portico, and the southern window.

In addition, extensive illegal excavations in the Valley of the Tombs and in the Camp of Diocletian, some undertaken with heavy equipment, looting of several stone sculptures from the unexcavated tombs have also been reported; the artefacts and contents of the Palmyra warehouse have also been vandalised.

Other sources reported that Fakhr-al-Din al-Ma'ani Citadel overlooking the site was being used for military purposes, and that the whole archaeological site was being used for movements of military vehicles.

The Committee will examine the state of conservation of Palmyra after the damages inflicted by Armed Extremist Groups, at its 40th session in Istanbul (July 2106) for the first time.

## **2. NATIONAL POLICY FOR THE PRESERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY**

### **2.1 Protected area/national legislation**

The site is inscribed on the national register of monuments and is protected under the National Antiquities law 222 as amended in 1999. A buffer zone for the property with dedicated regulations was established in 2007 and submitted to the World Heritage Centre respectively in 2010 and in 2012. Following several requested amendments and clarifications to the buffer zone map by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, the DGAM submitted a boundary clarification and a revised buffer zone in May 2016, which will be submitted for approval by the World Heritage Committee at its 40th session in Istanbul.

### **2.2 Institutional framework and management structure**

Palmyra falls under the direct responsibility of the DGAM World Heritage Directorate, which delegates its day-to-day management to the local DGAM office located at the Palmyra Museum. In addition the mission was informed by letter dated 28 April 2016 that a National Committee for the Safeguarding and Rehabilitation of Palmyra was established to adopt a national action plan for the safeguarding of the archaeological site and the museum. Chaired by the Minister of Culture, the Committee is composed of members from the DGAM, the National Commission of UNESCO and the Syrian Permanent Delegation for UNESCO. Moreover, coordination of safeguarding and rehabilitation activities at the international level is set to be supervised by the Cabinet of Ministers.

## **3. IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF ISSUES / THREATS**

### **3.1 General situation and conditions at Palmyra**

The armed conflict in Syria started in March 2011 has constantly escalated leading to significant violence and degradation of humanitarian conditions. Since then the destruction of Syria's exceptional archaeological, urban and architectural heritage has reached a deplorably high level and has continued to seriously affect all six inscribed properties, the twelve sites inscribed on the Tentative List, and a wide number of highly significant cultural heritage sites all over Syria. Cultural heritage in Syria continues to be damaged by shelling, street fighting, targeted explosions, extensive illegal excavations, and use for military purposes and as military training areas, construction violations, and quarrying, in addition to intentional destructions and inappropriate use of archaeological sites by internally displaced populations.

In this context of conflict and humanitarian crisis, Palmyra was taken by Armed Groups on 21 May 2015, and remained under its control until 27 March 2016. During this period, unbearable violence was inflicted to the population and invaluable losses to the property, and the former director of the site, Dr Khaled al-Assaad was assassinated. Since 27 March 2016, the city of Palmyra, the World Heritage site including the museum, have been controlled by the military with no civilian presence, except for the DGAM staff undertaking the damage assessment to the site and the museum, and first-aid measures in the museum.

### **3.2 Developments in the conservation of the property since the last report to the World Heritage Committee**

Information on damage to or loss of outstanding universal value, integrity and/or authenticity:

In January 2015, the State Party reported the following damages at the site as a result of intentional destruction:

- The Lion Statue of Athena (June 2015)
- The Cella of the Temple of Baal-Shamin (23 August 2015),
- The Cella and surrounding columns of the Temple of Ba'al (30 August 2015)
- The Triumphal Arch (4 October 2015)
- Three columns in the main street/colonnade were blown-up to execute three persons (26 October 2015).
- In September 2015, satellite images gave evidence of the destruction of six funerary towers. The date of destruction is unknown.
- Recent DGAM pictures of the Palmyra Museum show that all the voluminous sculptures that could not be evacuated from the museum, have been destroyed or beheaded. Such scenes recall the ones of the Mosul museum.

In addition, the Citadel has been severely damaged.

What is not known yet is the extent of the possible destructions and looting of other funerary structures, scattered around the ancient city; these include many decorated tombs. Indeed, propaganda photos have shown public destructions with hammers of sculptures (funerary busts) looted from Palmyra.

The mission asserted the above damages, many of which were reported by previous UNITAR/UNOSAT<sup>2</sup> aerial images and propaganda images when the site was inaccessible. The mission examined the remaining attributes of the site, mainly the grand monumental colonnaded street, with its covered side passages and subsidiary cross streets, the major public buildings, the Amphitheatre, the Tetrapylon, and the Agora, and several other attributes, and noted that they still stand and offer a strong testimony of Palmyra's urban layout, and of the splendour of its ruins, also in relation with the surrounding desert and oasis landscape.

The mission also saw temporary military camps, and roads, which have been established within the property and its buffer zone, and noted that these have an impact on the environment and the archaeological remains, due to excavation works, chemicals or heavy machinery used.

The rapid damage assessment of the destroyed attributes and structures shows that a certain percentage of the stones after intentional explosions (to be detailed in future studies and extensive field work) were in fairly good shape, in view of future considerations related to potential anastylosis projects. Indeed, the mission observed that while the explosions inflicted on the architectural elements pulverised important parts, others, such as the cylinders of the columns, fell without being severely damaged; some large portions of decorated elements could also be seen under the triumphal arch.

The mission could not assess the damages at the Valley of the Tombs, nor those at the Citadel dominating the site as the security situation did not allow visiting them.

The site is indeed very large (117,68 ha) and not totally explored (see map, Fig.1 and 2)). However, the extent of the possible destructions and looting of the funerary structures and

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<sup>2</sup> UNOSAT is the Operational Satellite Applications Programme of UNITAR (the United Nations Institute for Training and Research).

decorated tombs, scattered around the ancient city, and the damages observed at the Citadel outer walls (from afar by the mission, through media-released pictures, and lately through the ICONEM laser scan) need to be further examined.

The above rapid damage assessment has been further complemented with a report by the DGAM on 4 May 2016 following their recent field work, and a 3D-scanning survey undertaken with drones, and being completed on site with the support of the private company ICONEM (See Fig. 3 and 4). The DGAM report also foresees proposals for emergency and first-aid measures, which will be shared with the Advisory Bodies for discussion and technical support.

### Situation at the Museum

The mission undertook a visit to the Palmyra Museum that was dedicated to the history of the site, and to some of the artefacts that were discovered through over one hundred years of excavations. Formerly, the DGAM had managed to evacuate all easily transportable artefacts to Damascus, on the eve of Palmyra's occupation by Armed Extremist Groups. The mission noted that the museum building was severely damaged by a bomb and the effects of several explosions, and that most of the voluminous artefacts that could not be evacuated from the museum, have been vandalized or beheaded. The DGAM is currently conducting rapid inventories and damage assessment, and has evacuated part of the small artefacts to safer locations; the work is currently being pursued to inventory and protect artefacts in the storage. No plans are yet envisaged for the evacuation of voluminous artefacts locations to safe locations.

It is noted that the museum is principally a solid reinforced concrete building with stone cladding. Due to the armed conflict, the museum presents several important damages to its structure, showcases, exhibition and storage areas, and collections:

- Exterior walls: bullets traces, cracks, broken stone cladding, open joints, holes and damages in the walls;
- Stairs and access to the museum: damages and gaps, degradation;
- Roof deck construction and covering: several holes of important dimensions;
- Ceiling finish: insulation, piping and electrical systems collapsed/destroyed;
- Interior / structural stability: bullet traces, gaps in the materials, destruction of all false ceilings, lack of stability in several areas;
- Windows: glazing totally broken, frames destroyed/degraded, metallic protection frames degraded;
- Exhibition areas, basement and storage areas: bullet traces, destructions of supports, damages of walls, floors and ceilings; showcases: totally destroyed; the artefacts in the storage have been gathered in one room like a pile of rubble
- Type of damages to the collections: vandalism, beheading, splitting, cleaving, fragmentation, de-contextualisation;

The following emergency actions are currently being undertaken by the DGAM staff:

- Preliminary assessment of the damages (collections, museum storage, museum building);
- Numbering of all large and small fragments;
- Reassembly of fragments in boxes;
- Emergency inventorying;
- Evacuation of the most important damaged collection items and fragments of sculptures to other premises;
- Starting of the sorting processes of the artefacts' fragments

The mission team noted that museum requires urgent emergency consolidation and securing of its building (structure, ceiling, windows and openings), completing the evacuation of damaged items and fragments, continuing the emergency inventorying and documentation,

and proceeding with the sorting and reassembly of fragments in order to progress with the conservation and restoration of the artefacts. It is urgent to identify sufficient funding to cover the expenses of the DGAM staff, and potential experts, to continue the damage assessment and the emergency measures at the museum and the expenses related to the evacuation and securing of the damaged collection items.

#### The modern city in relation to the World Heritage property

The mission was informed that the Palmyra modern city, Tadmor, was inhabited by approximately 50,000 people in recent decades (2005) and that about 500 families were about to return or returned temporarily. National and UN operations are foreseen in the city to make it habitable and will include infrastructure and residential rebuilding projects in the framework of an overall planning process with relevant stakeholders.

The mission could observe a small portion of the outer perimeter of the Palmyra modern city centre from the main entrance road, where it noted that the city was currently not inhabited; the houses show traces of fire and vandalism, and the streets show traces of combats. The city is in the process of being de-mined. It was recently recently assessed by a UN humanitarian mission three weeks prior to this mission..

The mission offered assistance to the DGAM, UNDP and other agencies in this regard, to ensure respect of the World Heritage values and integrity of the Site of Palmyra, and the documentation and protection of any archaeological remains during infrastructure works.

#### Landscape context

The mission team reviewed the landscape context and the overall integrity of the Site of Palmyra. The site was named after the Greek name Palmúra after the Palm trees in the oasis, a meeting point at the crossroads from Europe and the Silk Road. More than 20 palm tree species have been recognized. The site was known as the “Bride of the Desert” due to its abundant vegetation, large scale irrigation systems and splendour setting. The World Heritage Committee had already noted at the time of the inscription in 1980 issues related to urban encroachment: “*The Committee draws attention to the hotel facilities on the site which should not, in its opinion, be further extended.*” The tourism infrastructure (including restaurants, souvenir stands etc.) and hotels have been largely damaged during combat and for any rebuilding projects the landscape connectivity of the World Heritage property has to be respected.

#### Infrastructure

The mission also observed that electric pylons and antennas were destroyed during combat and were currently rebuild or reconnected for electricity supply for military operations and use by citizens who may be slowly returning to the destroyed city. The mission also saw (temporary) military camps which have been established within the property and its buffer zone and notes that environmental considerations need to be taken into account to avoid any impacts on the archaeological site including for any excavation works, or any chemicals or heavy machinery used.

#### Commemoration

The modern city, the Museum and the archaeological site have not only become places of major military combats and of intentional destruction, but also of brutal killing of local people, experts and archaeologists, including the assassination of Khaled Al Assad (1932-2015), former Director at the World Heritage site and museum. These are inscribed in the collective memory due to propaganda images disseminated by Armed Groups and extensive media

reports. Memorialization may take many forms, and is certainly considered as an essential element of post-trauma and post-conflict processes.

#### **4 RESPONSE TO THE DECISION OF THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE**

The mission also reviewed follow-up measures to Decisions of the World Heritage Committee on the state of conservation of the property and measures which the State Party plans to take to protect the outstanding universal value of the property. The mission specifically would like to address the following issues:

##### Boundaries of the property

The original nomination contained a map, which shows the boundary of the property as the walled archaeological site. Following the 2009 Periodic Reporting and the Retrospective Inventory conducted by the World Heritage Centre, as outlined in paragraph 2 above, a buffer zone for the property with dedicated regulations was established in 2007 and submitted to the World Heritage Centre respectively in 2010 and in 2012.

Following several requested amendments and clarifications to the buffer zone map by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, the DGAM submitted a boundary clarification and a revised buffer zone in May 2016, which will be submitted for approval by the World Heritage Committee at its 40<sup>th</sup> session in Istanbul.

##### Future missions

Concerning technical assistance missions and support, the Mission discussed this matter with the DGAM. The DGAM report foresees proposals for emergency and first-aid measures, which will be shared with the Advisory Bodies for discussion and technical support. As soon as the security conditions allow, UNESCO will send an international team of experts, to further work on the detailed damage assessment with the DGAM team, and a joint WHC/ICOMOS/ICCROM Reactive Monitoring mission will be undertaken, as per the World Heritage Committee decisions since 2013.

##### Management

No management plan has been elaborated for the property yet; the current management system requires clear cooperation mechanisms with the Ministry of Tourism, the Governorate of Homs and the Municipality, urban regulations to control the expansion of the modern city, landscape protection regulations, and tourism infrastructure control, as well as strict traffic management measures within and around the site.

Concerning recent management modalities, and as reported in paragraph 2 above, a National Committee for the Safeguarding and Rehabilitation of Palmyra was established end of April 2016 at national level to adopt a national action plan for the safeguarding of the archaeological site and the museum. Chaired by the Minister of Culture, the Committee is composed of members from the DGAM, the National Commission of UNESCO and the Syrian Permanent Delegation for UNESCO.

It will be important to develop an integrated management plan with a solid structure to ensure the integrated management of the site and its museum, including the oasis, the landscape, and the impact of infrastructure and rehabilitation works in the modern city.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the demining of large parts of the archaeological site of Palmyra, UNESCO conducted a rapid assessment mission on 25 April 2016 and examined the substantial and irreversible damage and destruction at the property, which confirmed the damage that was reported in satellite images and propaganda videos, in particular at the Ba'al and Ba'al-Shamin temples, and at the triumphal arch. However, the mission could not access the Valley of the Tombs, the southwest Necropolis, and the southeast Necropolis to assess the destruction and looting of the funeral towers and underground tombs within the buffer zone, visible in satellite images of September 2015 and March 2016. Similarly, the damages at the Fakhr-al-Din al-Ma'ani Citadel could only be assessed from afar and through photos owing to its current inaccessibility. The visit of the Palmyra museum showed severe damage to the building. The mission noted that the building was in great need of emergency consolidation, restoration, securing and refurbishment. The artefacts at the museum that could not be evacuated before the occupation of the city have been intentionally damaged, and the objects in the museum's storage gathered like rubble in one room.

The mission concluded that some of Palmyra's most important attributes have been destroyed and that the destruction and situation at Palmyra as an iconic classical site is a severe blow to the Syrian people and the international community. However, and despite the great losses of Palmyra's most important attributes, the mission noted that the remaining attributes of the property still offer a strong testimony of Palmyra's urban layout, and its relationship with the surrounding desert and oasis landscape, and that the Palmyra museum collections have been stored in safe locations.

The DGAM has undertaken a damage assessment of Palmyra and its museum, first aid salvage, evacuation and rapid and inventorying of the museum collections, and detailed 3D scanning and documentation of the site. The mission commends these efforts and notes that funds are urgently needed to support the completion of documentation, damage assessment and first-aid measures.

It was agreed that the DGAM future plans for the property will be prepared in close consultation with the international scientific community, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies. It should be noted however that there is tremendous pressure from the international community to act quickly to reverse the damage at the property. Nevertheless, the mission recommends that current actions remain limited to damage assessment, documentation, and emergency measures. The property will require detailed studies and extensive field work as well as funding before future considerations related to potential anastylosis and restoration projects could be considered; such plans would require adequate conditions for in-depth scientific work, broad consultation amongst national stakeholders, international cooperation, and close consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies. Only then will the identification of the necessary corrective measures and the development of a *Desired state of conservation for the property*, be possible.

The mission notes that UNESCO is mandated by the international community to monitor and protect cultural heritage through its Executive Board, and its international cultural treaties. Especially as Palmyra is a World Heritage site, UNESCO's responsibility was to assess the damages at Palmyra, and fully engage in protecting and restoring the site through concrete measures. It was noted that the first priority was to make a preliminary damage assessment. This needs to be corroborated and verified by detailed assessments of the different areas once de-mining has been completed and the security situation has evolved to allow the presence of a multidisciplinary mission for detailed damage assessment on the site. Subsequently future actions according to the identified priorities can be planned together with Syria's Directorate of Antiquities and Museums, and Syria's competent archaeologists, historians and conservation

specialists, once the adequate conditions for security, scientific work, and broad consultation are available.

The intentional destruction of Palmyra's iconic elements raises a number of scientific and technical issues. The restoration of ancient classical structures – such as the Temple of Ba'al – will present unprecedented challenges. The possibility of restoration will depend on a careful assessment of what has remained of the original structures, the extent and accuracy of the documentation -which is of good quality- and the original state of the destroyed structures. Future conservation, restoration and protection plans for Palmyra have a social, cultural, and symbolic dimension that goes beyond the doctrine of cultural heritage conservation and will need a debate involving all stakeholders. The forthcoming expert meetings organised by UNESCO with its institutional partners, and other national and international initiatives in this regard, will provide the opportunity to further evaluate the damage, reflect, consult, and consider the unprecedented challenges. Palmyra requires the involvement of the most qualified experts in its history, in architectural and archaeological conservation, and in the ethics of conservation, and with the Syrian communities' and scientists' close involvement under the coordination of UNESCO. Dedicated reflection and planning meetings will contribute to defining the approaches and next operational steps and priorities in addressing Palmyra's restoration and protection.

**The Mission recommends that the following recovery measures be taken for the protection and restoration of Palmyra, as well as the follow-up World Heritage Committee Recommendations, as follows:**

### **I. Management**

The mission notes that while there is no management plan of the site, a management structure exists. The mission acknowledges that the preparation of a comprehensive management plan is a medium-term activity and cannot currently be undertaken. An overall planning approach for Palmyra city has to include the boundaries of the property, its proposed buffer zone and desert landscape views and connectivity. However, the mission highlights that it is of utmost importance that short-term recovery measures in the site or in the modern city do not hinder the future management of the property with irreversible actions, such as urban encroachment, impact on the landscape, infrastructure works in archaeological areas, military use of the site, etc.

### **II. Boundaries**

The mission noted that the DGAM had undertaken much needed work on the Boundaries of the property to ensure full protection with the establishment of a buffer zone. The mission recommends that this be brought to the attention of the 40th session of the World Heritage Committee for review and adoption. The mission assessed that clearly established boundaries of the property and buffer zone will allow the protection of the site including for temporary and future urban plans, constructions, as well as infrastructure and tourism plans.

### **III. Future Rehabilitation Plans for the modern city - Preventing urban encroachment**

Future plans for the rehabilitation and re-population of the modern city will require extensive infrastructure works and probably new constructions such as temporary housing. Coordination with the international humanitarian entities and the national authorities in charge will be crucial to make the necessary rehabilitation interventions at the city, compatible with the World Heritage status of the archaeological site, especially in terms of the boundaries of the World Heritage property, the building regulations in the buffer zone, and the presence of historical remains in the town, that would necessitate salvage excavations. Any encroachment on the archaeological zone has to be avoided during the rebuilding processes.



Indeed, a shared vision and approach in dealing with the city and the World Heritage site will be crucial, not only to protect the site, but most importantly, to envisage a recovery response that integrates humanitarian, educational and cultural concerns, that would mutually reinforce one another and contribute to post-trauma recovery of the local inhabitants.

It is therefore important that all national and UN operations to make the city habitable including infrastructure and residential rebuilding projects are carried out in the framework of an overall planning process with relevant stakeholders that respect the World Heritage values and integrity of the Site of Palmyra. The mission offered assistance to the DGAM, UNDP and other agencies in this regard.

#### **IV. International coordination**

The mission highlights that the UNESCO actions in relation with the Palmyra World Heritage site should be seen as part and parcel of the United Nations humanitarian, security and peace building response. As such, coordination and joint planning with the UN Resident Coordinator's office and the UN Country team are crucial.

Such coordination will concern further de-mining of the archaeological site and of the buffer zone where the necropolises and the Fakh-r-al-Din al-Ma'ani Citadel are located, infrastructure rehabilitation, and any new constructions such as health and education equipment in the modern city of Palmyra in the vicinity of the World Heritage site. The mission welcomes cooperation from the different entities in this regard.

The mission further notes that UNESCO ensures and will continue to ensure its coordinating role in the emergency safeguarding of Syria's cultural heritage, amongst international actors, and in close cooperation with national stakeholders.

#### **V. Commemoration and Interpretation**

The modern city, the Museum and the archaeological site have not only become places of major military combats and of intentional destruction, but also of brutal killing of local people, experts and archaeologists, including the assassination of Khaled Al Assad (1932-2015), former Director at the World Heritage site and museum. These are inscribed in the collective memory due to propaganda images distributed by Armed Extremist Groups and extensive media reports. Commemoration may take many forms in the interpretation of the site and of the museum, and is certainly considered as an essential element of post-trauma and post-conflict processes.

It is therefore critical to document relevant elements related to this memory, for both commemoration and interpretation on site and at the museum at a later stage.

#### **VI. Recovery measures**

As highlighted repetitively by the World Heritage Committee decisions, under the current conflict in Syria, the mission reiterates that only damage assessment, first aid and emergency measures can be conducted in Palmyra. After the end of the conflict, it is crucial to capitalize on cultural heritage in international and national efforts during the recovery phase. As such,

Palmyra, which bears very strong symbolic values for Syrians, can be harnessed upon, to foster dialogue, reconciliation, technical and academic cooperation.

**The Mission recommends the following specific technical measures be taken at the archaeological site:**

### Short term

- Systematic documentation and assessment of all damage incurred should be carried out with detailed descriptions, photographs, satellite images, 3D scanning, photogrammetry and other needed techniques as necessary. The mission commends the ongoing documentation and damage assessment conducted by the DGAM on site
- The mission recommends a Technical Assessment Mission be conducted to undertake the detailed damage assessment of Palmyra and define the first-aid measures, and their order of priority, as soon as the security situation permits
- The mission highlights that in the short term, and until the end of the conflict, damaged parts of the property have to be safeguarded through minimal and reversible first-aid interventions to prevent theft, further collapse and natural degradation.
- The mission strongly recommends that due actions need to be taken to avoid any impacts on the archaeological remains and the environment, by military camps and roads that have been established within the property and its buffer zone, including for any excavation works, chemicals or heavy machinery. UNESCO reiterates its call upon all parties associated with the conflict in Syria to refrain from any action that can further damage the World Heritage property of Palmyra, and to fulfil their obligations under international law by taking all possible measures to protect it.

### Medium term

- The mission recommends that the gathering of documentation, archives, and studies on Palmyra be undertaken in an exhaustive manner, involving all relevant expertise, archaeological missions, historians, restorers, and conservationists who have studied the site before the conflict; the mission considers this expertise as key to any future plans and calls on the international scientific community to collaborate for this purpose
- The mission recommends the elaboration of comprehensive approach and an overall conservation plan for Palmyra after the end of the conflict, when the conditions will allow achieving international standards and high-quality scientific methods, and establishing an inclusive and participatory process.
- Concerning potential restoration or potential anastylosis plans, the missions highly recommends that the authorities consider it within an overall approach, according to international conservation charters and standards, in full consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies;
- The mission highlights that future overall recovery plans would require the approval of the World Heritage Committee prior to their implementation. Preliminary guidelines have been formulated at the International expert meeting for the Safeguarding of Syria's Cultural Heritage in Berlin, Germany (June 2016), and will be complemented at future dedicated technical meetings. The mission highlights the importance of inclusive and participatory processes in the elaboration of conservation plans for Palmyra, and the needs to have them endorsed by the World Heritage Committee.
- The mission recommends convening the experts and entities, who are specialised and competent in the study of Palmyra, and technical experts in the area of conservation, to take part in future recovery plans, through an inclusive, participatory and consultative process.

### Long term

- The mission highlights that the restoration project(s) of Palmyra will need to be conducted through extensive field surveys and stone movements, and will necessitate a long and specialised field work by archaeologists and restorers for sorting and reassembling the existing fragments, to enable decision-making in terms of restoration and anastylosis.
- The mission also notes that the final stage of physical restoration will be the implementation of the restoration works, and recommends that these be coupled with

extensive capacity building programmes and on-the-job training for Syrian professionals and craftspersons.

In general, the mission recommends that all short, medium and long-term activities related to the recovery measures at the archaeological site, be coupled with capacity building and on-the-job training of national experts, professionals and technicians.

**The Mission recommends the following specific technical measures be taken at the Museum:**

Short term

- The mission recommends systematic documentation of all damage incurred (collections, museum storage, museum building) to be completed with detailed descriptions and photographs and by compiling the emergency inventory forms;
- The mission highlights the need for the DGAM to pursue the securing of damaged items by completing their evacuation, numbering of all large and small fragments and reassembling of fragments in appropriate boxes;
- The mission also recommends emergency consolidation and securing of the museum building (structure, ceiling, windows and openings).

Mid term

- The mission recommends the restoration of damaged statues, busts and objects taking into account priorities in terms of value;
- The mission also recommends securing the restored items in safe locations, with appropriate packing and climatic conditions;

Long term

- The mission recommends restoring the museum building and eventually conceiving an extension for new exhibition and/or storage areas;
- When full recovery is achieved, the mission considers that the museology approach can be rethought; eventually, the mission recommends considering adding to the visitors' experience an exhibition space dedicated to Palmyra and its museum as places of memory.

In general, the mission recommends that all short, medium and long term activities related to the Museum and to its collections, be coupled with capacity building, training, and on the -job training of national experts, professionals and technicians.

## **VII. Other international legal instruments**

Concerning illicit trafficking, all intergovernmental bodies, including the World Heritage Committee (July 2016) and the subsidiary Committee to the 1970 Convention (September 2016) should reiterate their calls upon all parties associated with the conflict in Syria and the international community, in particular the neighbouring countries to Syria, to ensure effective measures for the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural objects, in line with the UN Security Council Resolution 2199.

Furthermore, the mission encourages the full implementation of the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and urges Syria to ratify the Second Protocol. The mission calls upon the relevant Syrian authorities to refrain from constructing or using military structures in or in the vicinity of the World Heritage property, or from undertaking any activity likely to make Palmyra a military target, or inflicting physical damage to the archaeological site. The mission notes that Hague Convention covers both

immovable and movable cultural heritage including monuments, archaeological sites, scientific collections, and other objects of artistic, historical or archaeological interest and underlines that it therefore also applies to the Palmyra Museum collections. In this regard, raising the awareness of the military troops present at the site, on its cultural values and on the mitigation measures they should observe, will be very important.

### **VIII. Funding**

The mission notes that the recovery actions will require significant financial and human resources and draws the attention of the international community on the need to support these recovery actions through a concerted and coordinated process, in close consultation with UNESCO, and in line with the guidelines to be adopted by World Heritage Committee.

## **Annexes**

### **Terms of Reference for the UNESCO mission to Palmyra, Syria, 23-27 April 2016**

#### **Mission participants:**

UNESCO

Dr Mechtild Rössler, Director Division for Heritage, Head of the Mission

Ms Nada AL Hassan, Chief Arab States Unit, World Heritage Centre

Mr Hamad Al Hammami, Director Beirut Office

Ms Cristina Menegazzi, Programme Officer, Beirut Office

#### **Background**

- World Heritage Committee Decisions concerning the Site of Palmyra (Syrian Arab Republic) 39 COM 7A.32 and 39 COM 7A.36
- Executive Board 199/Decision 28: UNESCO's role in safeguarding and preserving Palmyra and other Syrian world heritage sites

#### **Objectives**

##### Mission Component: cooperation with stakeholders

- Discuss the overall situation and state of conservation with all relevant stakeholders identified;
- Identify key stakeholders for future missions and follow-up activities;

##### Mission Component: Assessment World Heritage site of Palmyra

- Rapid assessment of the state of conservation with a field visit to the property (Visit to the World Heritage property and its surroundings; Visit to the Museum of Palmyra; Visit to local offices of the site management)
- Review of modalities of operations to assess the situation at the site and preparations for a restoration and rehabilitation programme;
- Advise on any other matters concerning the state of conservation of the World Heritage property in light of the previous Decisions of the World Heritage Committee and in view of the report to the Committee at its 40th session in 2016. Discuss the feasibility of special follow-up missions and develop their TOR;

##### Other matters

Review proposed international conferences and specific outcome envisaged to support the restoration and rehabilitation of Palmyra;

## Programme for the Mission

### Mission members:

Dr. Mechtild Rössler, DIR/HER, Team Leader

Nada ALHassan, Chief WHC/ARB

Hamad Al Hammami, DIR/BEI

Cristina Menegazzi, Project Officer, Beirut

### Saturday 23 April

**19:30** : Debriefing Dinner

### Sunday 24 April-

**9:00** : Departure from Beirut to Damascus

**10:30** : Arrival at Masnaa (Lebanese-Syrian border)

**12:00 -13:00** : Security briefing – UNDP Office

**13:00-13:30** : Meeting with Mr. Yaacoub Hilo, Resident Coordinator – UNDP Office

**14:00 – 17:00** : Meeting with DGAM / visit of Damascus, WH site

### Monday 25 April

Along with delegation from

**DGAM:** Dr. Maamoun AbdulKarim, Dr. Ahmad Deeb, Dr. Lina Kutiefan & Dr. Nazir Awad

**Permanent Delegation of Syria to UNESCO:** MS. Lamia Chakkour

**National Commission:** Mr Nidal Hassan

**6:00** : Departure to Palmyra via Homs

**9:30 – 14:00** : Field visit, rapid damage assessment of the museum

**17:30** : Back to Damascus

### Tuesday 26 April

**9:00-14:00:** Meeting at the DGAM

Meeting with H.E Mr. Issam Khalil, Minister of Culture

**14:00 +:** Departure from Damascus

**17:00 +:** Arrival to Beirut

## Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

### Brief synthesis

An oasis in the Syrian desert, north-east of Damascus, Palmyra contains the monumental ruins of a great city that was one of the most important cultural centres of the ancient world. From the 1st to the 2nd century, the art and architecture of Palmyra, standing at the crossroads of several civilizations, married Graeco-Roman techniques with local traditions and Persian influences.

First mentioned in the archives of Mari in the 2nd millennium BC, Palmyra was an established caravan oasis when it came under Roman control in the mid-first century AD as part of the Roman province of Syria. It grew steadily in importance as a city on the trade route linking Persia, India and China with the Roman Empire, marking the crossroads of several civilisations in the ancient world. A grand, colonnaded street of 1100 metres' length forms the monumental axis of the city, which together with secondary colonnaded cross streets links the major public monuments including the Temple of Ba'al, Diocletian's Camp, the Agora, Theatre, other temples and urban quarters. Architectural ornament including unique examples of funerary sculpture unites the forms of Greco-roman art with indigenous elements and Persian influences in a strongly original style. Outside the city's walls are remains of a Roman aqueduct and immense necropolises.

Discovery of the ruined city by travellers in the 17th and 18th centuries resulted in its subsequent influence on architectural styles.

Criterion (i): The splendour of the ruins of Palmyra, rising out of the Syrian desert north-east of Damascus is testament to the unique aesthetic achievement of a wealthy caravan oasis intermittently under the rule of Rome from the 1st to the 3rd century AD. The grand colonnade constitutes a characteristic example of a type of structure which represents a major artistic development.

Criterion (ii): Recognition of the splendour of the ruins of Palmyra by travellers in the 17th and 18th centuries contributed greatly to the subsequent revival of classical architectural styles and urban design in the West.

Criterion (iv): The grand monumental colonnaded street, open in the centre with covered side passages, and subsidiary cross streets of similar design together with the major public buildings, form an outstanding illustration of architecture and urban layout at the peak of Rome's expansion in and engagement with the East. The great temple of Ba'al is considered one of the most important religious buildings of the 1st century AD in the East and of unique design. The carved sculptural treatment of the monumental archway through which the city is approached from the great temple is an outstanding example of Palmyrene art. The large scale funerary monuments outside the city walls in the area known as the Valley of the Tombs display distinctive decoration and construction methods.

### Integrity (2009)

All the key attributes, including the main colonnaded street, major public buildings and funerary monuments, lie within the boundary. The tower tombs and the citadel are vulnerable to minor earthquakes and lack of conservation. Since the time of inscription, the population of the adjacent town has increased and is encroaching on the archaeological zone. Although traffic has increased, the main road that passed through the site has been diverted. Increased tourism has brought pressure for facilities within the property.

### Authenticity (2009)

The key attributes display well their grandeur and splendour. However the setting is vulnerable to the encroachment of the adjacent town that could impact adversely on the way the ruins are perceived as an oasis closely related to their desert surroundings.

#### Protection and management requirements (2009)

The site was designated a national monument and is now protected by the National Antiquities law 222 as amended in 1999. A buffer zone was established in 2007 but has not yet been submitted to the World Heritage Committee.

The regional strategic action plan currently under preparation is expected to provide guidelines to expand and redefine the site as a cultural landscape, with respect to the transitional zones around the archaeological site, the oasis and the city.

There is an on-going need for a conservation and restoration plan to be developed that addresses fully the complex issues associated with this extensive multiple site and will allow for coordinated management, clear priorities and a cultural tourism strategy and address the issues of expansion of the nearby town.



## List of World Heritage and UNESCO missions to the site

- 2003 Mission in Syria August 1st – August 4th 2003. Report by Prof. Giorgio Croci.
- 2003 Mission to Syria (31 May - 8 June 2003), Mission Report. Simone Ricca
- 2003 Mission to Syria (31 May – 8 June 2003). Mission Report WHC. Véronique Dauge
- 1999 Rapport préliminaire de mission. Mission en Syrie du 5 Mars au 1er Avril 1999.
- 1997 State of Conservation of WH sites in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon. Report of a mission undertaken in December 1997.
- 1997 Rapport. Mission en République Arabe Syrienne du 30 novembre au 7 décembre 1997,
- 1993 Rapport de mission en République Arabe Syrienne. 17-24/12/1993.
- 1978 Compte-rendu de mission en Syrie (13 - 27/03/1978)

For all state of conservation reports 1980-2016:

see <http://whc.unesco.org/en/soc/?action=list&pattern=palmyra>

## Annex V: Illustrations and pictures

- WHC Pictures taken prior to destruction : <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/23/gallery/>
- DGAM pictures of destructions : <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=1962>
- Pictures on the destructions of the Museum: <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=1957>

## Annex VI : other documents consulted

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As'ad, Khaled et Yon, Jean-Baptiste, Inscriptions de Palmyre: promenades épigraphiques dans la ville antique de Palmyre, Damas, Institut français d'archéologie du Proche-Orient, 2001.

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Cheikhmous Ali , Syrian Heritage under Threat, Penn State University Press, Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology Heritage Studies, Vol. 1, No. 4 (2013), pp. 351-366

I.A. Richmond, Palmyra under the Aegis of Rome, The Journal of Roman Studies, Vol. 53, Parts 1 and 2, 1963, pp. 43-54 , Cambridge University Press

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Syria, Problems of preservation and presentation of sites and monuments, UNESCO, Museums and Monuments- VII, Report of the UNESCO mission of 1953 by Paul Collart, Head of the mission Selim Abdul Hak and Armando Dillon, 1954

Veyne, Paul, Palmyre: l'irremplaçable trésor, Albin Michel, 2015.

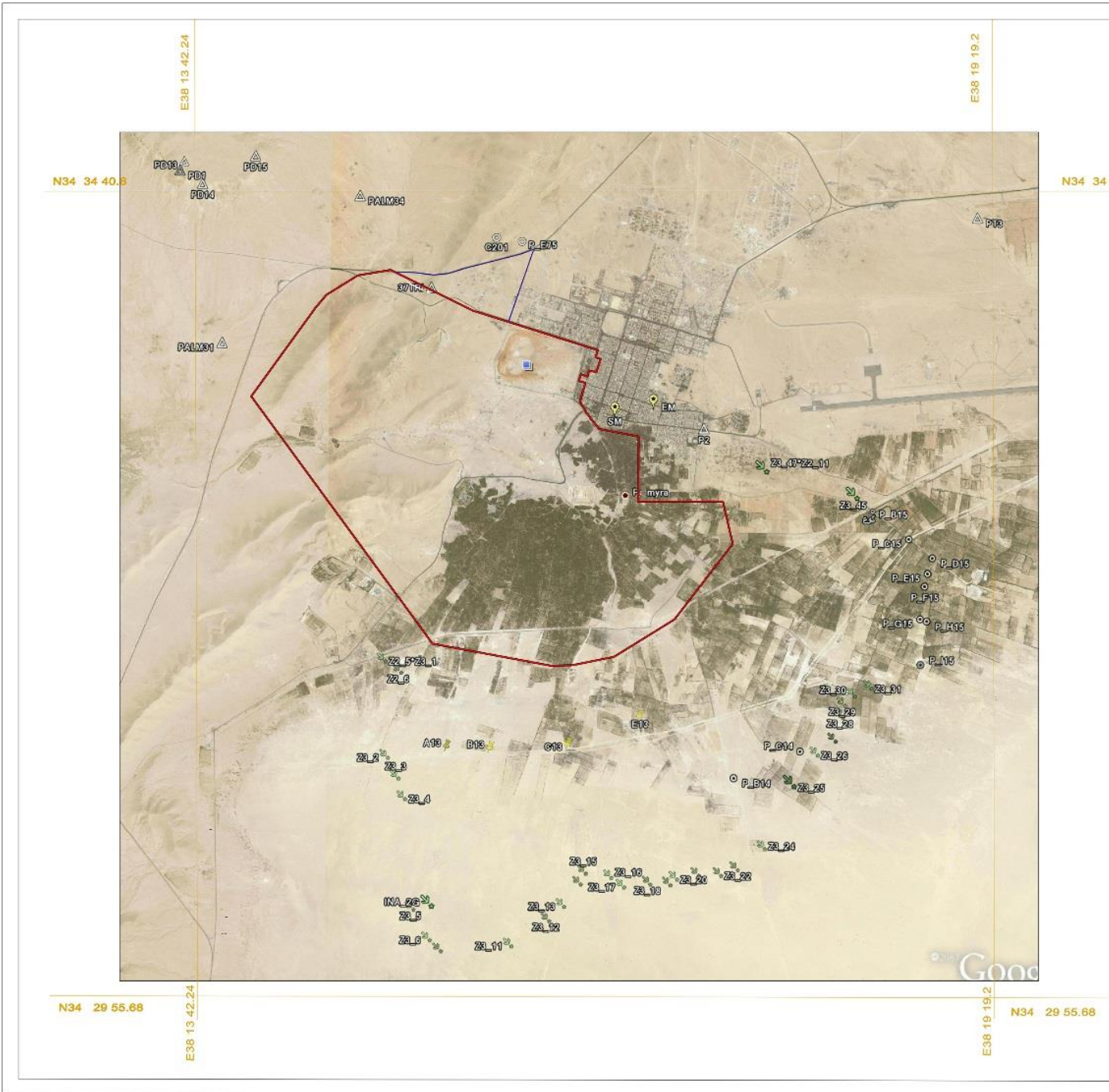


Fig.1 Boundaries of the property (DGAM)

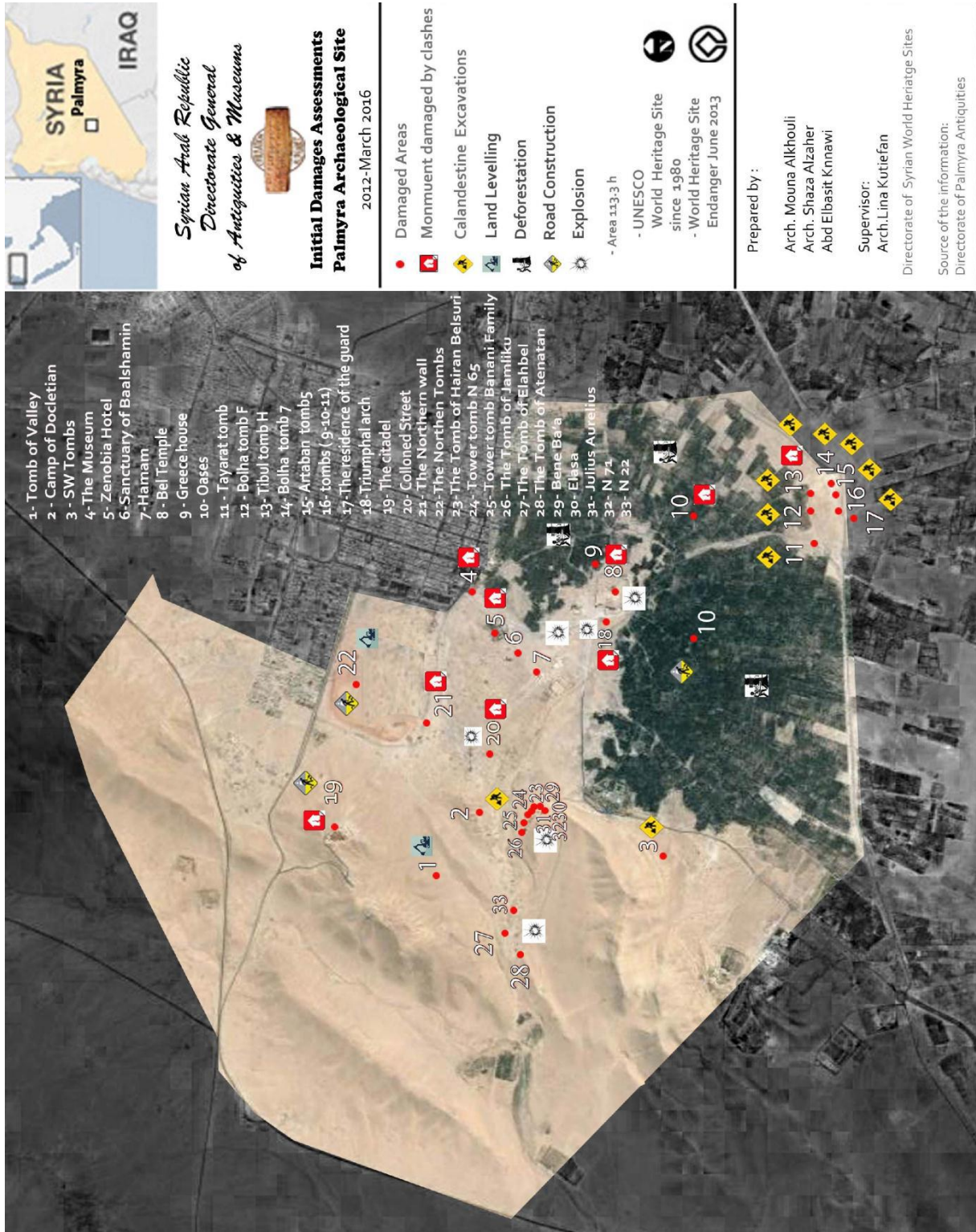


Fig 2: Map showing the damages at the property – May 2016 (DGAM)



Fig. 3: Aerial photo of the Ba'al Temple (April 2016, DGAM / ICONEM)



Fig.4: Aerial photo of the Ba'al Shamin Temple (April 2016, DGAM / ICONEM)

**Palmyra Museum**



Fig 5: Museum entrance



Fig 6: Museum garden



Fig 7: Museum interior



Fig7: Museum collections (evacuated and looted)



Fig9: Current sorting of artifacts in museum storage



Fig 10: Assembling vandalized fragments



Fig 11: Destroyed Triumphal Arch



Fig 12: Overview of the site



Fig 13: Amphitheatre



Fig 14: Amphitheatre





Fig 15: Destroyed Cella of the Ba'al Shamin Temple



Fig 16: Destroyed Cella of the Temple of Bel (Ba'al)