



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
1 February 2020



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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 44^e 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: **SITE OF PALMYRA**

Date of inscription on World Heritage List: 1980

CHALLENGES:

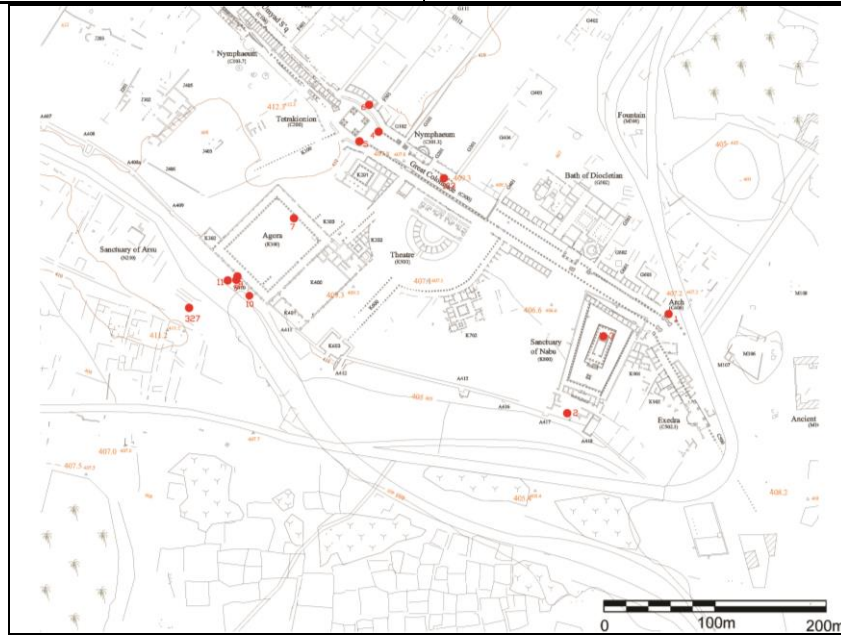
- At present, even the government recovered the infrastructure of the modern city, opened schools for children, encouraged local community to come back, but the site is still uninhabited, only 250 people lived there, the inhabitants moved to other cities during the war and the city appears to have never fully recovered.
- The lack of relevant documentation for the damaged monuments and the site boundary.
- Architectural remains of the site are in danger of collapse and face serious deterioration and risk of critical failure. This calls for urgent financial support to carry out the emergency interventions.

MEASURES TAKEN:

- Minor Boundary Modification (buffer zone) of Palmyra was established on 2017 to ensure that it includes those areas that are essential to retain the site's outstanding universal. The ministry's approval for the extension has been taken on September 2019. Therefore, the proposed site's boundary have been enlarged officially from 15.6 km² to 16.4 km² and the buffer zone to 168 km².
- Damage assessment for illegal excavations have been documented, photographed and located on the plans as an initial stage of documentation work, data tables and plans necessary for the documentation work are under work currently so that it can be soon. This mission were taken by DGAM staff on October 2019. The results of the survey shown that 461 illegal pits have been counted distributed in all the site parameter and some of them threatened the foundation and the structure of the buildings as shown in the below table:

The building/area	N of Illegal pits
Temple of Bel	20
Temple of Baalshamin	4
The Great Colonnade	4
The Tetrapylon	3
Camp of Diocletian	96
The Temple of Al-lât	13
The Greek house	9
Valley of the tombs	56
The Temple of Nabu	2
The four churches	21
The tombs near the wall city	11
The south- east necropolis	34
The northern necropolis	41

The south-west necropolis	51
The wall	Most of it has pits
The Agora	5
Total	461



Map of Palmyra shown the distributing areas of illegal pits



The DGAM staff during the mission



Illegally-excavated broken ancient artifacts



Illegally-excavated broken ancient artifacts



Illegal excavation in Camp of Diocletian



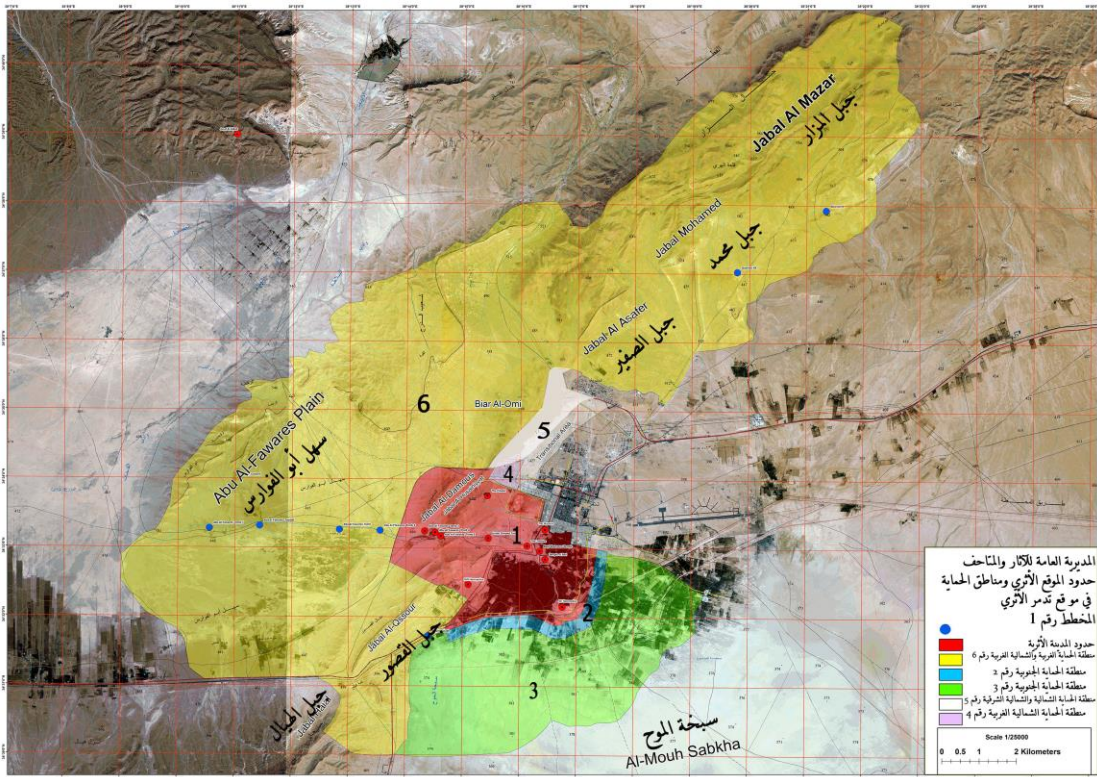
Illegal excavation in underground tombs



During the illegal excavation survey done by the DGAM team

The DGAM vision for Recovery phase on Palmyra was presented during the “Technical Meeting on the Recovery of the World Heritage Site of Palmyra” that took place on 18 December 2019 at UNESCO’s Headquarters, with the aim of reflecting on, and discussing the recovery of Palmyra, as a World Heritage property. Please refer to Annex (2).

The DGAM had finalized the minor boundary modification according to the UNESCO suggestions. The Ministerial decree n 258/A had been issued for the modification on September 9, 2019.



Minor boundary modification for Palmyra- decree n 258/A dated on September 9, 2019

Planning the Recovery of Palmyra Archaeological Site Vision and Planning Framework

INTRODUCTION

Palmyra, the iconic Site of evidencing human settlement since Paleolithic & Neolithic eras and one of the important cultural centers of ancient world, was severely damaged during this crises.

ISIL has conducted a systematic campaign of destruction of Palmyra's monuments in an attempt to obliterate the site's history. It has destroyed Temples of Bell & Baal-Shameen, with the Tetrapylon, the Monumental Arch gate, several tower tombs, the Arabic citadel and the façade of the theatre. Many artifacts from museum have been stolen or destroyed. Several areas were looted and devastated.

Recognizing the importance of recovering Palmyra to the current public and future generations has been the foundation of the DGAM mission since its liberation. This vision sets out the methods and techniques that should DGAM has addressed in respect of the international charters and guidelines that have been adopted for the technical conservation and on-going care of Palmyra World Heritage Site. "Recover Plan" requires a long-term view of projects, with due consideration of proper conservation techniques, appropriate consideration of the economic concerns, and the need to build the social awareness for management and care.

The plan should represents an integrated process of master-planning, scientific conservation, community Involvement, and the building of effective partnerships to provide enduring protection, while being flexible enough to answer the challenges that are demanded by the site.

Palmyra Today

At present, even the government recovered the infrastructure of the modern city, opened schools for children, encouraged local community to come back, but the site is still uninhabited, only 250 people lived there, the inhabitants moved to other cities during the war and the city appears to have never fully recovered. The site is only used on damage assessment carried by DGAM staff. The lack of relevant documentation and the architectural remains of the site are in danger of collapse and face serious deterioration and risk of critical failure. This calls for urgent measures to improve the site and careful examination of the extant illegal excavations and integrated this with the conservation condition assessment to develop a strategy for reburial, conservation and on-site interpretation.

Interventions after the crisis by financial support of UNESCO

- At the beginning of the response to initial assessment, damage assessment and mobilized aid to the museum and the archaeological site were made. In addition to Conducting rapid documentation of the current situation in all parts of the museum and evacuating the objects.
- Minor Boundary Modification (buffer zone) of Palmyra was established on 2017 to ensure that it includes those areas that are essential to retain the site's outstanding universal. The ministry's approval for the extension has been taken on September 2019. Therefore, the proposed site's boundary have been enlarged from 15.6 km² to 16.4 km² and the buffer zone to 168 km².

And now, decisions have to be taken on how to rebuild and restore the site, on priorities, and on where to start with initial restoration measures. In this presentation, I will present the DGAM vision through main focuses on conservation master plan.

Vision

The vision for Palmyra is the starting point for planning the Site's future.

Palmyra is the home of the Syrian people, it contains the monumental ruins of a great city that was one of the most important cultural centers of the ancient world. The picturesque landscape and architectural style of the Site are enduring visual symbols of our country. Recovery of Palmyra needs to occur in a way that balances the evolving functional needs of for the community and, indeed, for all those that care about World Heritage with the overriding commitment to preserve the historic, environmental and symbolic primacy of the site.

The way forward: Recovery Policy

KEY OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Empowering the local community: The plan has to be discussed and negotiated, not only with political decision-makers, professional planners and technical experts, civil society organizations and other representative bodies, but also with the affected citizens and businesses.
- ✓ Conserving the heritage and the memory of the site: The primary aim today is to identify the monuments in need of urgent repair, take temporary security measures for consolidating them, document their current situation and to prepare projects for structures to be restored. Conservation plans should defines the main conservation, excavations and presentation policies and includes provisions on urban development regulations and visitor arrangements. In order to do that, all excavations should carried out by different international groups, findings and data must be collected. A data

base should be done that can be opened will be available for those interested.

- ✓ Developing short and long-term integrated Planning: The plan of work should establish shorter-term objectives in the context of longer-term priorities and the Site overarching vision and guiding principles.

1-2-1- Master Plan Aspects

The Master Plan **provides a vision and framework to guide the recover phase**. It will establish the identity, history, authenticity and outstanding value of the site, defining the objectives, focusing on both project range, projected costs and expected outputs. The aim of the Master Plan express the conservation and presentation priorities and principles, as well as to integrate conservation and presentation and development policies. it will be specifically focused on guiding the medium and long-term decisions on the restoration, reconstruction, rehabilitation and regeneration of the site. Furthermore, based on public consultations, a restoration “philosophy” will be adopted, this philosophy will adhere to international restoration standards and approaches and will be supported by international expertise. The Plan should aim to facilitate public and private initiatives in the areas in need of rehabilitation, by creating the enabling conditions for the investment of funds by private operators and the financial system.

The vision, guiding principles, goals and strategies set forth in the Master Plan should base on these themes:

- A successful vision for post-war reconstruction depends on the existence of a scientific broad consensus among national and international level consist of national authorities with members of scientific Advisory board, ICOMOS, UNESCO, Experts participated in the archaeological missions in the site.
- Good archiving and documentation, is essential to a complete understanding of the needs of the site.
- Urgent intervention must be done. Other factors such as looting must also be noted.
- Evaluation of damage must be completed, including techniques of analysis and an assessment of materials science, both in respect to the existing monuments as well as all conservation intervention proposals and materials.
- It is necessary to diagnose and survey not only the archaeological site but also the oases, the surrounding areas.
- The promotion of national and international financial and technical support.
- Re-building the site’s image

- To sensitize Palmyra residents to conservation issues and the importance of their shared heritage and to mobilize them towards this goal.

A project master plan cannot cover all aspects of the site before a conservation program starts to prevent further deterioration. It identifies the need for **Short-Term Emergency Preventive Conservation** at the site that should include:

1. The establishment of procedures for conservation works, including how (and who) defines the priorities, and the role and selection of implementing partners;
2. The development of a short-term emergency and preventive conservation plan for monuments requires urgent repairs due to their structural problems are the ones that will be taken into consideration as a first step. As a result, the following monuments whose structural integrity is at risk and in need of urgent protection are prioritized for the coming years: XXXX
3. The establishment of documentation, publication procedures, scientific researches and carrying out studies for inventorying procedures for conservation activities for understanding the building better. Scientific researches for gaining precise information (structural resistance, archive researches).
4. Obtaining projects for comprehensive conservation of monuments, Redesign and improvement of existing infrastructure.

To focus our effort and move towards our vision and to effectively maintain a site for the future, a long-term conservation plan has to be developed within the **Management Plan** and implemented in a sensitive and sustainable manner. The goals of the Management Plan were defined as:

Goal 1: Research, documentation and conservation practices needed to preserve the Site OUV.

Goal 2: Reintroducing cultural heritage into the society by conveying the site's values and significance and thus ensuring local public's embracing the site.

Goal 3: Include planning rules for of new developments in the site and the BZ & the Oases without endangering the site's values.

Goal 4: Improving tourism infrastructure and promotion of the site at national and international level and increasing coordination and managing capacity at the site.

The goals are evaluated under seven fields of activities:

- Scientific Research

- Archaeological & excavation works.
- Repair, Consolidation & Restoration.
- Landscaping, visitor management and presentation
- Tourism & Promotion
- Socio- economic development of the site, local participation & awareness raising
- Management

SWOT analyze:

Strengths (S)

- The plan has an extensive national base of support.
- Site's international scientific fame & attraction to national & international funds & resources
- Still preserved cultural landscape

Weakness (W)

- Conservation problems in certain monuments.
- Absence of comprehensive conservation planning.
- Lack of resources, expertise & workmanship.
- Absence of database
- Inaccessibility to previous reports
- Lack of suitable accommodation & working conditions
- Economic Insufficient
- Not sufficient existing to department of Palmyra antiquities

Opportunities (O)

- Being attractive to national & international funds and resources
- Creation of employment opportunities
- Promote the educational and cultural values of the site archaeological landscape.
- Increase local community and public awareness and interest in the place.
- Ensure a better conservation in monitoring, diagnosing, & restoration.
- Create technical skills .
- International technical cooperation
- A better governance and policies for the site
-

Threats (T)

- Decrease of financial support
- Poor quality technical infrastructure
- Lack of permanent management and planning for the future
- Not sufficient management system for the monument which is as a part of World Heritage Property

Financing and Implementing the Recovery Plan

National and Local Finance

- The Government of Syria
- The Governorate of Homs
- The local private sector.
- NGO's

International Donors and Specialized Agencies

- UNDP,
- UNESCO
- **Hermitage Museum** in St Petersburg, **Russia** + Scientific Academy
- International Foundations

Time line for implementing the Recovery Plan

Short Term 2020 - 2021

Governance & Planning

- Establish the scientific committee
- Pre. master plan
- Pre. management plan
- Special area projects
- Develop database plan

Mid Term 2022-2026

Technical Actions

- Completing the Management Plan
- Damage assessment, building consolidation.
- Structure condition analyze.
- Social & economic assessment.
- Completing data base Plan.
- Trainings & workshops.
- Guidelines for restoration.
- Awareness campaign

Long Term 2027-2037

Special Project

- Monuments restoration
- Cultural & social pro.
- Cultural community pro.

Conclusion

It is clear that in order to establish, "Recovery Plan" as a good working foundation for Palmyra, that each of the four pillars of "master-planning", "scientific conservation", "community Involvement" and the "building of effective partnerships", need to be pursued rigorously.

In respect of the technical planning and all activities contributing to conservation practice on site, the ethics and principles recognized by the scientific board will be the backbone of best practice and responsive activity.

DGAM needs to ensure that training and capacity building in skills and ethics, to local national staff and workers, at the appropriate level, is widely and responsibly made available.



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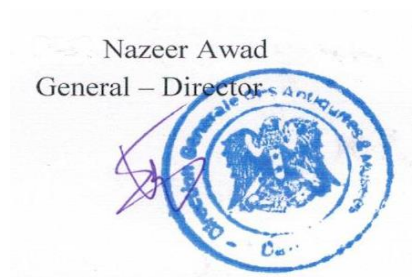
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Name of World Heritage property: **ANCIENT CITY OF PALMYRA**
Date of inscription on World Heritage List: 1980

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANTS:

An oasis in the Syrian Desert, northeast of Damascus, Palmyra contains the monumental ruins of a great city that was one of the most important cultural centers 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 civilizations in the ancient world. A grand, colonnaded street of 1100 meters' 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 travelers in the 17th and 18th centuries resulted in its subsequent influence on architectural styles.

THREATS:

Several monuments were damaged such as: the Citadel, the gate of Temple of Bel and the Triumph Arch which need urgent intervention including consolidation works. Lack of funding is the major difficulty for not implementing the consolidation works.

MEASURES TAKEN:

- A request fund for implementing the Recovery action plan was sent to UNESCO Beirut office on August 29, 2018 with a budget of 915520 US\$.
- The DGAM has signed Memorandum of Understanding with the Association of Russian Stone to restore the Arch of Triumph. The work is expected to begin in the beginning of the next year. In the framework of this MoF, the DGAM would like to establish an international scientific committee for the restoration project for Palmyra under the umbrella of UNESCO.