

Name of World Heritage property	State Party	ID number
Old City of Sana'a	Republic of Yemen	C 385

STATE PARTY'S REPORT ON THE STATE OF CONSERVATION OF  
THE OLD CITY OF SANA'A, YEMEN – INSCRIBED ON THE WORLD  
HERITAGE LIST IN DANGER

Ministry of Culture - GOPHCY– February 2019

DECISIONS ADOPTED BY THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE AT ITS  
42ND SESSION (Manama, 2018), CONCERNING THE OLD CITY OF SANA'A

**Decision : 42 COM 7A.38**

The World Heritage Committee,

1. **Having examined** Document WHC/18/42.COM/7A.Add,
2. **Recalling** Decision **41 COM 7A.52**, adopted at its 41st session (Krakow, 2017),
3. **Expresses its continuing concern** at the damage caused to the cultural heritage of Yemen as a result of armed conflict, and that the Old City of Sana'a has incurred irreversible destruction, and continues to be vulnerable, owing to the current security situation, ongoing social change and continuing lack of organizational support and resources for both heritage management and physical conservation;
4. **Commends** the local technical actors and other parties involved in damage assessment, documentation and emergency interventions at the property, and **requests** that they restore damaged buildings based on surveys and documentation, and using traditional construction techniques and materials, as much as possible, to avoid incrementally affecting the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property;
5. **Notes** the actions taken to address unauthorized construction of new buildings within the property without prior consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies and **reiterates its previous request** that the State Party submit to the World Heritage Centre, for examination by the Advisory Bodies, further information on these new buildings and on new projects prior to initiating any construction works;
6. **Reiterates** the need for a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission to advise on short-term repair and conservation works, and to contribute to the development of a set of corrective measures and a timeframe for their implementation, as well as the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR), as soon as the security situation in Yemen has improved,



7. **Urges** all parties involved in the conflict to refrain from any further action that would cause damage to the cultural heritage of Yemen and the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property and to fulfil their obligations under international law by taking all possible measures to protect such heritage, in particular the safeguarding of properties on the World Heritage List and those included in the Tentative List of Yemen, and **encourages** all concerned stakeholders to unite for the preservation of cultural heritage in Yemen;
8. **Reiterates its previous call** to the international community to provide technical and financial support, including through the UNESCO Heritage Emergency Fund, for the implementation of the Emergency Action Plan for the Safeguarding of Yemen's Cultural Heritage, adopted at the UNESCO expert meeting in July 2015, including funding for capacity building and first-aid restoration and protection measures; and **also calls on** the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to continue providing technical assistance and support where needed;
9. **Also requests** the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2019**, 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 43rd session in 2019;
10. **Decides** to retain the Old City of Sana'a (Yemen) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

The continuation of the war and the siege on Yemen have led to increasing challenges and threats to the World Heritage sites, especially the old city of Sana'a. This has caused the deterioration of the economic and social situation and the lack of resources. This has caused the termination of support and funding for development projects and maintenance and corrective measures to improve the general situation of the old city of Sana'a.

The old city of Sana'a, as a world heritage site in danger, is still facing many challenges and threats. Although the frequency of air strikes on the capital decreased significantly during the year 2018, However, the city is still threatened due to the Political disagreement still exist in Yemen and the war did not stop completely, the coalition aircraft is still bombing some sites around the old city, even at intervals that lead in turn to increase the damage to the old buildings already affected by the previous bombing that targeted three neighborhoods inside the Old City since the start of the war so far, Which has weakened the structure of the old buildings, especially those surrounding the centers of bombings resulting from the air strikes in (Al-Qassimi and Alfolihi neighborhoods, Madrassa and Al-Bakiria neighborhoods) In addition to Bahr Rajraj neighborhood, which is located along the southern part of the city wall parallel to the ALordey Compound, which was subjected to heavy air strikes during the war years, the southern wall and buildings facing it.

However, in accordance with its obligations and limited resources and financial resources, the State party has not been able to take any measures except in Al-Qasimi. The rest of the buildings in the neighborhoods that have been bombed are still intact and some buildings are threatened to collapse at any moment. Some residents of al-Falihi and al-Qasimi are still displaced outside their destroyed homes.

The deteriorating economic situation resulting from the war and the siege contributed to the expansion of the market area towards some residential buildings as an economic alternative to the population due to the interruption of salaries, but the State party was able to reduce this expansion relatively through some awareness programs in addition to issuing demolition orders for serious violations that does not comply with traditional building materials and building Character. Training courses were also organized for staff Traditional builders and the neighborhoods chiefs .

The Ministry of Culture has contributed through the Heritage and Cultural Development Fund, local community and the local authority with some limited funds for the restoration of some of the damaged monuments and buildings.

The State Party has reactivated the high committee for old city of Sana'a protection, headed by HE the Presidential Office Director, assisted by HE Minister of Culture and Sana'a Mayor, membership of GOPHCY chairman and other related stakeholders, the main objectives of the committee are ; awareness rising, fund seeking, encourage community participation and monitoring tool, for recovered safeguarding of the old city of Sana'a, it held several meetings with deferent stakeholders including private sector representatives.

After continuous meetings of the High Commission for the preservation of old Sana'a from January 2017 to April 2018 and stand in front of the risks that hit the historic city from the destruction and distortion of its distinctive architectural character

Under the patronage of the Chairman of the Supreme Committee for the Preservation of Historic Cities HE Dr. Abdul Aziz Saleh bin Habtoor, Prime Minister and under the theme "Together to preserve Sana'a, history ,"

The Ministry of Culture organized in cooperation with the concerned authorities the first national symposium for the preservation of Sana'a heritage from 29 - 30 July 2018.

The Symposium, which is attended by several government agencies, aims at restoring and ensuring sustainable protection of the old city of Sana'a as a world human heritage at danger.

It also aims at empowering the GOPHCY and enhance its role and national tasks in preserving the old city of Sana'a in an effective and sustainable manner and building a common vision on the strategies necessary to confront the process of destroying the Yemeni heritage in needed of developments and community aggression. , As well as the establishment of full cooperation between civil society and various institutions in the development programs and preservation of the old city of Sana'a, as well as working to raise the level of cooperation between the concerned authorities.

**The Symposium focuses on two topics :**

**The first Topic:** the foundations of sustainable preservation towards activating the role of GOPHCY as a national institution concerned with the preservation of cultural heritage, institutional and legal construction, securing financial and technical resources.

**The Second Topic:** Together towards an integrated strategy to preserve the old city of Sana'a, through partners and their role in the conservation process, the role of central and local authority, the importance of awareness and the role of the institutions concerned.

**The Ministry has also reviewed** the executive bylaw t of Law No. (16) for the year (2013), which have been prepared and funded by the Social Fund for Development will be submitted soon to the Prime Minister for adoption

**As a State Party that has ratified** the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage of 1972, we are committed to protecting the World Heritage sites and the sites listed in the preliminary list in accordance with the Yemeni Law for the Protection of Cities and Historical Sites, the Antiquities Law and other applicable laws. However, according to all clear evidence, The Yemeni cultural heritage sites, including the old city of Sana'a, were damaged by the Arab collation airstrikes

The State party therefore calls upon UNESCO, relevant international organizations and the international community to carry out their duties to pressure the coalition countries to stop targeting the Yemeni heritage and to assume full responsibility and physical and moral compensation for all damage caused by coalition according to the international laws, charters and treaties.

The State party confirms that it is doing everything in its power and in accordance with the available resources and in the context of war, siege and lack of resources to reduce and protect the phenomenon of indiscriminate construction within the historical city. However, there have been a number of cases as a result of the urgent need and the country's low economic situation. Some owners of buildings have been reconstructed inappropriately and some shops have been created to meet the demands of social life in the disastrous circumstances of the country.

**The State needs urgent support** to carry out the following activities that support the institutional and legislative framework of the preservation process in the city:

- Preparing and operating the guidelines for restoration, construction and rehabilitation within the framework of historical cities, as an important scientific document
- Completion of the updating of the database of field survey and documentation of buildings and spaces in the old city of Sana'a.
- The first phase of preparation of conservation and development plan for the old city of Sana'a. Implementation of the second phase of the conservation and development plan for the old city of Sanaa.
- Management plan for the historic city.
- Implementation of restoration projects and urgent maintenance of damaged buildings.

## 2. Response from the State Party to the World Heritage Committee's Decision, paragraph by paragraph

- 3) ***Expresses*** its continuing concern at the damage caused to the cultural heritage of Yemen as a result of armed conflict, and that the Old City of Sana'a has incurred irreversible destruction, and continues to be vulnerable, owing to the current security situation, ongoing social change and continuing lack of organizational support and resources for both heritage management and physical conservation;

The old Sana'a is still facing many challenges and threats, especially the armed conflict and the war that have caused a deterioration in the social and economic situation, Where the bombing of the three sites inside the city and in its surrounding remains without any intervention, except for what has been implemented in the neighborhood of Qassimi the protection works for 3 buildings and many of the damaged buildings are threatened to fall at any moment, especially in Alfolihi and AL -Madrassa neighborhoods, Moreover, absence of national resources, and termination of international supports have created major economic obstacles for conservation process.

Currently, GOPHCY has lack of basic mains and continuing lack of organizational support, it gets real impediments to fulfill its obligations, unless to be reinforced by urgent international supports hopefully.

- 4) ***Commends*** the local technical actors and other parties involved in damage assessment, documentation and emergency interventions at the property, and requests that they restore damaged buildings based on surveys and documentation, and using traditional construction techniques and materials, as much as possible, to avoid incrementally affecting the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property;

The Ministry of Culture, represented by the General Organization for the Preservation of Historic Cities (GOPHCY) and despite the financial constraints and difficulties, has taken some conservation measures according to the available resources and limited funding received by UNESCO and some local community organizations and the local council. UNESCO and the World Heritage Center have funded a small project to inventory and assess the damage and was carried out by Center for architectural studies and training (CATS). (GOPHCY) is still awaiting suitable funding for the implementation of the rescue intervention according to the results of this inventory.

- 5) ***Notes*** the actions taken to address unauthorized construction of new buildings within the property without prior consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies and reiterates its previous request that the State Party submit to the World Heritage Centre, for examination by the Advisory Bodies, further information on these new buildings and on new projects prior to initiating any construction works;

The State party has been exerting strenuous efforts to deal with non-permitted new construction and restoration intervention in buildings (violations) within the city. Several preventive measures have been taken to limit unlicensed construction and the issuance of several judicial orders against violators. The state party in cooperation with the Social Fund (SFD), has also undertaken a training course for the Traditional builders and the neighborhoods chiefs, the Traditional builders were granted licenses to practice the profession within the city, the State party can control the violating Traditional builders and prevent them from working within the city.

Also, the state party is seeking to carry out a preliminary study and an assessment of the unlicensed buildings, then to provide the World Heritage Center and the relevant advisory bodies with a copy of that study to seek advice on possible solutions to address these violations. However, the financial possibilities prevent the implementation of this study.

This evaluation study will target the non-serious violations that resulted from the economic and social needs of the city's residents. Serious violations, which did not exceed 10 cases during the past year, were issued judicial orders to be removed and three cases were removed.

The state party is still following the execution of judicial orders to remove the rest.

- 6) *Reiterates*** the need for a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission to advise on short-term repair and conservation works, and to contribute to the development of a set of corrective measures and a timeframe for their implementation, as well as the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR), as soon as the security situation in Yemen has improved;

The State party concerned persists in continuing to consult with the World Heritage Center and advisory bodies on restoration and rehabilitation process to ensure respect for international preservation standards. The concerned party also thanks UNESCO for its training of 3 staff from GOPHCY, one from the Antiquities Authority (GOAM) and three from the Social Fund for Development in Amman, Jordan, Qualifications in the field of three-dimensional photography (Photo geometry) during the past year and hope to continue such training courses for the cadres of the GOPHCY to obtain local expertise in various technical fields that contribute to preserving the historical monuments in Yemen. And reiterates its request to provide urgent and rapid financial support to save the buildings of the city and we would like to point out that the work of restoration or study is not enough to save the city, the magnitude of the suffering is very large and that the State party strive after the end of the war and eliminate the effects left by the war inside the city to remove City from the danger list.

**7) Urges** *all parties involved in the conflict to refrain from any further action that would cause damage to the cultural heritage of Yemen and the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property and to fulfil their obligations under international law by taking all possible measures to protect such heritage, in particular the safeguarding of properties on the World Heritage List and those included in the Tentative List of Yemen, and encourages all concerned stakeholders to unite for the preservation of cultural heritage in Yemen;*

The State party expresses its concern at the continued air strikes bombing despite the low level of bombing lately. However, the threat remains. Coalition forces continue to bombard the Old City from time to time, exacerbating the problem of buildings damaged by the previous airstrikes inside and around the city. The State party call upon the international community and the relevant bodies, especially UNESCO, to pressure the parties involved in the conflict to neutralize the Yemeni culture heritage sites including old city of Sana'a and not to employ it politically.

**8) Reiterates** *its previous call to the international community to provide technical and financial support, including through the UNESCO Heritage Emergency Fund, for the implementation of the Emergency Action Plan for the Safeguarding of Yemen's Cultural Heritage, adopted at the UNESCO expert meeting in July 2015, including funding for capacity building and first-aid restoration and protection measures; and also calls on the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to continue providing technical assistance and support where needed;*

The state party, appreciates WH committee appeal's on the international community to provide urgent financial support for the implementation of the Emergency Action Plan for the Safeguarding of Yemen's Cultural heritage, adopted at the UNESCO Expert meeting in July 2015, including funding for capacity building and first-aid restoration and protection measures, and also calls on the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to continue providing the State Party with technical assistance and support where needed, and hope that all international concerned bodies to facilitate urgent reception of that supports;

The state party, is in urgent need of international community support, ,we are depending too much in the role of the World Heritage Center, and Advisory Bodies and donors , to assist and support the state party in any way possible for priority conservation, management measures and capacity building programmes, as well funding emergency interventions, that should be taken during this period of time , because the most of the world culture heritage sites and tentative listed of Yemen are facing severe deterioration, due to the war, armed conflict, erosion, and natural aspect. The local staff and experts could implement any necessary actions, if there is a serious generous support from the international communities and organizations.

We request and hope of the World Heritage Center to secure funding for the participation of specialists from Yemen in the regular meetings of the World

Heritage Committee y, to enable the state party to participate and meet experts and specialists, and to take advantage of opportunities to get support from international organizations and communities, and presents a true picture of the development of the world's cultural heritage on the ground Especially at the present time, in which the State party is confronted with many threats that have a significant impact on the process of protecting the heritage of Yemen in the context of war, siege and lack of resources.

**9) Also requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2019, 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 43rd session in 2019;**

### **3. Activates implemented during the year 2018**

**The period 2018 to 2019. Many activities within the old city of Sana'a according to the available possibilities as follows:**

**The State party is keen to raise the level of awareness** among the authorities and the local community, and to encourage community participation The Ministry of Culture has supported and involved some community organizations in setting up awareness campaigns and raising awareness of the importance of preserving the cultural heritage as follows:

**(lovers of Antiquities and Heritage Organization)** and the Tourism Promotion Board in coordination with the Education Office, GOAM, and GOPHCY. implemented A national awareness campaign targeting students in schools under the slogan "Preserving our monuments and cultural heritage is the responsibility of all"

Enhancing the role of the curriculum to realize the greatness of Yemen's history and heritage and to enshrine the values of preserving it.

**The campaign consists of 3 phases in the capital's secretariat:**

- The first phase of the period from 7 to 18 April 2018 in the 3 districts of old Sana'a Altahrir and Shawob in 10 schools
- The second phase of the period from 4 to 26 December 2018 in 4 districts for 15 schools
- The third phase will be in the other districts for 45 schools for three months, February, March and April 2019
- Radio Flashes No. 15 Flash awareness and community message targeting all groups of society via radio
- production of 10 television cartons flashes as awareness for children

**Belqees Throne Foundation for Development, Tourism & Heritage**  
**18/08/2018**

Al-Madarah second Festival in Sana'a, under the slogan "Together to keep Old Sanaa in the World Heritage List. The dangers that threaten the old city of Sana'a, Zabid and Shibam Hadramout from the World Heritage List



**The State party represented by the Minister of Culture** held a number of meetings and consultations with several governmental bodies, headed by the Chamber of Deputies, the Council of Ministers, Ministries, Governors and relevant authorities, in order to acquaint them with the problems and difficulties facing the Ministry in the process of preserving the cultural heritage and historic cities listed in the World Heritage List (Sanaa - Zabid - Shibam) and the historical and archaeological sites, sites and monuments on UNESCO's tentative list and discuss ways of cooperation. The preservation of historic cities, sites and monuments is considered to be a complex process. This is in terms of quality and hierarchy. The preservation also means revival in future and complete effectiveness with modern life. This necessarily requires the concerned authorities to have a complementary work and put efforts to strengthen institutional relationship.

Meeting with Minister of Water and Environment discussing number of topics related to joint work between the two ministries. The meeting dealt with the efforts exerted in the preparation of the study on the replacement of the sewage network in Sana'a, especially after parts of the main transmission lines of the network have been destroyed as a result of the end of its life.

Continuous field visits to the old city of Sana'a to see the state of conservation. Field visits and meetings with the Minister of Tourism and the Governor of Sana'a Governorate to view the construction works and the new buildings next to Dar Al-Hajar and their conformity with the specifications and their impact on the historical landmark.

### 1) **Studies and Field Surveys.**

No	Activities	Implemented By	Funded By	Date
1	Inventory Damage to Buildings Affected by The Bombing	GOPHCY(CATS)	UNESCO Through SFD	July 2017
2	An emergency study of 8 buildings that are vulnerable to collapse due to vibration and weather conditions	GOPHCY	Local Council	Feb 2018
3	study for the restoration of one of GOPHCY building (Sanani Heritage House) Al - Abhar	GOPHCY	NGO	March 2018
4	An integrated study for the restoration of the outer walls of the Alsilah Palace, east of the Old City	GOPHCY	Government	Aug 2018
5	Preparing the executive plan for the project to Inventory the damage to the infrastructure projects of the old city of Sana'a	GOPHCY	UNESCO Through SFD	20 Jan 2019
6	San'aani Heritage House			

## 2) Training and Qualification of Staff.

No	Activities	Implemented By	Funded By	Date
1	The first training course for the qualification of the cadre involved in the inventory of damage	GOPHCY(CATS)	UNESCO Through SFD	July 2017
2	Second training course for staff working in heritage (GOPHCY & Tourism Promotion staff)	GOPHCY(CATS)	GOPHCY	Jan 2018
3	The third training course for the Inspection department staff working in old Sana'a	GOPHCY(CATS)	GOPHCY	March 2018
4	Training course for the Traditional builders and the neighborhoods chiefs	GOPHCY(CATS)	SFD	Oct 2018
5	A training course for the young graduate engineers who were recently joined to the Inspection department	GOPHCY(CATS)	GOPHCY	Jan 2019
6	Training course for teams participating in the inventory of the damage to the cities registered in the World Heritage List (Sana'a -Zabid - Shibam) with the city of Aden).	GOPHCY(CATS)	SFD UNESCO Through SFD – Project Funded By EU	Dec 2018

## 3) restoration work and rescue interventions.

No	Activities	Implemented By	Funded By	Date
1	Restoration works of 8 houses in Old Sana'a	GOPHCY	Local Authority -Old Sana'a	March 2018.
2	The implementation of the rapid intervention works of the buildings of Al-Qasimi according to the study submitted to UNESCO protection works of ( Al-Watari and Al-Sayighi houses), in addition to Restoration works of Al-Khamisi house. The three buildings were the worst affected.	GOPHCY	UNESCO	May to August 2017.
3	Rehabilitation of the North Quay for Al-Qasimi Buildings and the work of the Rainwater Harvesting Project to irrigate Bustan Brom north of the buildings mentioned above	GOPHCY	UNESCO Doha Office through SFD	October 2017 to March 2018
4	The Restoration of One of GOPHCY Building (Sanani Heritage House) Al - Abhar	GOPHCY	NGO -Private Sector	Oct 2018

**4. Other current conservation issues identified by the State(s) Party(ies) which may have an impact on the property's Outstanding Universal Value**

- Collation forces airstrikes
- Armed conflict escalation
- Lack of resources
- Socioeconomic situation deterioration
- Natural factors and decay

4.1. If no appropriate action wouldn't be taken immediately, the deterioration could have escalated in the old city of Sana'a.

4.2. Urgent actions from the international community and organization concerned, are essential;

**5. In conformity with paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, please describe any potential major restorations, alterations and/or new construction(s) within the protected area (core zone and buffer zone and/or corridors) that might be envisaged.**

Non

**6. Public access to the state of conservation report**

State Party, doesn't mind to upload the report for public access.

Signature of The Authority

**Abdullah Ahmed Alkebsi**

**Minister of Culture**

Sana'a February 2019

The image shows a handwritten signature in blue ink over a circular official stamp. The stamp is blue and contains the emblem of the State of Yemen (a falcon) in the center. The text around the emblem is in Arabic: 'الجمهورية اليمنية' (Republic of Yemen) at the top and 'وزارة الثقافة' (Ministry of Culture) at the bottom.