



State Party: Republic of Sudan

Name of Property: Gebel Barkal and the Sites of the Napatan Region

Ref No: 1073

Executive Summary

In response to Draft Decision 44 COM 7B.17 (31 July 2021) and 43 COM 7B.54 (7 June 2019) and the report of the Reactive Monitoring Mission to Sudan (12 September 2019), the National Corporation of Antiquities and Museums of Sudan (NCAM) is submitting the following State of Conservation Report to address concerns regarding threats to conservation and to the Outstanding Universal Value of the site.

In its decision, the World Heritage Committee “continues to express serious concern over the state of conservation of the property” due to “degradation as a result of environmental factors, including heavy rainfall and potential flooding, absence of adequate controls, lack of appropriate maintenance, inadequate museum and storage facilities, lack of management planning, ineffective coordination of archaeological missions, absence of an integrated strategy for the conservation of newly excavated archaeological features, [and] urban encroachment and development projects.”

The WHC Draft Decision requested implementation of all the recommendations of the 2019 monitoring mission and 2020 UNESCO Heritage Emergency fund mission as matter of urgency.

In responding to the 2021 Decision, it should be noted that Sudan continues to suffer significant political and economic challenges both at the national level and within NCAM. During the summer of 2021, the Director-General of NCAM resigned his position, and in October of 2021, the Sudanese military removed most cabinet ministers from their positions. NCAM is currently managed by interim co-directors, and in the absence of clarity at the ministerial level, their authority to implement changes is significantly constrained.

ALIPH will map site boundaries and proposed buffer zones and these will be submitted to UNESCO



The 2019 mission listed 25 specific recommendations in its executive summary. Some of the recommendations of the monitoring mission have been implemented.

- An assessment of threat to the Nuri pyramids from rising groundwater has been completed thanks to the UNESCO Emergency Heritage Fund, including a workshop for professionals and the community in the Faculty of Engineering of the Technical University of Merowe.
- Construction of barriers to motor vehicle access is ongoing, with support from three grants (Ambassadors Fund of the USA, ALIPH, and an anticipated grant from (UNESCO). Significant progress is planned for 2022.
- Conservation monitoring is in place in El-Kurru and is being developed for the Barkal temples under a joint project of NCAM and the University of Michigan (USA).
- Active programs of community engagement focusing on education and site protection are working at El-Kurru and Barkal.
- Interpretive panels have been installed in the Barkal visitors' center and will be installed at El-Kurru in winter 2023.
- Improvements to museum storage, display, and cataloguing in the Barkal Museum continue to be made
- Tourism management is being addressed through a series of workshops funded by the Netherlands Funds-in-Trust and UNESCO (most recently a workshop for community and professionals held at the Visitor's Center



at Barkal on January 24, 2022). We were pleased to welcome the new Director of the UNESCO Office in Khartoum, George Papagiannis, to this meeting.

The WHC Decision taken note of a proposal for revision of 2007 management plan. Thanks to promised funding from UNESCO, development of a new management and sustainable tourism plan is underway and will be completed in the coming year. The 2022 conference of the International Society for Nubian

Studies, held every four years, will be an opportunity to engage all the archaeological projects working on the sites in development of the plan. In 2018 at the Paris meeting, Barkal projects had gathered to begin to support the report for the reactive monitoring mission, and we expect a similarly productive meeting in Warsaw in August-September.

NCAM has also developed a new initiative of local coordination to support managements of the individual properties that make up the World Heritage site. Working with the Supreme Council of Tourism in Northern State, we have developed a proposal to the Governor of Northern State to form a joint office of Antiquities and Tourism. Under the plan, each site (Barkal, Sanam, Kurru, Nuri, and Zuma) will have an archaeologist from NCAM, a tourism official, and a local community representative appointed by Murtada Bushara, each paid by the relevant office (NCAM and tourism). They will monitor and assess the state of conservation and tourism at each of the five sites.



Another new initiative is the renovation of a house within El-Kurru village (but near the entrance to the site) for use as a Community Heritage Center. This project will use traditional materials and architectural forms and will not alter the landscape around the site, but it should provide a basis for local education and site protection, and is enthusiastically supported by the local community.

NCAM would like to request clarification of a statement in the decision regarding ongoing excavation at the site. The request is to “ensure that no new archaeological excavations occur until conservation of the existing archaeological structures is ensured. As noted in the Context of Decision (C 1073), NCAM relies on international archaeological teams to support research, site management, and conservation at the sites, and we are concerned that without the possibility of conducting excavation, teams will not continue to work at the sites. We would like to propose that each team be required to devote significant resources to conservation at the site, rather than a complete halt to excavation.

Due to the current political situation and COVID 19 pandemic, many archaeological missions have not come to the site over the past two years, only two missions are working in Gebel Barkal and Kurru, and both are contributing significantly to conservation and management of the sites. Because of this request from UNESCO, we have allowed only surface clearance and documentation for these projects, but we will need to allow more possibilities for excavation in future. Excavation would take place only the context of a larger conservation plan for the site.



The WHC Decision reminds NCAM to submit to the world heritage centre, to review by the advisory bodies details information's for any future work that my affects the OUV of the property, NCAM confirms its interest in preserving the OUV and to send detailed information concerning any proposed changes to the property.

In order to delay the results of these workshops and the start of preparing for the conservation plan and management plan, a detailed report will be sent when all these elements are completed during this year.

The WHC Decision also urges to continue the efforts with regards the boundaries of the property. NCAM, with coordination the French Units of archaeology in Sudan (SFDAS), Sudan Archaeological Heritage Protection Project and Kheper 3D to make maps of the properties in accordance with UNESCO standards, the topographical maps has been completed for Gebel Barkal, Kurru and Zuma, while the maps of Nuri and Sanam will be completed in April, through the joint office of antiquities and tourism, the maps will be sent for adoptions in the state and the problems of the boundaries will be solved.

The WHC Draft Decision requested NCAM to submit on the state of conservation by 1 February 2022 an update reports. Since many of the requirements are in progress and under implementation and the work of documentations and monitoring has not been completed, NCAM requested WHC, to send the detailed report when preparation of management plan and conservation plan and topographic maps is completed after the implementation of the proposed workshops of WHC is implemented.



This report compiled by Murtada Bushara Mohamed (Regional Manager for Archaeology, Northern State), with assistance from Dr. Geoff Emberling (University of Michigan).

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