



## Emergency Safeguarding of the Portico of the Temple of Bel in Palmyra (Syrian Arab Republic)

Budget Proposed

**US\$ 150,000**

Duration

**6 months**

Beneficiary

**Syrian Arab Republic**

Category

**Conservation •  
Capacity Building**



In summer 2016, the Temple of Bel, among other important archaeological monuments of the World Heritage Site of Palmyra, was intentionally destroyed. An element of the structure of the Temple, the Portico, remained miraculously standing, testifying to the irremediable loss of this emblematic monument. Its state of conservation is deteriorating; rapid assessments show the destabilization of the structure and the fragile piling of its constitutive stones, which has suffered from both the deflagration and destruction of the monument.

The emergency safeguarding of this structure, the thorough analysis of the available documentation, sound assessment of the damages and its consolidation, is an utmost priority.





## Context

The armed conflict in Syria started in March 2011 and has constantly escalated, leading to significant violence and degradation of humanitarian conditions.

Since the 38th session of the World Heritage Committee in 2014, 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 World Heritage properties, the twelve sites inscribed on the Tentative List, and a wide number of highly significant cultural heritage sites all over Syria. Besides the extensive collateral damage to the sites, the intentional destruction of cultural heritage in Syria reached an unprecedented degree and culminated in extensive destructions in Palmyra, and in particular of the Bel Temple.

In April 2016, a UNESCO Rapid Assessment Mission was dispatched to assess the damages and identify emergency measures at the site and at the museum. In December 2016, when Palmyra was occupied again by extremist armed groups, UNESCO organized a Technical Assistance Workshop with the staff of the Syrian Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums to further examine the technical aspect of the emergency measures in Palmyra, in particular the consolidation of the Portico of the temple of Bel.

Since March 2017, the site of Palmyra is accessible again and allows for the implementation of emergency measures.

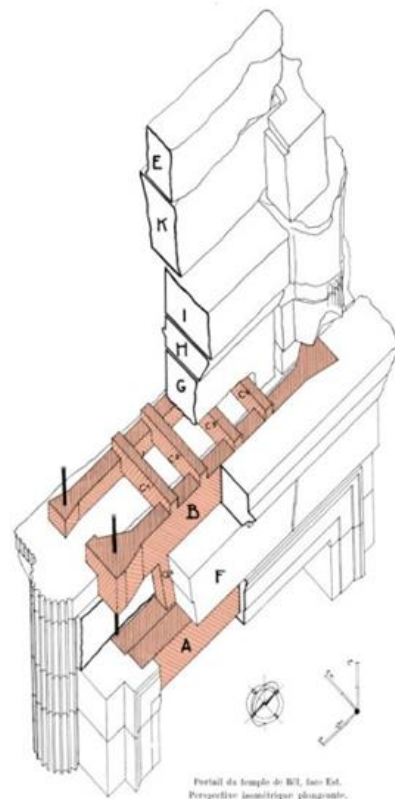


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## Objectives

- 1. Documentation of the Portico and damage assessment.** Undertake a detailed survey of the Portico architectural element in order to define the technical requirements for its emergency consolidation. The survey would consist of gathering and analyzing all documentation available (national and international records, reports, photographic backgrounds, publications, inventories, archives) on the Portico and the archaeological campaigns carried out for its previous conservation, the on-site 3D scanning of the remains and a sound technical diagnosis of the remaining structure.
- 2. Emergency consolidation of the Portico.** Guarantee temporarily the protection and stability of the Portico by implementing appropriate measure for the partial shoring or dismantling of the structure, in order to avoid further damage before any further restoration work is undertaken.



Partiel de temple de Bel, face Est.  
Perspective isométrique plongeante.



# Outcomes & Beneficiaries

## Outcomes

- 1.** The very strong symbolic value of the World Heritage site of Palmyra for Syrians is harnessed to foster dialogue and reconciliation.
- 2.** Further risks of loss are mitigated at the Temple of Bel through documentation gathered and the implementation of consolidation works.
- 3.** Capacities to propose emergency interventions that respond to scientific international standards are enhanced through technical and academic cooperation.

## Beneficiaries

- o National institutions concerned by the protection of cultural heritage in Syria, notably the DGAM
- o National experts who actively work on safeguarding cultural heritage



# Relevance

The project is in line with the strategy adopted by the UNESCO General Conference in November 2015, entitled "Reinforcement of UNESCO's action for the protection of culture and the promotion of cultural pluralism in the event of armed conflict" on how to strengthen UNESCO's response, including through specific suggestions for priority activities. It is complementary to the project Emergency Safeguarding of Syrian Cultural Heritage, funded by the European Union and co-financed by the Governments of Flanders and Austria.

The project contributes to the operational response proposed in the UNESCO Emergency Safeguarding Action Plan for Syria's Cultural Heritage adopted at the High Level meeting that UNESCO organized on 29 August 2013 in order to halt the on-going loss of cultural heritage and prepare post-conflict priority actions.

The project implements the World Heritage Committee Decisions, in particular Decisions 41 COM 7A.21, 41 COM 7A.22 (Istanbul/UNESCO, 2016), requesting the State Party to limit interventions at the site of Palmyra to minimal first-aid interventions and to undertake preventive measures through detailed studies and extensive field work in consultation with the international scientific community in order to define optimal approaches.

It is under the responsibility of the international community to mobilize to avoid further damage to this emblematic remain of the Temple of Bel, which potential collapse would add to despairing intentional destruction of the Temple.





## Visibility

A communication & visibility plan will be developed in consultation with the donor(s), including (but not limited to) the options below:

Visibility material		Placement / Event	Outreach	Audience
<b>Article on the Homepage of WHC's website</b>	Logo	WHC website: whc.unesco.org	Public	Statistics for 2016: 13,340,000 visits 9,735,000 unique visitors 41,650,000 pageviews
<b>Reports to the World Heritage Committee</b>	Logo	World Heritage Committee session	Public; WH Committee members, Observers, NGOs, site-managers, press	Approx. 2.000 participants from 193 countries
<b>Article in the World Heritage Review</b>	Logo	"World Heritage Review" Magazine and "World Heritage Information"	Public	Approx. 20,000 targeted subscribers
<b>Booklet presenting the project as a case study for future emergency activities</b>	Logo	Paper publication (500 copies) Also online on WHC website: whc.unesco.org	Public	Targeted stakeholders (for the paper version) Web statistics for 2016: 13,340,000 visits 41,650,000 pageviews



## Budget

An estimated overall US\$ 150,000 is needed for the implementation of this activity.

These funds will cover consultants' fees, travel and accommodation expenses, international workshop, material and human resources for the implementation of consolidation work, communications, report production, guidance booklet presenting the project as a case study as well as translation in English/French, design and printing of the appropriate information material.



## Timeline

- Month 1 to month 2: gathering documentation and assessing damages
- Month 3: international workshop and definition of the consolidation project
- Month 4 to month 6: implementation of consolidation works



## Contacts

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