



State of Libya

Libyan Cultural Heritage Sites

State of Conservation Report

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE OF LEPTIS
MAGNS WORLD HERITAGE SITE

C 183

February 2020



World Heritage 44 COM





1. Executive Summary

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The State of Party, (Libya) would like to express its gratitude to the World Heritage Committee (WHC) and its advisory bodies for the efforts and endeavours they have undertaken to monitor the status of the archaeological site of Leptis Magna (the property) in order to remove it from the list of endangered sites.

This report has been prepared, in accordance with Annex 13 of the Operational Guidelines, and compiled in response to WHC decision 43 COM 7A.24 at the forty-third session held in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan (30 June - 10 July- 2019). In the report, the WHC commended the efforts made to develop a strategy for the protection and preservation of the Libyan properties listed in the World Heritage sites.

The Department of Antiquities and local authorities have taken measures to preserve heritage property and involve civil society in maintaining the outstanding global value of property. The DoA will continue to make the WHC aware of the evolving status of the property, of any new measures taken to ensure its protection and preservation and provide detailed information on the work accomplished.

We affirm that despite the political, security and economic problems that the country has faced since 2011, which can be considered a threat to the archaeological site, there have been no cases of damage or serious violations of the site. This is due to the measures taken by the Antiquities Department in cooperation with the Tourism Police and the local population.

Libya would like to assure the WHC that there have been no security violations in the area of Leptis Magna at all and that the site is not in any danger and therefore should be taken off the endangered list. The DoA also reiterates their invitation to a joint WHC / ICOMOS mission to assess the status of the property on site and to provide advice to the DoA.

A workshop was held on 12 / 02 / 2019 by the end of works of the committee formed by Government of National Accord decision no. (390 / 2017) to prepare the reports to reply to the decision of the World Heritage Committee to include the five Libyan sites in the list of danger.

May be the one of the most important results from this workshop is the formation of a new special committee (Government of National Accord decision No. (155 / 2019)), to management the Conservation Strategy, (state of conservation Report, 2018) to ensure protection and preservation of the property.

The committee was authorized to implement the strategy presented for the preservation and maintenance of the five Libyan world heritage sites and communicating with the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO in particular.

The follow up World Heritage Sites department was established in DOA to follow up on everything related to these sites, manage them, prepare periodic reports and proposed plans, and supervise the implementation of projects.

Antiquities surveying section in DOA doing regular visits to monitor the site and its historic environment. Antiquities surveying section reported that periodic maintenance is not scheduled in corrected way due to the lack of funding, which considered as the main reasons of the deterioration at the site. The site itself is fully accessible to the public. However, all the museums have been closed and most of the museum contents have been safely stored away far from the museums.

As a benefit and good results from the Training in Action program, for year 2019, (The use of modern technologies in methods of documenting and managing cultural heritage). The Department of Antiquities has launched a project to assess the detailed status of the property according to the degree of damage and the priorities for intervention, and prepare a detailed report to request support from the UNESCO Fund, as well as training a team of researchers on modern methods of documentation and assessment of the situation to take over the tasks of managing the archaeological site of Leptis Magna, (property).

This report finds that the current state of conservation on the site is satisfactory but could be improved with the help of more funding and political stability. Regarding the impact of human and other environmental threats, the situation at the site has improved in the last three years, due to an increase in the number of trained staff and Local authorities and departments.

To control the overgrowth and the impact of vegetation, team of specialists visited the property to determine the extent of damage and control mechanisms. A group of plants, including weeds, trees and shrubs, have been identified, and it is noted that one type of shrub is spread inside buildings and roads, while the other types are found in open area outside buildings and roads, and through tests on the following has been reached to plant classification, The plan is being prepared for direct control operations.

Since the winter season is approaching, with the increased threat of the Wadi Lebda and to protect the property from Wadi flooding, the DOA has taken steps to clear and clean the path of the Wadi in order to allow the water to flow freely to the sea.

To reduce the effects of weather factors and sand drift, the discussion was opened using Nano Technology with a company specialized in insulation operations to study the possibility of using its product to protect.

We can confirm that the animal grazing and vandalism has been reduced. As for discharge of domestic waste water, by working with the local authority the problem was solved.

The state party, Libya would like to assure the WHC that there have been no security violations in the area of archaeological site of Leptis Magna and that the site is not in any danger and therefore should be taken off the endangered list.



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Property Data

Name of World Heritage property;

Archaeological Site of Leptis Magna

State Party;

Libya

Identification Number;

C 183

Year of inscription on the List of World Heritage;

1982

Type of Property;

Cultural

Geographic Information (lat/long);

32 38' 17.48" N, 14 17' 25.65" E

Area;

299.86 ha.

Government Institutions Responsible for the Property;

Department of Antiquities, (DoA)

Criteria;

i, ii, iii

Previous Committee Decisions;

Decisions 41 COM 7A.38 and 41 COM 8C.2 adopted at its 41st session (Krakow, 2017)

& Decision: 42 COM 7A.23 adopted at its 42st session (Manama, 2018)

& Decision: 43 COM 7A.24 adopted at its 43st session (Baku, 2019)

Previous, WHC Monitoring Missions;

None



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This report has been prepared, in accordance with Annex 13 of the Operational Guidelines, and compiled in response to WHC decision 43 COM 7A.24 at the forty-third session held in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan (30 June - 10 July- 2019). In the report, the WHC commended the efforts made to develop a strategy for the protection and preservation of the Libyan properties listed in the World Heritage sites.

The Department of Antiquities and local authorities have taken measures to preserve heritage property and involve civil society in maintaining the outstanding global value of property. The DoA will continue to make the WHC aware of the evolving status of the property, of any new measures taken to ensure its protection and preservation and provide detailed information on the work accomplished.

We affirm that despite the political, security and economic problems that the country has faced since 2011, which can be considered a threat to the archaeological site, there have been no cases of damage or serious violations of the site. This is due to the measures taken by the Antiquities Department in cooperation with the Tourism Police and the local population.

Libya would like to assure the WHC that there have been no security violations in the area of Leptis Magna at all and that the site is not in any danger and therefore should be taken off the endangered list. The DoA also reiterates their invitation to a joint WHC /

ICOMOS mission to assess the status of the property on site and to provide advice to the DoA.

Committee formed by decision no. (155) / 2019 issued by the Government of National Accord, Libya for the Management and Implementation of the Strategy for Preservation and Conservation of the Five Libyan World Heritage Sites and World Heritage Sites Administration Unit in DOA are working together to follow up everything related to these sites, manage them, prepare periodic reports and proposed plans, and supervise the implementation of projects.

As a benefit and good results from the Training in Action program, for year 2019, in the field of using of modern technologies in methods of documenting and managing cultural heritage), DoA Survey unit with the support of MEDA and Rome Tree university conducted a survey of the site (Nov-2019-Feb2020) using modern techniques (drones-photogrammetric – GIS) the aim is to asses both the general condition of the Site as well as the detailed condition of monuments, streets..etc, the Survey project included the training of DOA staff. The DOA intends with the support of Rome Tree University and other specialized institutions to start preparing detailed intervention proposals with estimated budgets in order to be submitted when seeking funding from UNESCO or other organizations.

To control the overgrowth and the impact of vegetation, team of specialists visited the property to determine the extent of damage and control mechanisms. A group of plants, including weeds, trees and shrubs, have been identified, and it is noted that one type of shrub is spread inside buildings and roads, while the other types are found in open area outside buildings and roads, and through tests on the following has been reached to plant classification, The plan is being prepared for direct control operations.

Efforts for control vegetation growth and cleaning by the DOA office of Leptis Magna during the year of 2020 several cleaning and vegetation removal campaigns took place, focusing on the removal of trees in the site that pose a threat to buildings and walls.

Other efforts with the local authority for clearing of the path for the discharge of domestic waste water, on the West side of the Site that is in close proximity to the site, allowing for the water to flow freely away from the archeological site and prevent any possible flooding.

The planting of trees and the creation of an earthen embankment on the side of the street leading to the amphitheater, to prevent people from accessing the site and using the area for garbage disposal.

The initialization of work at damaged portion of the wall overlooking the colonnaded street. The damaged portion is 16 meters long and 6 m tall, the damage consists of loss of the outer layer of ashlar stone exposing the wall to further damage from erosion. The work started by stabilizing the wall using wooden beams for support, work is still ongoing at the time of preparing this report. DoA is in correspondence with the Conservation school in Rome seeking consultation on the recommended materials and techniques to be used in the restoration.

Since the winter season is approaching, with the increased threat of the Wadi Lebda and to protect the property from Wadi flooding, the DoA has taken steps to clear and clean the path of the Wadi in order to allow the water to flow freely to the sea.

To reduce the effects of weather factors and sand drift, the discussion was opened using Nano Technology with a company specialized in insulation operations to study the possibility of using its product to protect. In the other hand DoA is studying proposals to

build barriers in key location(s) such as the Hunting baths and the unfinished baths to protect the most vulnerable monuments.

On the 28th of August 2020 break out a fire started at the basin of the harbor due to drying of vegetation , a fire started at a small portion of the basin of the harbor and continued for the next day and a half, the fire covered a large area about 100 m in length. However the fire was controlled.

DoA is contracting to initializing a project for constructing a site new fence; also this project includes rehabilitation work for the entrance area of the site.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the Site and Site museum are closed since March 2020. The site and museums are not open for visitors, and the number of staff working at them has been reduced to 30% in accordance with the directions from the Libyan CDC and the issued Presidential decree.

Paris meeting which hold on March (05 – 06) 2020 was successful, the meeting included the discussion of the minor modifications of the properties boundary and proposing the buffer zones of the Five Libyan World Heritage Sites, in this meeting Libyan team benefited from direct discussion and close consultation with WHC, ICOMOS about the issues that concern all the Libyan World Heritage sites.

This report finds that the current state of conservation on the site is satisfactory but could be improved with the help of more funding and political stability. Regarding the impact of human and other environmental threats, the situation at the site has improved in the last three years, due to an increase in the number of trained staff and Local authorities and departments.

The state party, Libya would like to assure the WHC that there have been no security violations in the area of archaeological site of Leptis Magna and that the site is not in any danger and therefore should be taken off the endangered list.