Ministry Of Culture

Directorate General of Antiquities & Museums

STATE PARTY REPORT

On The State of Conservation of The

Syrian Cultural Heritage Sites
(Syrian Arab Republic)

For Submission By
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INTRODUCTION

This Progress Report on the State of Conservation of the Syrian World Heritage properties is:

- Responds to the World Heritage request during the 43rd session of the world heritage committee in Baku 2019
- Provides an update to the December 2018 State of Conservation report.
- Prepared in to be present on the previous World Heritage Committee meeting 44e session 2020.

Information Sources

This report represents a collation of available information as of 31 December 2019, and is based on available information from the DGAM braches around Syria, taking inconsideration that with ground access to the Ancient Villages in North of Syria extremely limited for antiquities experts, extent of the damage cannot be assessment right now.
Name of World Heritage property: **CRAC DES CHEVALIERS & QAL’AT SALAH EL-DIN**  
Date of inscription on World Heritage List: 2006

**Crac Des Chevaliers**

The join Syrian-Hungarian expedition started this year the First phase of the master plan project financed by UNESCO/WHC, the mission this year finished the following activities:

- **Historical, Archaeological & Functional Studies:**

  The team started from the church tower (No. 20) in the inner castle, because its surface had been isolated in 2017 by the joint Syrian-Hungarian mission, many excavations and diggings (necessary for study) were conducted on a surface the tower and its interior and the surrounding area.

![Aerial photo of the Crac des Chevaliers with the church indicated with yellow. (B. Takáts)](image)

- **Establishing Topographical Network & Drawings**

  The team Created a network of topographical points to be used in measurements and surveying work in the castle, these references points will be compatible with the local coordinates system and cover all the area of the castle.
Establishing the topographical network

Architectural Studies & Designs

Establishing Coding System for the buildings of the castle that will forms the basis upon which all subsequent studies will depend.

Compared the studies conducted by "Paul Deschamps", "Tomas Biller" and" John Zimmer". The Zimmer model was adopted in coding, but with the modification of numbers.

Updating the horizontal plans, that were missed in Zimmer's plans, to include coding all the spaces in line with the direction of movement within the castle.

Structural & Building Material Studies

The work was continued during August and September 2019 with an “In situ” stone decay diagnosis. That work involved mapping of stone deterioration to four facades in different directions. As well as, evaluation of decayed surface by using Rilem Tube as a non-destructive technique.
Identifying Intervention Criteria & Priorities

Special Area Plans in the most affected areas of the castle started by the team. While in no way this contribution can replace the long-term planning process needed to establish priorities actions and to guide interventions in the long range and to support the rehabilitation of the physical infrastructure of the castle, it can provide orientations for short term actions and it can help raising the necessary resources from donors.

**Qal’at Salah El-Din**

**CHALLENGES:**

The lack of funding sources, the volatile security situation, shortages of specialist staff in addition to the difficulties of the castle location, those factors had led to a lack of maintenance and monitoring of structural changes, which led to the deterioration of the structure in parts of masonry.

- On 2019, a collapse of part of the byzantine wall on the southeastern side of the castle, which rises 50 meters from the surrounding street. On 2017, the cross vault on the second floor of the byzantine tower collapsed, which deteriorated the structural state of the walls of the tower placed on a rocky slop.
- Other masonries in the castle are exposed to severe cracks such as the Royal Tower (Donggun), stables, water tank, walls, towers, and the lower town.

The deterioration of the structural state in the castle can be explained according to the following factors:
- Dense tree roots that fill masonry and cause cracks in walls.
- Weather factors such as heavy rain, humidity, temperature variation.
- Insufficient maintenance and repair work due to lack of financial and human resources.
- The castle topography in the mountainous area and slopes.

It is important to mention the forest fire risk during the past years, that would present a high risk of threat to the buffer zone of Qa’lat Salah El-Din.

MEASURES TAKEN:

- The DGAM implemented emergency interventions to support the collapsed eastern wall and the defense towers of the lower town in the castle.
- With funding from the Ministry of Tourism, a project for preparing tourist routes and facilities will start this year in the safe areas of the castle.
The DGAM has submitted IAR on 5 September 2019 for Documentation & Emergency Structural Intervention In Qa’lat Salah El-Din. The IAR will assist DGAM to undertake a survey to the castle as a part of the preservation process, management and monitoring of the property. Information shall be of sufficient quality to provide an adequate basis for making historic preservation decisions and touristic plans as requested by the 43rd world heritage committee. A major goal of the Project is to create a detailed site plan in the Qa’lat with documentation of the missing standing architectural remains in Beit Al Madina area.

Physical conservation works have been carried out at the properties and works are progressing according to available funds. The reasons for placing the castles on the Danger List no longer applied as the ancient city is not facing danger of war anymore. In this case the DGAM is ready to welcome the monitoring mission and to implement the necessary corrective measures to remove the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger.