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World Heritage Convention

45 COM

WHC/23/45.COM/7A.Add.2

Paris, 28 August 2023

Original: English

**CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF
THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE**

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION
OF THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE**

**Extended forty-fifth session
Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
10-25 September 2023**

**Item 7A of the Provisional Agenda:
State of conservation of the properties inscribed
on the List of World Heritage in Danger**

Summary

In accordance with Section IV B, paragraphs 190-191 of the *Operational Guidelines*, the Committee shall review annually the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger. This review shall include such monitoring procedures and expert missions as might be determined necessary by the Committee.

This document contains information on the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger. The World Heritage Committee is requested to review the reports on the state of conservation of properties contained in this document. The full reports of Reactive Monitoring missions requested by the World Heritage Committee are available at the following Web address in their original language:
<http://whc.unesco.org/en/sessions/45COM/documents>

All state of conservation reports will also be available through the World Heritage State of conservation Information System at the following Web address: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/soc>

Decision required: The Committee is requested to review the following state of conservation reports. The Committee may wish to adopt the draft Decision presented at the end of each state of conservation report.

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NATURAL PROPERTIES

AFRICA

4. Mount Nimba Strict Nature Reserve (Côte d'Ivoire/Guinea) (N 155bis)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1981

Criteria (ix)(x)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger 1992-present

Threats for which the property was inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger

- Iron-ore mining concession inside the property in Guinea
- Arrival of large numbers of refugees from Liberia to areas in and around the Reserve
- Insufficient institutional structure

Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger
Proposed for adoption in the draft Decision below

Corrective measures identified

Adopted, see page <http://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/7464>

Timeframe for the implementation of the corrective measures

In progress

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/155/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 22 (from 1981-2019)

Total amount approved: USD 540,649

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/155/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount granted: USD 25,282 from the Rapid Response Facility in January 2012 (see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/news/830/>), USD 31,214 from the Government of China Funds for Capacity Building and cooperation for World Heritage in Africa (<https://whc.unesco.org/en/280/?id=1058&&>)

Previous monitoring missions

October/November 1988: World Heritage Centre mission; 1993: Joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN mission; 1994: IUCN mission; 2000: World Heritage Centre mission; 2007: Joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN mission to Guinea; 2008: Joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN mission to Côte d'Ivoire; 2013: Joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN mission; January 2019: Joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Mining
- Influx of refugees
- Agricultural encroachment
- Deforestation
- Poaching
- Weak management capacity
- Lack of resources
- Unsatisfactory transboundary cooperation
- Road construction

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/155/>

Current conservation issues

On 30 March 2022, the States Parties of Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea submitted a joint report on the state of conservation of the property, and on 1 March 2023, they submitted additional information all of which is available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/155/documents/> and reporting the following:

- The management functions of the Ivorian component of the property were supported from 2017 to 2021 by a 250 million FCFA (38 million for 2021) programme financed by AFD under the second Contrat de Désendettement et de Développement (C2D). The third C2D and establishment of an endowment fund for permanent financing remain in negotiation;
- The strengthening of operational management capacity, anti-poaching measures, joint patrols, geo-referencing, ecological monitoring of key species, removal of illegal occupants, land use planning, restoration of degraded areas, installation of firebreaks and support to local communities are reported as significant efforts towards achieving the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger as shown in the table of achievements annexed to the report. These efforts, although hampered by COVID-19, Ebola in 2021, will continue in 2023 with the support of national and international institutions, including Société des Mines de Fer de Guinée (SMFG), UNESCO, USAID, GEF, European Union (EU) and the World Bank through a number of programmes in the landscape;
- The Support programme for the preservation of forest ecosystems in West Africa (PAPFor) began in 2022 following significant delays due to COVID-19, Ebola and the socio-political crisis in Guinea. The 5-year programme, funded by the EU supports the continued implementation of management functions including surveillance, elaboration of the Development and Management Plan (PAG), ecological monitoring, support to riparian communities, buffer zone and transboundary activities in the Mount Nimba landscape. Challenges include the delayed PAPFor project, and insufficient studies on key species. The 5-7-year timeframe for implementation of the corrective measures is anticipated to be appropriate;
- The construction of the Danané-Lola road was suspended in 2019 and the section crossing the buffer zone of the property in Guinea was moved further north, away from the property;
- An Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) for the proposed SMFG project, in accordance with the highest international standards and taking into consideration the OUV of the property, is underway and will be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by IUCN;
- The environmental compliance certificate of Zali mining has expired, and the State Party of Guinea has approved the Terms of Reference (ToR) for their ESIA update following the incorporation of recommendations made by the World Heritage Centre/IUCN on the draft ToR in 2020-2021;
- As an alternative to the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) requested by the Committee prior to permitting any new mining, the State Party of Guinea proposes to establish an assessment framework for mining proposals in the Nimba area, consisting of a set of technical criteria with guidance notes to assess the potential impacts (including cumulative) of individual mining proposals on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property in relation to the Desired state of conservation for the removal of property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR), and to submit this for IUCN review. A comprehensive update of the strategic environmental study of the entire mining sector in Guinea is planned as part of the World Bank's Guinea Natural Resource Management Project for the Mining and Environmental Sectors, which began in 2023;
- No mining activity is permitted within the property and mining activities in the vicinity must be compatible with the OUV of the property.

On 19 November 2021, the State Party of Guinea transmitted a letter to the World Heritage Centre advising of the planned timeline and review for the completion of the ESIA for the proposed Nimba Iron Ore mine, which would be located adjacent to the property.

In June 2022, the States Parties took part in a workshop in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to support the process of removing sites inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger in French-speaking Africa, followed in June 2023 by a complementary workshop in Senegal to monitor the implementation of the corrective measures and reflect on the DSOCR.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN

Considerable progress has been made by the States Parties in implementing corrective measures under difficult circumstances including due to insufficient funding, the impacts of COVID-19 and Ebola, and ongoing security issues, and this is commendable and should be continued.

The increased funding from governments and a growing number of national and international partners including UNESCO, USAID, GEF, EU and the World Bank to enhance the property's conservation through a number of programmes in the landscape is welcomed and vital for the future of the property. The continuation of several ongoing initiatives in the landscape in particular the operationalization of the PAPFor in 2022 will allow the States Parties to further strengthen monitoring and management capacity as well as transboundary cooperation and support to local communities. The reduction of illegal activities and bushfires within the property following the strengthening of anti-poaching measures and the installation of firebreaks in sensitive areas around the property is encouraging.

Noting that the PAG for the Côte d'Ivoire component of the property was validated in 2022, that the elaboration of the PAG for the Guinean component started in 2022, and that an integrated master plan for the entire property will be completed within three years, it is recommended that the States Parties and their partners ensure these processes are completed as soon as possible.

The delays in the designation of a functional buffer zone in the Côte d'Ivoire component of the property remain worrying. However, with the operationalization of the PAPFor in 2022, it is recommended that the Committee reiterate its request to the State Party to ensure the forests in the vicinity of the property be officially designated as a buffer zone following the procedure of minor boundary modifications with reference to paragraphs 107 and 164 of the Operational Guidelines.

Notwithstanding the reported species monitoring efforts, a comprehensive ecological monitoring and anti-poaching system for the property remains to be fully implemented. The ongoing harmonization of strategies across the three countries including Liberia as part of PAPFor represents a significant and encouraging development toward a coordinated approach in the landscape, and it is recommended that the States Parties and partners continue their efforts through adequate resourcing to ensure the restoration and maintenance of the ecological integrity of the property, in 2023. It is also recommended that the Committee adopt the DSOCR developed during the 2019 Reactive Monitoring mission, updated and presented in 2021 by the States Parties as additional information to their 2020 State of conservation report (see <https://whc.unesco.org/document/180683>, pages 40-47 of the PDF file), and work closely with relevant expert and specialist groups of IUCN and development partners to refine this and ensure its implementation going forward.

Whilst noting that the asphaltting project of the Danané-Lola road was suspended in 2019 and the section crossing the buffer zone of the property in Guinea was moved further north, away from the property, the State Party should ensure that subsequent road projects do not negatively impact the OUV of the property including the proposed Lola-Zoo-Côte d'Ivoire border road project financed by the African Development Bank.

Recalling the significant concerns in recent years regarding the potential individual and cumulative impacts of mining projects in Guinea, the State Party's commitment to ensuring the assessment of all potential development projects in line with international standards and to ensure these do not negatively impact the OUV, is encouraging. Regarding the proposal to develop a new assessment framework for mining proposals in the Nimba area as an alternative to an SEA, it is recalled that all development proposals should be assessed in line with the new Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context and that an SEA provides the framework to ensure a strategic level assessment of the potential impacts of various mining projects on the OUV. It would be important to clarify the objectives of the planned World Bank strategic assessment of mining in all of Guinea, including its timeline and to what extent this would specifically assess the potential impacts of projects on the OUV of the property consistent with the aforementioned guidance.

It is noted that the recommendations of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN on the ToR for the new ESIA for the Zali mining project were reportedly taken into account. It is recommended that the State Party of Guinea provides the World Heritage Centre with a copy of the approved ToR and ensures the ESIA is carried out to the highest international standards and in line with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context.

Regarding the proposed Nimba Iron Ore mine, the proactive engagement of the State Party of Guinea with the World Heritage Centre and IUCN regarding the development of the ESIA is welcomed. However, it is recommended to recall the significant concerns of the Committee regarding the potential impacts of

this project on the OUV of the property, to ensure the ESIA is carried out according to the highest international standards, and to reiterate its request for an independent evaluation of the ESIA as soon as it is finalized and before any decision is taken to approve the project, including the issuance of an environmental compliance certificate.

It is positive that the State Party of Guinea has committed not to authorize any mining project within the property and that mining activities in the vicinity must be compatible with the OUV of the property. However, the World Heritage Centre and IUCN remain concerned about the proliferation of mining permits around the property and it is recommended that the Committee reiterates its request to the State Party of Guinea not to deliver permits for mining exploitation near the property without an SEA being carried out in order to assess the cumulative impacts on the OUV of the property.

Finally, it is recommended that the Committee retain the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7A.4

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7A.Add.2,*
2. *Recalling Decisions **43 COM 7A.6** and **44 COM 7A.40** adopted at its 43rd (Baku, 2019) and extended 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021) sessions,*
3. *Commends the States Parties for their ongoing efforts under difficult circumstances to implement the corrective measures including joint transboundary surveillance patrols, funding to support management operations, anti-poaching activities, restoration of degraded areas, support for local communities, and development of a high-resolution map of the property, and requests the States Parties to continue the implementation of all corrective measures including to strengthen ecological monitoring and finalize the management plans for the property;*
4. *Appreciates the support by an increasing number of national and international partners to the conservation of the property, including UNESCO, USAID, GEF, EU and the World Bank and encourages the States Parties to build long term programmes with them and explore other funding opportunities for a sustainable maintenance of the ecological integrity of the property;*
5. *Recalls the importance of having a functional buffer zone (or an equivalent measure) around the property in Côte d'Ivoire, and reiterates its request to the State Party of Côte d'Ivoire to designate and formalize such an area following the procedures of the Operational Guidelines, and to strengthen the monitoring of community forests around the property, while ensuring that their management objectives are compatible with the management of the property;*
6. *Notes that the asphaltting project of the Danané-Lola road was suspended in 2019 and the section crossing the buffer zone of the property in Guinea was moved further north, away from the property, and encourages the State Party to ensure that subsequent road projects in the landscape do not negatively impact the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property including the proposed Lola-Zoo-Côte d'Ivoire border road project financed by the African Development Bank;*
7. *Takes note of the expiration of the environmental compliance certificate of Zali mining SA for the mining block immediately adjacent to the property and the information provided by the State Party of Guinea that the recommendations of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN on the draft Terms of Reference (ToR) were fully incorporated, and also requests the State Party to submit the approved ToR to the World Heritage Centre;*

8. Requests the State Party of Guinea to ensure that the Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIA) for the proposed Nimba Iron Ore mining project by the Société des mines de fer de Guinée (SMFG) and the Zali Mining iron ore project:
 - a) Are carried out in accordance with the highest international standards in line with the Guidance and Toolkit on Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, and in close consultation with all key stakeholders,
 - b) Identify fully and quantify the potential effects of the project on the OUV of the property, at each phase of its cycle, including construction and operation, taking into account the synergistic and collateral impacts also linked to on-site transformation of the ore and its transport, as well as the socio-economic changes to be expected,
 - c) Are submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by IUCN before any decision to approve the projects, including any issuance of a certificate of environmental compliance;
9. Notes with appreciation the commitment of the State Party of Guinea not to authorize any mining activity within the property and to ensure mining activities in the vicinity must be compatible with the OUV of the property, but remains concerned about the proliferation of mining permits around the property, and further requests the State Party of Guinea not to grant any exploration or mining permits around the property without carrying out a strategic environmental assessment to assess the impacts, including synergistic and cumulative impacts of these projects, and submitting it for prior consideration to the World Heritage Centre and for examination by IUCN, and also to provide further clarification regarding the planned World Bank strategic assessment of all mining projects in Guinea, in relation to the OUV of the property;
10. Adopts the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR), presented in 2021 by the States Parties as additional information to their 2020 State of conservation report, and requests furthermore the States Parties to ensure its refinement and implementation in collaboration with international experts and development partners, considering the recommendations of the workshops related to the DSOCR held in 2022 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in 2023 in Senegal;
11. Requests moreover the States Parties to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2024**, 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 46th session;
12. Decides to retain Mount Nimba Strict Nature Reserve (Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

8. Virunga National Park (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (N 63)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1979

Criteria (vii)(viii)(x)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger 1994-present

Threats for which the property was inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger

- Increased poaching of wildlife
- Inability of staff to patrol the 650 km long boundary of the Park
- Influx of 1 million refugees occupying adjacent parts of the Park
- Widespread depletion of forests in the lowlands

Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger

Adopted, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/4338>

Corrective measures identified

Adopted in 2011, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/4338>

Revised in 2014, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/5979>

Updated in 2018, see page <http://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/7224>

Timeframe for the implementation of the corrective measures

Adopted in 2018, see page <http://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/7224>

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/63/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 10 (from 1980-2005)

Total amount approved: USD 253,560

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/63/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount granted: USD 1,802,300 from the United Nations Foundation and the Governments of Italy, Belgium and Spain as well as the Rapid Response Facility (RRF), USD 40,000 from the Rapid Response Facility (RRF)

Previous monitoring missions

April 1996 - March 2006 - December 2010: World Heritage Centre Reactive Monitoring missions; August 2007: joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reinforced Monitoring mission; March 2014: joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN/Ramsar Reactive Monitoring mission; April 2018: joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Armed conflict, lack of security and political instability
- Granting of a petroleum exploration permit inside the property
- Poaching by the army (issue resolved) and armed groups
- Encroachment
- Extension of illegal fishing areas
- Deforestation, charcoal production and cattle grazing

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/63/>

Current conservation issues

On 8 April 2022, the State Party submitted a report on the state of conservation of the property, available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/63/documents/> and reporting the following:

- 2021 saw a renewed deterioration in the security situation and a proliferation of armed groups. Violence against authorities and civilians is increasing and the park deplored 8 deaths amongst

its staff in 2021 adding to the 220 guards killed in the line of duty in the last 25 years, largely through armed group attacks;

- The construction of five fortified *forward observation bases* (FOB) and one airstrip operated by eco-guards and the DRC armed forces (FARDC) allows a rapid response to rebel attacks and contributes to security in the region. Armed groups remain active in the southern and central sectors. Control of the northern Mount Tshiaberimu area, habitat of the only group of Grauers gorilla has been maintained. The park also regained control of two areas close to Lake Edward that were previously held by armed groups.
- In 2021, 7,460 patrols covered 105,862 km, with approximately 20% conducted jointly with FARDC. Patrol coverage was 84% supported by enhanced operational infrastructure, slightly down from previous years as a result of the pandemics (Ebola, COVID-19) and growing insecurity;
- Transboundary cooperation with Uganda and Rwanda for the protection of flagship species (mainly gorillas, elephants, hippos) remained effective despite COVID-19. Activities included the delineation of the park boundaries at the Rwandan border and installation of 3 km of electric fence to avoid human-wildlife conflict between elephants and agriculture in Rwanda, joint ICCN-FARDC-Ugandan Army patrols to address fisheries resource exploitation in Lake Edward, and the development of a zoonotic disease risk management plan in the Virunga Landscape;
- Charcoal production remains a major threat. Actions include charcoal seizures, court referrals and a pilot project to promote improved green energy as an alternative to deforestation;
- In 2021, the installation of 138 km of electric fencing significantly slowed encroachment, which covers 12.1% of the property. The major ecological zones (gorilla sector and ecological corridor) remain protected.;
- The demarcation of 477.3 km (138 km fenced) of boundaries has been completed. Around 434.5 km remain to be demarcated;
- Fish catch on Lake Edward has dropped by 27% and efforts to address illegal fishing continue including planned regulation of fishing by electronic identification of vessels and the fight against armed groups.
- Since 2015, the gorilla population continues to grow at its natural annual rate (4.5%), with nearly 300 individuals recorded in the property in 2021. The elephant population is at a 40-year high with nearly 800 individuals recorded in the property in aerial surveys (550 in 2020, 133 in 2018), with animals moving back into the park from neighboring Queen Elizabeth National Park (Uganda). The hippo population is stable at around 1,500 individuals and slowly recovering following a decline from 30,000 individuals to less than 1,000 between the 1970s and mid-2000. A significant decrease in hippo poaching was recorded (26 in 2019, 7 in 2020) however hippos are no longer present in the recently recovered Lake Edward area;
- The majority of poaching of buffalos, elephants and hippos occurred in an area formerly occupied by armed groups, over 2,000 traps were observed, several poachers and camps were destroyed;
- Oil exploration is for the moment no longer considered but the exploration permits granted in the property have not been officially cancelled since the withdrawal of SOCO over 7 years ago;
- The implementation of the Virunga Alliance program has continued through the development of small-scale hydropower, agriculture, and fishing practices outside the property. Tourism infrastructure has been rehabilitated whilst ecotourism remains on hold due to pandemics and insecurity;
- 149 new eco-guards were recruited and trained (total 730 staff) including in aerial surveillance and human rights. A 2021-2025 Development and Management Plan (PAG) is under validation. Operational funding is around USD 18.5 million. Electricity production, agriculture and tourism have generated USD 81 million to date. A strategy is being developed to secure financial autonomy for the property by 2026;
- Overall difficulties/challenges include the impacts of armed groups on management activities, encroachment in the property linked to corruption, and impacts of pandemics, amongst others;
- Almost 5 km of road was opened, and a military camp constructed in the property to facilitate military operations.

On 29 July 2022, the World Heritage Centre transmitted to the State Party information available in the public domain regarding a decision by the Government to auction oil and gas blocks, including for two oil blocks overlapping with the property as well as oil blocks covering other protected areas outside the property. Although the oil blocks overlapping with the property were not included in the initial auction documents, they were included in subsequent official communications. On 8 May 2023, the Ministry of Hydrocarbons issued a publicly available statement that the deadline for the auction (for the Albertine Graben) is extended to November/December 2023. At the time of preparation of this report, no reply has been received from the State Party on this matter.

During 2022 and 2023, UNESCO held several exchanges with the park authority “Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature (ICCN)” in response to the considerable deterioration in the security situation, which reported the following:

- the situation in the mountain gorilla sector became critical following the attack on the Bukima guard post in November 2021 and the sector is now largely under control of the M23 armed group;
- ICCN remains the legal authority and patrolling by park staff continues in the central sector but has been suspended in the mountain gorilla sector ;
- ICCN has been working with local community trackers who continued mountain gorilla monitoring work. This work has been supported through a grant from the Rapid Response Facility (RRF) .

Since the extended 44th session of the World Heritage Committee in July 2021, ICCN rangers continue to be killed in armed attacks including one ranger on 15 October 2021, one ranger on 20 November 2021, two rangers on 23 December 2022, one on 6 February 2023, four rangers and one civilian staff on 18 May and two rangers on 28 May 2023.

On 14 March 2023, UNESCO sent a letter to the Minister of the Environment and Sustainable Development, welcoming the continued efforts of the park authorities to maintain conservation activities in the property in the current situation of active conflict, expressing UNESCO’s support and solidarity with the families of the victims of the current tragic events, and suggesting the joint organization of a national workshop on heritage protection in conflict zones in DRC during 2023.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN

It is of significant concern that since the last State Party report, the security situation in the region of the property has deteriorated considerably as a result of a renewed offensive by armed groups. It is concerning that ICCN staff were forced to abandon the gorilla sector, and that the sector remains unpatrolled. However, the continued efforts to monitor the gorilla populations through local community trackers, supported through an emergency grant from the RRF, is commendable. The World Heritage Centre plans to further support this work through the financial contribution of Norway to the World Heritage Fund. It is noted that the authorities reported that at this stage, gorilla populations remain unaffected by the hostilities, but that local poaching pressure is increasing. Local poachers are not targeting gorillas but small game for subsistence consumption using snaring, but there is a danger that gorillas fall victim to these snares. Community trackers are also involved in snare removal and inform local authorities on encountered cases of poaching.

ICCN also reported that fighting has also resulted in the internal displacement of people, many of whom are currently installed in makeshift camps on the flanks of the volcanoes, resulting in an important increase in deforestation pressure without access to alternative sources of firewood for cooking and heating.

It is further noted with significant concern that a large part of the park is included in the territory administered by armed groups, including the park headquarters at Rumangabo. Whilst it is encouraging that a number of park rangers remain present in Rumangabo and continue to patrol the central sector of the property, the loss of life and injury amongst park staff is tragic. The reported involvement of some local armed groups in commercial poaching activities is also concerning, although authorities report that at this stage, continued patrolling by park staff in the central sector has limited the impacts. It is recommended that the Committee offer its sincere condolences to the families of the guards killed in the line of duty and local communities, express its utmost concern about the deterioration of the security situation, commend the continued efforts by park staff to protect the property under difficult circumstances, and request the State Party to urgently continue its efforts to re-establish security throughout the property, including through the joint organization with UNESCO and its partners of a national workshop on heritage protection in conflict zones in DRC, as soon as possible.

Whilst the last official State Party report reported various positive achievements including maintaining patrol coverage at 84%, regaining of control over the Mount Tshiaberimu area, previously held by armed groups, and renewed control over areas on the shores of Lake Edward, it is unclear how the current insecurity has impacted these achievements.

The reported progress encroachment is very encouraging, with the area affected reduced from more than 20 % of the property in 2018 to 12% in 2021. Restoring the territorial integrity of the property remains one of the most important challenges and a key requirement to move towards a removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger in the future. In this context, the reported opening of a road and military infrastructure within the property is of utmost concern and details should be provided as soon as possible.

The fact that the State Party has again included the oil blocks overlapping with the property in a new auction process for oil and gas blocks is of utmost concern. It needs to be recalled that the Committee in numerous Decisions has urged the State Party to cancel existing petroleum concessions granted inside the property and to confirm its unequivocal commitment to prohibit new petroleum exploration and exploitation within the property. It is recommended that the Committee once again reiterate its position that oil and gas exploration and exploitation are incompatible with the World Heritage status and urge the State Party not to allocate new concessions overlapping with the property and to permanently cancel any existing concessions.

Whilst the initially reported continuation of transboundary cooperation with Uganda and Rwanda is positive, the broader implications of renewed insecurity on these efforts remain to be confirmed. The development of a new 2021-2025 Development and Management Plan (PAG) was also a significant step for the management of the property. It is recommended that, following validation, the PAG is submitted to the World Heritage Centre. Given the importance of sustainable financing, the development of a strategy for the property to achieve financial autonomy by 2026 is highly commended.

Regarding flagship species, the report in 2022 that the gorilla population is increasing and that elephants are starting to return from Queen Elizabeth National Park is positive, however there is a risk that these positive trends are reversed given the insecurity in the area. This is a strong indication that poaching was better controlled in this part of the property before the start of the current hostilities. The slow recovery of the hippo population is noted after the catastrophic decline during past decades. These are encouraging signs, but the current upsurge in poaching pressure linked to the insecurity poses a risk that these successes could be reversed, with the increased presence of armed groups impacting patrolling and monitoring of large mammals. Recalling that the recovery of flagship populations will require time, the efforts to protect and conserve these species under very difficult conditions is commended and efforts to continue to address poaching and prevent a renewed decline of flagship species should be maintained as far as the security situation allows. Recalling again that in 2020, the State Party reported that the biological indicators of the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) requested by the 2018 Reactive Monitoring mission, were being harmonized with the PAG and that both will be transmitted once finalized, it is recommended these are submitted to the World Heritage Centre as soon as the conditions on the ground allow.

The ongoing efforts to promote sustainable development through the Virunga Alliance programme are welcomed. Considering the possible further development of run of river small scale hydropower on the rivers outside the property, it is recommended that the State Party ensure that these projects are appropriately assessed, including that the potential impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property are fully considered.

Taking into account the impact of the renewed fighting in the property on its state of conservation and the decision of the State Party to again auction the petroleum blocks overlapping with the property, it is recommended that the Committee request the State Party to invite a joint UNESCO/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to the property, as soon as the security situation allows.

It is also recommended to retain the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger and to continue the application of the Reinforced Monitoring mechanism.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7A.8

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7A.Add.2,
2. Recalling Decision **44 COM 7A.45**, adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021),
3. Deplores the continued armed conflict and resulting further loss of life of protected area staff killed in the line of duty and of local communities, and offers its most sincere condolences to their families and to all the staff of the “Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature (ICCN)”;
4. Welcomes the progress achieved by the State Party and partners in implementing some of the corrective measures despite the challenging security context in the region;
5. Expresses its utmost concern regarding the considerable deterioration of the security situation resulting in large parts of the property being in the area under the administration of armed groups and the park authorities having to abandon the gorilla sector, and reported increase in poaching, commends the actions taken by the park authorities to maintain the monitoring of gorilla populations through local community trackers and as well as continuing anti-poaching activities in the rest of the property and urges the State Party to continue its efforts to protect the property in line with its commitments in the 2011 Kinshasa Declaration, including through the joint organization with UNESCO and its partners of a national workshop on heritage protection in conflict zones in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), as soon as possible;
6. Notes with concern the reported increase in deforestation for fuelwood around the camps for Internally Displaced People fleeing the armed conflict and requests the State Party, in collaboration with humanitarian relief organizations, to address the matter, such as by providing the camps with alternative fuel systems for cooking and heating;
7. Whilst reiterating its position that oil and gas exploration and exploitation is incompatible with World Heritage status, notes with utmost concern that the State Party has again included the oil blocks overlapping with the property in a new auction for oil and gas blocks, despite the repeated requests by the Committee to cancel existing petroleum concessions granted inside the property, and again strongly reiterates its request to the State Party not to allocate new concessions overlapping with the property and to cancel any existing concessions and to confirm its unequivocal commitment to prohibit new petroleum exploration and exploitation within the property;
8. Welcomes the increase of gorilla populations and that elephants are starting to return to the property from neighbouring Queen Elizabeth National Park (Uganda) reported in the latest State Party report, notes with concern that the current upsurge in poaching pressure linked to the insecurity poses a risk that these successes could be reversed, with the increased presence of armed groups impacting patrolling and monitoring of large mammals - these species remain vulnerable and under threat by continuing poaching, and encourages the State Party to maintain its efforts to combat poaching as far as the security situation allows, and to submit, as soon as the conditions on the ground allow, the latest results of flagship species inventories, as well as the biological indicators for the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) to be finalized in cooperation with the World Heritage Centre and IUCN;

9. *Welcomes the reduction of the encroachment in the property from more than 20% in 2018 to 12% in 2021, recalls that restoring the territorial integrity of the property remains one of the most important challenges and a key requirement to move towards a removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger in the future and urges the State Party to ensure that local, provincial and national authorities cooperate with the park management to halt encroachment and take measures to recover and restore the encroached areas;*
10. *Further notes with concern the reported opening of a road and military infrastructure within the property and requests the State Party to ensure that any infrastructure developments in or around the property, including hydropower projects and road developments, are assessed for their potential impacts, including cumulative impacts, on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property in line with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, and to inform the World Heritage Centre of any new developments in line with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, prior to any activities being undertaken.*
11. *Further requests the State Party to continue its efforts to implement all corrective measures as updated by the 2018 Reactive Monitoring mission and to continue the implementation of the sustainable development activities established in the framework of the Virunga Alliance;*
12. *Requests furthermore the State Party to invite a joint UNESCO/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to the property, as soon as the security situation allows, to assess the impact of the renewed fighting in the property on its state of conservation, in particular in the central and gorilla sectors, the actions taken or planned for the cancellation of any oil block auctions overlapping with the property and the implementation of the corrective measures;*
13. *Notes with appreciation the development of a 2021-2025 Development and Management Plan (PAG), and the proposed development of a strategy to secure financial autonomy for the property by 2026, and requests moreover the State Party to submit the validated PAG to the World Heritage Centre for review;*
14. *Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2024**, 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 46th session;*
15. *Decides to continue to apply the Reinforced Monitoring mechanism for the property;*
16. *Also decides to retain Virunga National Park (Democratic Republic of the Congo) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.*

14. Selous Game Reserve (United Republic of Tanzania) (N 199bis)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1982

Criteria (ix)(x)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger 2014-present

Threats for which the property was inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger

2014: Poaching and the ensuing dramatic declines in elephant populations, and the effects thereof on the ecosystem. In 2018 the impacts of the proposed Stiegler's Gorge hydropower dam (more recently referred to as the Julius Nyerere Hydropower Project (JNHPP)) were added to the justification for Danger Listing.

Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger

A draft DSOCR was developed but not finalized before the justification for Danger listing was amended to include the impacts of the JNHPP.

Corrective measures identified

A draft action plan with corrective measures was developed but not submitted by the State Party before the justification for Danger listing was amended to include the impacts of the JNHPP.

Timeframe for the implementation of the corrective measures

Not yet identified

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/199/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 3 (from 1984-1999)

Total amount approved: USD 67,980

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/199/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

June 2007, November 2008 and December 2013: Joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring missions. February 2017: IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission.

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Significant decline in wildlife populations due to poaching
- Insufficient funding and interruption of the retention scheme
- Unclear implications of conversion of a large part of the former game reserve to national park status
- Management challenges of trophy hunting
- Changes in legislation in 2009 permitting hydrocarbon and uranium prospecting and extraction inside game reserves and lack of clarity on the implications of change to national park status in this regard
- Excision of land from the property to accommodate a uranium mine
- Operationalizing the uranium mining project and consideration of in situ leaching by the developer
- Lack of disaster preparedness and water monitoring related to the uranium mine
- Inadequate tourism management and development
- Decision to construct and subsequent construction of the Julius Nyerere Hydropower Project (JNHPP) and its associated infrastructure without adequate impact assessment
- Logging within the reservoir area
- Proposed Kidunda Dam development without adequate impact assessment
- Other potential infrastructure developments
- Need for buffer zone
- Need for increased involvement of local communities

- Alien invasive species

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/199/>

Current conservation issues

On 16 February 2022, the State Party submitted a progress report, and on 13 February 2023 an updated state of conservation report. An executive summary of each report is available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/199/documents>. The reports can be summarized as follows:

- Renewed acknowledgement of the inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger due to both the drastically declined elephant population and the Julius Nyerere Hydropower Project (JNHPP);
- Strong anti-poaching measures are in place, with an absence of any elephant carcasses found on the property since 2019. The elephant population has grown some 15% between 2014 and 2018; the most recent elephant survey was conducted in late 2022;
- JNHPP aims to meet “conservation and developmental needs” to the benefit of “the most underprivileged rural populace”. Ongoing construction considers “all the environmental safeguards” in the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA);
- Finalization of multiple studies and plans is expected by April 2023 focusing on fish migration; impacts on ecosystem services; hydrology and sedimentation; stakeholders’ engagement plan; baseline risk assessment; cost-benefit analysis; assessment and preparation of cultural heritage management plan, as well as a basin management plan;
- The reservoir area amounting to some 1.8% of the property is not of “any significant impact” and commitment to mitigation measures identified in the ESIA is renewed;
- The dormant Mkuju uranium mine, Kito 1 oil and gas exploration, and oil exploration outside the property would be subject to new ESIA’s if reactivated;
- Renewed interest in the Kidunda dam outside of the property in 2021 triggered an updating of the ESIA dated 2017 (reported as being submitted with this report);
- The property is divided into a national park (62%) and a game reserve (38%), resulting in two areas with different management regimes and a need for a new property name;
- Bilateral cooperation continues with the Government of Germany, focusing on the property’s management;
- While the analysis of the wider Selous-Niassa ecosystem for possible World Heritage scenarios is not a priority, a separate transboundary World Heritage nomination of the Selous-Niassa Corridor is conceivable;
- The World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission will be invited “soon after completion of logistical preparations”.

The aforementioned ESIA for the Kidunda dam was not appended to the State Party report. On 21 March 2023, the World Heritage Centre requested the ESIA to be submitted.

On 18 May 2023, a plane crash in the property resulted in the tragic death and injury of several individuals from the Tanzania National Parks Authority (TANAPA) and Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS).

On 9 June 2023, the State party submitted an updated Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) report for the JNHPP. Due to its very late submission, this SEA could not be reviewed before the finalization of this report.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN

It is recommended that the Committee express its sincere condolences following the tragic death and injury of the individuals engaged in the protection of the property.

It is regrettable that the State Party has provided very limited new information but repeats information and positions already transmitted in previous reports. New information includes that an elephant census was concluded in late 2022, and renewed interest in the Kidunda dam project. The statements regarding poaching and recovery of the elephant population by 15% between 2014 and 2018 are noted. However,

this is not consistent with the wildlife census report referred to in the 2021 State of conservation report, where the Selous-Mikumi elephant population was found to be stable between 2014 and 2018. The recent census data would provide an important contribution to better understanding the current status of the elephant population and it is recommended the 2022 census report be submitted to the World Heritage Centre. Recalling previous Committee concerns regarding the potential impact of the Kidunda dam project on the property and a lack of appropriate impact assessment, it is regrettable that the revised ESIA (dated 2021) was not appended, nor subsequently provided at the World Heritage Centre's request, and that no information on its results or the potential impact on the OUV were provided. While the State Party report emphasizes that the dam would be located outside the property, it is recalled that earlier State Party reports suggested the reservoir would overlap a portion of the property. It is therefore critical that no decision is taken that would be difficult to reverse prior to the submission of the revised ESIA to the World Heritage Centre for review by IUCN.

The commitment to undertake new ESIA's, should the currently dormant resource extraction projects be reactivated, is noted and all potential developments should be assessed in line with the new Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context.

The confirmation that the construction of the JNHPP, as a major dam with a large reservoir within the property, has continued (including the filling of the dam reservoir in December 2022), is of utmost concern in spite of repeated Committee concerns including the lack of appropriate impact assessment, potential impacts of the project on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), its position that dams with large reservoirs are incompatible with World Heritage status

While the State Party's commitment to environmental and social safeguards is noted, none are specified or discussed in the report. It is critical to recall that the ESIA on which the State Party explicitly bases these safeguards, was considered in an independent review commissioned by IUCN to fall "considerably short of acceptable standards" and failing to provide "a best practice assessment of the potential impacts on the property's [OUV]" (Decision **43 COM 7A.16**). Furthermore, in its 2020 State of conservation report, the State Party committed to "undertaking further revisions" of both the SEA and the ESIA of JNHPP in view of the results of the independent reviews of these commissioned by IUCN. On the occasion, the State Party also explicitly acknowledged the need to align its impact assessment with IUCN's World Heritage Advice Note on Impact Assessment and committed to submitting revisions in the course of 2020. It is noted that a revised SEA was submitted by the State Party in June 2023, however this very late submission did not allow for review of this document before the preparation of the current report. Moreover, the value of this revised SEA at a time when construction is nearing completion is unclear. It is important to again reiterate that the State Party's justification that the JNHPP reservoir footprint will affect only 1.8% of the 5.2 million hectare-property is not reflective of the degree of its impact on the OUV, as detailed in earlier reports.

It is recalled that in their report to the extended 44th session of the Committee in 2021, the World Heritage Centre and IUCN considered that, as a result of JNHPP, the OUV of the property had been irreversibly damaged as a result of the loss of values and integrity under Criterion (ix), and there continued to be significant threat to the remaining values under Criterion (x).

The Committee decided however, that there should be an on-the-ground verification of the status of the property through a joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission. It is therefore of utmost concern that this mission, which was initially requested in 2018 (Decision **42 COM 7A.56**), continues not to be invited by the State Party. The continued absence of a mission invitation results in the situation that a standard procedure of the Convention requested by the Committee has not been implemented, and impedes necessary meaningful dialogue with the State Party to inform the Committee in a timely manner, regarding the current status of the OUV of the property and the extent of loss of integrity and irreversible damage to the values which underpin the OUV as it was inscribed on the World Heritage List, and the options available to the State Party and the Committee to rectify this situation. In light of the absence of new information enabling an understanding of multiple acute challenges the long overdue Reactive Monitoring mission is ever more urgent to underpin future decision-making by the World Heritage Committee.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7A.14

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7A.Add.2,
2. Recalling Decisions **31 COM 7B.3, 32 COM 7B.3, 33 COM 7B.8, 34 COM 7B.3, 35 COM 7B.6, 36 COM 8B.43, 37 COM 7B 7, 38 COM 7B.95, 39 COM 7A.14, 40 COM 7A.47, 41 COM 7A.17, 42 COM 7A.56, 43 COM 7A.16 and 44 COM 7A.51**, adopted at its 31st (Christchurch, 2007), 32nd (Quebec City, 2008), 33rd (Seville, 2009), 34th (Brasilia, 2010), 35th (UNESCO, 2011), 36th (Saint-Petersburg, 2012), 37th (Phnom Penh, 2013), 38th (Doha, 2014), 39th (Bonn, 2015), 40th (Istanbul/UNESCO, 2016), 41st (Krakow, 2017), 42nd (Manama, 2018), 43rd (Baku, 2019) and extended 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021) sessions respectively,
3. Also recalling the Committee's clear position, adopted in its Decision **40 COM 7**, that the construction of dams with large reservoirs within the boundaries of World Heritage properties is incompatible with their World Heritage status,
4. Further recalling the commitment made by the State Party that led to the adoption of Decision **36 COM 8B.43**, to not undertake any development activities in the property without the Committee's approval,
5. Notes with utmost concern the irreversible impact of the continued construction of the Julius Nyerere Hydropower Project (JNHPP) on the values and integrity which underpin the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property as it was inscribed on the World Heritage List;
6. Reiterates its concerns regarding the potential impacts of the proposed Kidunda dam project which may inundate part of the property, and requests the State Party not to proceed with any decision that would be difficult to reverse before the revised 2021 Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) has been submitted to the World Heritage Centre and reviewed by IUCN;
7. Takes note of the State Party's commitment that the dormant Mkuju uranium mine, Kito-1 oil and gas exploration, and oil exploration blocks outside the property, would be subject to a new ESIA process should they be considered in future, and also requests the State Party to ensure that any development that may impact on the OUV of the property is assessed in line with the new Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context;
8. Expresses its utmost concern that the State Party has still not invited the World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission, as requested by the Committee since 2018, and urges the State Party to invite this mission as a matter of utmost priority in order to re-establish dialogue on the various challenges, including but not limited to:
 - a) The status and implications of the ongoing construction of the Julius Nyerere Hydropower Project and associated infrastructure for the World Heritage status,
 - b) The status and reported recovery of the elephant population,
 - c) The renewed interest in the Kidunda dam and 2021 revised ESIA for this project,
 - d) The implications of the creation of Nyerere National Park in terms of legal status, governance and funding mechanisms,

- e) *The current status of the OUV of the property and to confirm whether the property continues to demonstrate the integrity and values which underpin the OUV as it was inscribed on the World Heritage List,*
 - f) *The future scenarios for the property including options to conserve the wider Selous-Niassa ecosystem;*
9. *Expresses its sincere condolences to the colleagues and families of individuals, including from the Tanzania National Parks Authority and Frankfurt Zoological Society, who were tragically killed and injured in a plane crash in the property;*
10. *Further requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2024**, 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 46th session;*
11. ***Decides to retain Selous Game Reserve (United Republic of Tanzania) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.***

ASIA-PACIFIC

15. Tropical Rainforest Heritage of Sumatra (Indonesia) (N 1167)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2004

Criteria (vii)(ix)(x)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger 2011-present

Threats for which the property was inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger

- Road construction
- Mining
- Illegal logging
- Encroachment

Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger

Adopted; see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/5970>

Revised, see page <http://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/7213>

Corrective measures identified

Adopted; see page <http://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/5970>

Revised, see page <http://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/7213>

Timeframe for the implementation of the corrective measures

In progress

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1167/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 2 (from 2005 to 2012)

Total amount approved: USD 96,600

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1167/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount granted: USD 1,800,000 for the 3-year UNF/UNFIP Project (2005-2007) – Partnership for the Conservation of Sumatra Natural Heritage; USD 35,000 Rapid Response Facility Grant (2007); USD 49,620 from the UNESCO/Netherlands Funds-in-Trust to integrate management and review boundaries for the long-term protection of the Outstanding Universal Value of the Tropical Rainforest Heritage of Sumatra (2020-2022)

Previous monitoring missions

February-March 2006: joint UNESCO/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission; March 2007: joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission; February 2009: joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission; April 2011: joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission; October 2013: IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission; April 2018: IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Management systems/management plan
- Ground transport infrastructure (Road construction)
- Land conversion (Agricultural encroachment)
- Illegal activities (Illegal logging; Poaching)
- Governance (Institutional and governance weaknesses)
- Renewable energy facilities (Geothermal development license adjacent to the property)

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1167/>

Current conservation issues

On 31 January 2022, the State Party submitted a report on the state of conservation of the property, which is available at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1167/documents/>. On 4 April 2022 and 16 March 2023, the State Party submitted a progress report on the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR), the corrective measures and the action plan. They report the following:

- To strengthen the management of the three national parks within the property, the Government of Indonesia initiated a Ministerial Decree on Coordination Team of the Tropical Rainforest Heritage of Sumatra (TRHS) Management that will provide direct management support from the central government to these three national parks in conserving the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). The draft decree is planned to be legalized in second quarter of 2023;
- Population assessments of Sumatran elephant, tiger, rhino and orangutan using occupancy monitoring, SMART patrolling and law enforcement show either a degree of uncertainty that requires continuous monitoring, or a declining population. A Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary opened in the wider Leuser ecosystem to support the species' Emergency Action Plan;
- Although patrol effort has fluctuated, it has generally increased significantly compared to earlier years (2014/15). Correspondingly, the number of threats and snares recorded by the patrol teams has also fluctuated over time but tends to show a decreasing pattern;
- No decision has been taken regarding previously reported proposals to clear forest areas within the property. In 2019, the President of Indonesia indefinitely extended the 2011 moratorium for "the postponement of issuance of new licenses and improving, governance of primary natural forest and peatland". Meanwhile, forest loss continues to be observed in all components of the property however it is reported that examining the forest cover changes from 2011 up to 2021 indicated that forest cover has relatively stabilized. A guideline on Handling Tenure Conflicts in Conservation Areas has been developed to address the issue of settlements in encroached areas within the property;
- An Ecosystem Management Plan and a 2018-2022 Ecosystem Restoration Plan have been developed to rehabilitate land and eradicate and control the invasive species, Mantangan, in Bukit Barisan Selatan National Park (BBSNP). More than 80,000 ha of degraded areas within the property have been rehabilitated in the past 10 years;
- Community engagement efforts have been strengthened, now placing the local community in the center of conservation activities and communities are considered key partners in ecosystem restoration;
- The rangers of the property have worked with communities to mitigate negative interactions between humans and wildlife, including responding to conflicts, increasing community awareness and resilience, and engaging local governments and the private sector;
- The State Party confirms that there are no mining concessions, mining exploration permits or new road developments within the property. Illegal small-scale mines inside the property have been undergoing closures since 2014 and the mining sites have been rehabilitated. Impacts from existing roads in the property are being mitigated through intensive patrols and conducting studies to evaluate the impact of road developments on wildlife mobility and the necessity of wildlife corridors or canopy bridges;
- An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) from August 2021 for the Karo-Langkat road upgrade inside Gunung Leuser National Park (GLNP) identified several negative impacts of the road upgrade, notably habitat fragmentation, while concluding that the current intensive road use has not led to a significant change in the presence of Sumatran tiger and orangutan. Mitigation measures, along with environmental monitoring to reduce the impact of habitat fragmentation, are recommended. A copy of the EIA (in English) was submitted with the report;
- EIAs for the Sanggi-Bengkunat road upgrade (11.5 km road through BBSNP) and the Bukit Tapan-Sungai Penuh road widening (23 km road through Kerinci Seblat National Park (KSNP)) are undergoing finalization. Preliminary results suggest that the Sanggi-Bengkunat road section upgrade will pose a high threat to the Sumatran rhino, elephant and tiger, and especially to the

rhino due to their high distribution around the road, and that the Bukit Tapan-Sungai Penuh road widening will pose a barrier for wildlife. The EIAs will propose mitigation measures for both projects;

- A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of road development plans in the property is underway;
- The Trans-Sumatran highway is reported to be at least 12 km from the KSNP boundary and therefore far from the property;
- The new 2020-2029 management plan for KSNP was submitted with the report, albeit in Indonesian;
- A proposal for a significant boundary modification is under development with support from the UNESCO/Netherlands Funds-in-Trust. Boundary maintenance and awareness raising amongst local communities and other stakeholders is also undertaken on a routine basis;
- The wider Leuser Ecosystem has been designated as an area with an environmental interest focus. A spatial plan for the Leuser Ecosystem is currently being developed with the aim of preventing environmental degradation, conserving species and habitats, and supporting sustainable human life without disturbing the protective function. Management of the Gunung Leuser Biosphere Reserve is ongoing.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN

The State Party provided some positive updates in response to Decision **44 COM 7A.52** and concerning the DSOCR indicators, including the development and implementation of ecosystem management and restoration plans; continued commitment to further enhance patrols and monitoring; strengthened community engagement efforts; and reaffirmation that there are no mining concessions, mining exploration permits or new roads within the property. The Ministerial Decree to strengthen the management is noted, and the State Party should provide further information with regards to the support that will be provided through these means. While no decision has been taken on the proposed forest clearance within the property, and the moratorium to prevent primary forest loss has been extended, there are no assurances for the long-term protection of the property. However, such assurances are critically needed, given the continued loss of forest recorded in the property, despite its reported stabilization from levels occurring in 2011. There should be no further forest loss within the property, and rehabilitation work must prioritize key ecological roadside corridors, in line with the corrective measures. Recalling the alarming reports from 2019 that local government was proposing to clear 1,306 ha of forest within KSNP as well as 49,000 ha of forest around KSNP and BBSNP, it should be a critical priority to ensure the connectivity of the property with the surrounding ecosystem, particularly with any wildlife corridors. The implementation of other corrective measures, such as agreeing upon a common methodological framework for monitoring each species, remains pending.

Concerning the three road upgrades and the widening within the property, it is noted that EIAs are either completed or now underway. The EIA findings for the Karo-Langkat road that the key mammalian species appear not to have been affected by the road is positive, but it remains vital that the identified mitigation measures are implemented to minimize the impacts of habitat fragmentation. The preliminary findings from the EIAs for Bukit Tapan-Sungai Penuh and Sanggi-Bengkunat roads – the latter being yet another upgrade – indicate that these activities pose high threats to the continued movement of mammalian species. This outcome could be anticipated and emphasizes the importance of well executed impact assessment processes to judge the appropriateness of such developments inside a World Heritage property and assess whether mitigation measures can reduce the impacts to acceptable, low levels. The current status of these projects along with the ongoing SEA for the road development plans in the property should be clarified, and it should also be stressed again that no decision should be taken for either road project until an EIA has been submitted to the World Heritage Centre and reviewed by IUCN, in accordance with the provisions of Paragraphs 118bis and 172 of the Operational Guidelines.

The distance of the Trans-Sumatran Highway from KSNP is noted, but its distance to GLNP appears much closer. Therefore, clarification should be sought on the assessment that has been undertaken to ensure that the integrity of GLNP is protected, especially considering the importance of the wider Leuser ecosystem, as expressed previously by the Committee. Regrettably, no information was provided on the Muara Situlen-Gelombang road, which will supposedly cut 18 km through GLNP, despite the World Heritage Centre's request for comments, in a letter dated 9 March 2021, and the subsequent reminder sent on 4 March 2022. Similarly, the State Party is yet to provide any information regarding alleged

proposals to develop four hydropower dams (Soraya Dam, Jambo Aye Dam, Kluet Dam and Samarkilang Dam) and mining projects near the property in the Leuser Ecosystem, which was also requested in the March 2021 and 2022 letters. Details of these projects, including the spatial plan under development for the Leuser Ecosystem, should be reported.

It is noted that a significant boundary modification proposal for the property is underway with the support of the UNESCO/Netherlands Funds-in-Trust project, and the State Party should be encouraged to continue its close cooperation with the UNESCO Office in Jakarta and remain in consultation with the World Heritage Centre and IUCN to advance the proposal.

Given the unrelenting significant threats to the property and the deteriorating condition of the property, it is recommended that the Committee also apply the Reinforced Monitoring Mechanism to this property to allow for a closer follow up of its state of conservation.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7A.15

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7A.Add.2,*
2. *Recalling Decision **44 COM 7A.52**, adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021),*
3. *Reiterates its utmost concern over the alarming, continued deterioration of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property due to encroachment, further road development, the impacts of invasive species, the continued decline of key species and the increasing ecological isolation of the property, strongly regrets that the State Party continues to consider different development activities, including road construction and logging, in contradiction with the corrective measures, and urges again the State Party to increase its efforts to implement the corrective measures in order to avoid the loss of OUV of the property over time;*
4. *Notes some positive actions undertaken by the State Party, including the development and implementation of ecosystem management and restoration plans, the strengthening of community engagement efforts, and the reaffirmed absence of mining concessions, mining exploration permits or new roads within the property;*
5. *Requests the State Party to provide further information on the Ministerial Decree on Coordination Team of Tropical Rainforest Heritage of Sumatra (TRHS) Management, with specific reference to the resulting support to the management of the property;*
6. *Acknowledging that no decision has been taken for the proposed forest clearance within the property, and that a moratorium to prevent primary forest loss has been extended, nevertheless notes with the utmost concern the reported continued forest loss within the property, and urges the State Party to immediately halt logging and prioritize restoration activities in ecologically sensitive areas, wildlife corridors and roadsides;*
7. *Also reiterates its utmost concern that the integrity of the property continues to be severely threatened by various road proposals and other developments, also requests the State Party to provide details of the ongoing Strategic Environmental Assessment for the road development plans in the property, along with the project status and copies of any Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) if available, on the following:*
 - a) *Muara Situlen-Gelombang road that would reportedly cut 18 km through Gunung Leuser National Park (GLNP),*

- b) Four hydropower dams (Soraya Dam, Jambo Aye Dam, Kluet Dam and Samarkilang Dam) and mining projects located within the Leuser Ecosystem in the vicinity of GLNP,
- c) The spatial plan under development for the Leuser Ecosystem;
8. Also notes the EIA findings for the Karo-Langkat road upgrade for which works have already been completed and further requests the State Party to ensure the full and timely implementation of the identified mitigation measures;
 9. Further notes that the EIAs for the Sanggi-Bengkunat road upgrade and the Bukit Tapan-Sungai Penuh road widening projects are undergoing finalization, and requests furthermore the State Party to clarify the current status of these projects and submit the EIAs to the World Heritage Centre for review by IUCN, ensuring that the EIAs are in conformity with the new Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context and include mitigation options that would result in minimal or no impact on the OUV of the property and retain the option not to proceed with the projects if this is not achievable;
 10. Requests moreover the State Party to provide details on the Trans-Sumatran Highway proposal in relation to the GLNP component of the property, including the proximity of roadworks to the national park and any assessment undertaken on potential impacts on the OUV of the property;
 11. Notes furthermore that the new management plan of KSNP for 2020-2029 was finalized, and invites the State Party to submit this management plan in English, either in full or as a summary, to the World Heritage Centre;
 12. Requests moreover the State Party to submit a detailed report on the implementation of the corrective measures, action plan and timeframe for their implementation, and encourages the State Party to continue the property boundary demarcation supported by the UNESCO/Netherlands Funds-in-Trust project, and to seek guidance from the World Heritage Centre, IUCN and the UNESCO Office in Jakarta to advance a proposal for a significant boundary modification ;
 13. Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2024**, 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 46th session;
 14. Noting with deep concern the continued significant threats to the property and its deteriorating condition, **decides to apply the Reinforced Monitoring Mechanism to the property to allow for a closer monitoring of its state of conservation;**
 15. **Decides to retain Tropical Rainforest Heritage of Sumatra (Indonesia) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.**

16. East Rennell (Solomon Islands) (N 854)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1998

Criteria (ix)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger 2013-present

Threats for which the property was inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger

- Logging
- Invasive species
- Over-exploitation of coconut crab and other marine resources
- Climate change
- Legislation, management planning and administration of the property

Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger

Adopted; see page <http://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/6965>

Corrective measures identified

Adopted; see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/7423>

Timeframe for the implementation of the corrective measures

Adopted, see page <http://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/7423>

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/854/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 2 (from 2006 to 2012)

Total amount approved: USD 56,335

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/854/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount granted: USD 56,689 UNESCO/Netherlands Funds-in-Trust (2015): Technical Support to East Rennell; USD 35,000, UNESCO/Flanders Funds-in-Trust (2015): Support to East Rennell; USD 38,398, UNESCO/Netherlands Funds-in-Trust (2019-present); and USD 298,000, UNESCO/Japan Funds-in-Trust (2022-present): Developing sustainable livelihoods in East Rennell

Previous monitoring missions

March–April 2005: UNESCO/IUCN Monitoring mission; October 2012: IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission; November 2015: World Heritage Centre/IUCN Advisory mission; May 2019: joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Climate Change and severe weather events (Changes to oceanic waters; cyclones)
- Commercial hunting (issue resolved)
- Fishing/collecting aquatic resources (Over-exploitation of coconut crab and other marine resources)
- Forestry/wood production (Commercial logging)
- Invasive/alien terrestrial species
- Mining
- Management systems/management plans (Management planning and administration of the property)
- Legal framework (Legislation)
- Commercial fishing (issue resolved)

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/854/>

Current conservation issues

On 9 May 2022 and 30 March 2023, the State Party submitted reports on the state of conservation of the property, which are available at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/854/documents/>, reporting the following:

- Collaboration between the Solomon Islands Government (SIG) and the Lake Tegano World Heritage Site Association (LTWHSA) continues. During the 2021 Annual General Meeting of the LTWHSA, poor road access, climate change issues and food security were acknowledged as priority issues to address, commitment to protecting the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property was reaffirmed, and a call on the government for more assistance was made, in particular to prioritise the East Rennell Road, and for climate change funding and support through an integrated climate vulnerability assessment. The application from Nickel Enterprise SI Limited proposal to mine East Rennell land boundary was also disregarded;
- Challenges remain in mobilizing the financial resources for completion of the LTWHSA Management Plan, including due to COVID-19. Rennell-Bellona province has been selected as one of the project sites for “Ensuring Resilient Ecosystems and Representative Protected Areas in Solomon Islands”, supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF). A community inception meeting was held in East Rennell in February 2023 and the project is expected to promote better understanding of the Protected Areas Act 2010;
- An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) was conducted in June 2021 following the grounding of a barge (SAPOR 2302) in the Nukuma’anu coastal marine area in the property, damaging 30 ha of coral reefs. The environmental damages were valued at SBD 13,498,400 (about USD 1.6 million) for both market and non-market value, including cultural services. The EIA recommended that the responsible company Gulf Tree and Associates (Solomon Resource Limited) should ensure compensation for the damage caused;
- No EIA was undertaken for the proposed road construction by the Rennell and Bellona Provincial Government because it concerns road maintenance and upgrade only;
- The OTC logging company proposal to log the Agapogavu strip and to construct a 40-metre width road was cancelled;
- Food shortages for local communities at the property continue, which have been exacerbated by COVID-19 and climate change;
- With support from the UNESCO/Netherlands Funds-in-Trust (NFIT), community and stakeholder consultation meetings were organized in April-May 2022, resulting in an Action Plan which identified priority actions for developing sustainable livelihoods in East Rennell that were subsequently endorsed by the Minister and Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development;
- The UNDP-GEF Small Grants Programme supported the installation of a piggery-, apiary-, and poultry farm. Additional support for a sustainable livelihood project is being sought from the UNESCO/Japan Funds-in-Trust (JFiT) based on the aforementioned Action Plan;
- With support from the United Kingdom Darwin Initiative, BirdLife International initiated a project to mitigate and control impacts of invasive rats. Sixteen community rangers were hired for the project.

On 26 July 2021, the World Heritage Centre sent a letter to the State Party regarding third-party information about the granting of bauxite mining exploration licenses to Nickel Enterprise SI Limited by the Ministry of Mines, Energies and Rural Electrification.

On 28 June 2022, the World Heritage Centre sent a letter to the State Party conveying information from a third party about a reported change in management arrangements for some of the customary owned lands within the property.

No response has been received from the State Party on either of the letters at the time of writing.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN

The State Party's continued efforts to implement the corrective measures and recommendations of the 2019 Reactive Monitoring mission are welcomed. While the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are acknowledged, the limited progress with the implementation of the corrective measures and other recommendations of the mission due to budget issues is of concern, and efforts should be strengthened. Since the allocation of budget depends on a new Cabinet Paper, it is recommended that the Committee reiterate once again its request to adopt, as a matter of urgency, this Cabinet Paper with the commitments and associated budgets of the respective ministries.

The continued and progressive efforts by customary landowners, local communities of East Rennell and the LTWHSA to safeguard the OUV of the property from destructive activities are appreciated. It is noted that communities took a clear position against the bauxite mining exploration proposal, but the State Party is yet to clarify the status of the proposal and should be reminded of the Committee's position that mining, including exploration, is considered incompatible with the World Heritage status for natural sites (Decision **37 COM 7**).

The process of providing legal protection for the property's OUV while respecting customary rights of the local communities, pending finalization of the Management Plan and community dialogue on the Protected Areas Act 2010, should be accelerated. The opportunity for the new GEF-6 funded project to support this process should be explored, as there may be potential to facilitate the declaration of a Protected Area, in line with the recommendation of the 2019 mission, as a positive step in the development of the Management Plan for the property which is a key objective under the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR). The letter received from the third party is concerning in this regard as this relates directly to the establishment of a legal protection mechanism. Recalling the Committee's position that the long term conservation of the property's OUV can only be secured with the full consent of the customary land owners and land users in full respect of their rights, all parties concerned should be urged to develop a workable, long-term solution for the customary governance of the property throughout the process of establishing legal protection for the property, and the State Party should be requested to provide information in response to the letter of 28 June 2022.

The cancellations of the logging proposal and the associated new road in the property are welcomed. While the need to improve the condition of the only road to the property is acknowledged, caution is still warranted, as that road could still pose a threat through easier access for commercial logging, in the absence of adequate legal protection. It is therefore recommended that the Committee remind the State Party to undertake an EIA in line with the new Guidance for Impact Assessment in a World Heritage Context for all planned development to assess potential impacts on the property's OUV, in accordance with Paragraph 118bis of the Operational Guidelines, and submit it to the World Heritage Centre for review by IUCN.

The continued food insecurity for local communities, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the impacts of climate change, is of great concern and should be urgently addressed. In this context, ongoing dialogues, including the community and stakeholder consultation meetings organized in April/May 2022, and activities towards the development of sustainable livelihoods for East Rennell's communities should be welcomed and these efforts should be further supported in line with priority actions identified in the new Action Plan, notably through the NFIT, JFiT and GEF-6 projects.

It is regrettable that no information was provided in following up the previously reported mass mortality of flying foxes, a species recognized as an attribute of the property's OUV. The State Party should be encouraged to urgently undertake a scientific investigation.

Joint action by the communities and BirdLife International to mitigate and control the impacts of invasive rats is welcomed and the State Party is requested to report on the progress. If initial research confirms that it will not be possible to completely eradicate invasive rats, the State Party might wish to propose an update of the DSOCR, in which the eradication of rats is currently listed as a method of verification, and the State Party should develop and implement an adequately resourced strategy to focus on minimizing the impact of already introduced invasive and alien species and fully operationalize effective biosecurity measures.

The submission of the extensive EIA on the impacts of the grounding of an industrial barge is appreciated. The estimated USD 1.6 million damage to the coral reefs, which hold important natural and cultural value to local communities, is significant and cause for concern. It is recommended that the Committee call upon the responsible company and licensee of SAPOR 2302 to adhere to the

conclusions and recommendations of the EIA, with regards to compensation of the ecological, cultural and socio-economic impacts of the grounding.

In view of the multiple challenges faced by local communities, whose sustainable wellbeing is a prerequisite for the safeguarding of the property, the State Party should be encouraged to continue mobilizing additional international support, including via International Assistance under the World Heritage Fund, as well as to attract climate change funding to conduct the proposed integrated climate vulnerability assessment of the property.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7A.16

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7A.Add.2,
2. Recalling Decision **44 COM 7A.53**, adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021),
3. Welcomes the State Party's continued efforts to implement the corrective measures and recommendations made by the 2019 Reactive Monitoring mission, yet reiterates its concern that limited progress has been made towards their effective implementation, and therefore requests the State Party to strengthen these efforts;
4. Reiterates once again its request to the State Party to adopt, as a matter of urgency, a new Cabinet Paper with the commitments and associated budgets of the respective ministries reflected in the budget allocation for the next fiscal year;
5. Commends the continued efforts by customary landowners, local communities of East Rennell and the Lake Tegano World Heritage Site Association (LTWHSA) to safeguard the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, also reiterates its concern that potential threats to the property's OUV arising from commercial logging and mining still exist, in the absence of an adequate legal protective mechanism for the property;
6. Also reiterates its request to accelerate the pending finalization of the Management Plan and community dialogue on the Protected Areas Act 2010, including by exploring potential support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF-6)-funded project in this regard and urges all parties concerned to develop a workable long-term solution for the customary governance of the property, and requests the State Party to provide a detailed update in its next progress report, recalling its position that the long term conservation of the property's OUV can only be secured with the full consent of the customary land owners and land users in full respect of their rights;
7. Expresses its utmost concern about the reported granting of bauxite mining exploration licenses possibly overlapping with the property, recalling its position that mining, including exploration, is considered incompatible with World Heritage status for natural sites, appreciates the clear position by the local communities against proposed bauxite mining exploration reportedly in the area bordering the property, also requests the State Party to unequivocally confirm that the mining project has been abandoned;
8. Also welcomes the cancellation of the commercial logging proposal and the proposed associated new road, and reminds the State Party to undertake a full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for other planned developments, in line with the new Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, including for the upgrade of the existing road, to assess any potential impact on the property's OUV before any decision is made that would be difficult to reverse, in accordance with

Paragraphs 118bis and 172 of the Operational Guidelines, and to submit a copy of the EIA to the World Heritage Centre for review by IUCN;

9. *Regrets that no information was provided on the previously reported mass mortality of flying foxes, and thus also urges the State Party to undertake a scientific investigation on this issue to identify causes and appropriate management interventions to safeguard this population as an important attribute of the property's OUV;*
10. *Notes the EIA conducted for the grounding of an industrial barge inside the property, and expresses concern regarding the extent of the damage to local coral reefs and the adverse socio-economic impacts on local communities, and thus calls upon the responsible company and licensee of SAPOR 2302 to adhere to the conclusions and recommendations of the EIA with regards to compensation for ecological, cultural and socio-economic impacts of the grounding;*
11. *Reiterates its great concern that local communities continue to face food insecurity, accelerated by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change, and further requests the State Party to address the issue as a matter of urgency, and also calls upon the international community to provide urgent humanitarian support;*
12. *Further welcomes the community and stakeholder consultations organized in April/May 2022 which identified priority actions for developing sustainable livelihoods in East Rennell, and the livelihood projects supported by the UNDP GEF Small Grants Programme and the UNESCO/Netherlands and UNESCO/Japan Funds-in-Trusts and the project jointly implemented by BirdLife International and local communities to study and mitigate the impacts of invasive rats, and encourages the State Party to continue mobilizing additional international support, including through the International Assistance mechanism under the World Heritage Fund, as well as climate change funding to conduct an integrated vulnerability assessment of the property;*
13. *Further reiterates its concern that achieving the full implementation of the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) by 2025 will be challenging without significant international support, and further calls upon the international community to provide the State Party with the necessary support;*
14. *Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2024**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, including a progress report of the implementation of the recommendations made by the 2019 Reactive Monitoring mission, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 46th session;*
15. ***Decides to retain East Rennell (Solomon Islands) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.***

CULTURAL PROPERTIES

AFRICA

25. Tombs of Buganda Kings at Kasubi (Uganda) (C 1022)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2001

Criteria (i)(iii)(iv)(vi)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger 2010-present

Threats for which the property was inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger

Fire that resulted in the destruction of part of the property

Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger

Adopted, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/4351>

Corrective measures identified

Adopted, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/4351>

Timeframe for the implementation of the corrective measures

Adopted in 2011 and revised in 2017 - see pages <https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/4351> and <https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/6977>

Previous Committee Decisions see page <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1022/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 6 (from 1998-2023)

Total amount approved: USD 240,363

For details, see page <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1022/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount granted: 2011-2012: USD 68,365 from the Japanese Funds-in-Trust for an Expert Appraisal Mission; 2013-2016 and 2019-2020: USD 650,000 from the Japanese Funds-in-Trust for the project: Technical and financial assistance for the reconstruction of Muzibu-Azaala-Mpanga, an architectural masterpiece of the Tombs of Buganda Kings at Kasubi, Uganda, World Heritage property in Danger. 2017: 4,300 USD from the World Heritage Fund for ICOMOS advisory consultancy for the finalization of the elaboration of the Master Plan; 20 000 USD from Heritage Emergency Fund (HEF) for on-site training in preventing disasters and risk, 75 000 USD from the World Heritage Fund for firefighting equipment, 30,000 from the Heritage Emergency Fund and 100 000 USD from the Norway Funds for preparation of Guidelines for the development of the Buffer zone aligned with the property's Master plan.

Previous monitoring missions

April 2010, August 2011, November 2011 and August 2013: World Heritage Centre mission; November 2010: Joint UNESCO/ICOMOS/ICCROM Reactive Monitoring mission; April 2012: Joint ICOMOS/ICCROM Reactive Monitoring mission; February 2015: Joint UNESCO/ICOMOS/ICCROM Reactive Monitoring mission; since 2014, regular missions by UNESCO Office for Eastern Africa in Nairobi.

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Ground transport infrastructure
- Management systems/ management plan
- Fire
- Buildings and development (buffer zone)

Illustrative material see page <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1022/>

Current conservation issues

On 1 February 2022, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, which is available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1022/documents/>. Progress in a number of conservation issues addressed by the Committee at its previous sessions is presented in this report as follows:

- The reconstruction of the Mazibu Azaala Mpanga (main tomb) was progressing and, despite delays related to the Covid-19 pandemic, it was expected to be completed by July 2022;
- The restoration of the Bujjabukala (gate house) was reaching finalisation;
- A contract for the installation of fire-fighting equipment was established and the installation was to be completed by July 2022. The State Party worked closely with the UNESCO Regional Office in Nairobi on this issue;
- The definition of the buffer zone guidelines through a stakeholder participation process was ongoing. Funds were being sought to resource this process, which, due to its size, had needed to be phased. Once completed, the city's development plans would be realigned;
- Photo annexes were provided depicting the ongoing reconstruction of the Mazibu Azaala Mpanga and the restoration of the Bujjabukala (gate house).

In response to Decision **44 COM 7A.4**, an annex outlining the State Party's progress in completing the corrective measures to achieve the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) was submitted. Apart from the reconstruction of the Mazibu Azaala Mpanga, important corrective measures that at the time had been completed included:

- Research into Ghandu construction techniques and materials;
- Completion and implementation of a masterplan;
- Drafting of a Disaster Risk Management Plan.

The implementation of these measures had led to:

- Training of artisans;
- Conservation of key attributes;
- Strengthening of the management system.

A UNESCO technical mission of an international team of four experts commissioned by the World Heritage Centre visited the property and its buffer zone in May 2023. This mission took place within the framework of a project aiming to support the State Party in developing guidelines for the buffer zone by promoting the application of the 2011 Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) to safeguard heritage in African contexts, developed by the World Heritage Centre in 2022 with financial support from the Government of Norway and using the Tombs of Buganda Kings at Kasubi as a case study. That team evaluating the buffer zone of the property will make recommendations on the extension of its boundaries and compile guidelines for the management of the buffer zone of the property following the principles of HUL. On 24 July 2023, a workshop was organized by the World Heritage Centre to represent the draft guidelines proposal to African experts for feedback and comments. More than 100 African experts, site managers and professionals participated in the workshop.

A Reactive Monitoring Mission to the property took place in June 2023 in response to Decision **44 COM 7A.4**, which requested a mission to the property to review the current state of conservation and evaluate whether the conditions for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger have been met. The mission report is available online at the following web address: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1022/documents/>.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

The State Party has made substantial progress towards achieving the DSOCR. It has closely collaborated with the UNESCO Regional Office in Nairobi, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies throughout, which has been of great benefit to completing many of the corrective measures adopted by the Committee at its 35th session (Decision **35 COM 7A.17**). Key achievements include the restoration of the Bujabukala and the completion of the reconstruction of the Mazibu Azaala Mpanga. It is most welcome that the firefighting system has been installed in the tombs area of the property, supported by the Japanese Funds-in-Trust for the Preservation of the World Cultural Heritage and the World Heritage Fund. The State Party submitted the requested Disaster Risk Preparedness Management Plan (Decision **35 COM 7A.17**) to the World Heritage Centre in July 2021. This was reviewed by ICOMOS, which made recommendations for its improvement.

The 2023 Reactive Monitoring mission to the property, assessed the extent of the completion of the implementation of all corrective measures and reviewed its state of conservation to evaluate whether the conditions for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger have been met.

The mission concluded that the corrective measures have been substantially completed to the extent that their implementation has achieved the Desired state of conservation for removal from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR). The World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies advise the Committee that it would be appropriate to remove the Tombs of Buganda Kings at Kasubi from the List of World Heritage in Danger and they congratulate the State Party and all its partners for this significant achievement.

The mission appreciated the strong commitment and engagement of the Government's national and local authorities, as well as the traditional management of the Buganda kingdom authorities, and the Kasubi local communities, as the custodians of sacred sites providing a model for the cooperation of government institutions and traditional ones for the management of World Heritage properties. Their dedication led not only to the reconstruction of the Mazibu Azaala Mpanga but also to the revival of traditional customs and practices associated with the requirements of rituals to sustain the aura and sacredness of the Tombs of Buganda Kingdom at Kasubi. Challenges remain and the State Party should be encouraged to continue its efforts to improve the state of conservation and management system of the property. The 2023 mission recommended, amongst others, that the State Party implement measures to ensure the long-term sustainable availability of human, financial, and material resources, specifically spear grass, for the long-term maintenance of the property. The State Party reported to the mission that it is updating the property's Management Plan. This should be seen as an opportunity to set out an appropriate management system, integrate an updated Disaster Risk Management component into the Management Plan, align it with the extent Master Plan and provide mechanisms to harmonize with the buffer zone guidelines currently under development. It also noted that tourism management should be a cornerstone of the new management plan and measures to define maximum carrying capacities need to be developed urgently. The mission recommended that the State Party translate the corrective measures defined for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger into management actions to be implemented continuously for the protection and management of the tangible and intangible attributes of the property.

It is recommended that the Committee request the State Party to carefully consider the recommendations of the international team of four experts commissioned by the World Heritage Centre to develop guidelines for the development of the buffer zone, considering as well the boundary of the buffer zone, to submit these to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, and to realign the spatial planning regime of the city of Kampala once these have been adopted by the Committee.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7A.25

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7A.Add.2,*
2. *Recalling Decisions **35 COM 7A.17** and **44 COM 7A.4**, adopted at its 35th session (UNESCO, 2011) and extended 44th session (Fuzhou/Online, 2021) respectively,*

3. Welcomes the completion of the reconstruction of the Mazibu Azaala Mpanga, the restoration of the Bujjabukala (gate house) and the close collaboration of the State Party with the World Heritage Centre, the UNESCO Regional Office in Nairobi and the Advisory Bodies;
4. Commends the strong commitment and engagement of the Government's national and local authorities, as well as the traditional management of the Buganda kingdom authorities, and the Kasubi local communities, as the custodians of sacred sites;
5. Acknowledges the continued financial commitment of the Government of Japan, through the Japanese Funds-in-Trust for the Preservation of the World Cultural Heritage, the UNESCO Heritage Emergency Fund (HEF) and the World Heritage Fund to the installation of a firefighting system for the tombs area of the property;
6. Also acknowledges the Government of Norway's financing of the World Heritage Centre project aiming at developing the guidelines by promoting the application of the 2011 Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) to safeguard heritage in African contexts, which took this property as a case study, also welcomes the efforts made towards re-evaluating the buffer zone boundary alignment, defining development guidelines for the buffer zone and aligning local planning regulations with the safeguarding, maintenance and transmission of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property and the requirements of its protection and management, and requests to the State Party to:
 - a) Continue its efforts to establish an improved buffer zone alignment, complete guidelines for the buffer zone in collaboration with World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, guided by the approach of HUL, and submit these to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies,
 - b) Submit the amended local planning regulations that accommodate the guidelines for the buffer zone to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies;
7. Notes the conclusions and recommendations of the 2023 joint UNESCO/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission and strongly encourages the State Party to implement these recommendations;
8. Also encourages the State Party to proceed with updating the Management Plan for the property aligned with HUL including to:
 - a) Update the Disaster Risk Management Plan into the existing Management Plan,
 - b) Align the Management Plan with the existing Master Plan,
 - c) Provide mechanisms to harmonize the Management Plan with the buffer zone guidelines currently under development,
 - d) Include a tourism management component in the Management Plan based on a thorough understanding of the carrying capacity of the property,
 - e) Translate the corrective measures defined for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSCOR) into management actions to be implemented continuously for the protection and management of the tangible and intangible attributes of the property;
9. Also commends and congratulates the State Party, as well as the Buganda Kingdom and its partners for substantively completing the implementation of the corrective measures defined for achieving the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR);

10. ***Decides to remove the Tombs of Buganda Kings at Kasubi (Uganda) from the List of World Heritage in Danger;***
11. ***Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2024**, 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 47th session;***

ARAB STATES

Note : the following reports on the World Heritage properties of Iraq need to be read in conjunction with Item 30 below.

28. Hatra (Iraq) (C 277rev)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1985

Criteria (ii)(iii)(iv)(vi)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger 2015-present

Threats for which the property was inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger

Destruction and damage due to the armed conflict

Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger

Drafted; proposed for adoption in the draft Decision below

Corrective measures identified

Drafted; proposed for adoption in the draft Decision below

Timeframe for the implementation of the corrective measures

Drafted; proposed for adoption in the draft Decision below

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/277/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 1 (from 1999-1999)

Total amount approved: USD 3,500

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/277/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount granted (for all World Heritage Sites of Iraq):

- USD 6,000 from the Italian Funds-in-Trust
- USD 1.5 million by the Government of Japan (for cultural heritage, including World Heritage)
- USD 154,000 by the Government of Norway (for cultural heritage, including World Heritage)
- EUR 300,000 by the Government of Italy (for cultural heritage, including World Heritage)
- USD 35,000 by the Government of the Netherlands (for cultural heritage, including World Heritage)
- USD 100 000 Heritage Emergency Fund - support for Iraqi World Heritage properties
- USD 35,782 from the Netherlands Funds-in-Trust (for Strengthening capacities in state of conservation reporting on properties inscribed on the list of World Heritage in Danger)
- USD 50,000 from the Netherlands Funds-in-Trust (Strengthening capacities for the documentation and conservation of Properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger in Iraq)

Previous monitoring missions

June 2023: Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Deliberate destruction of heritage
- Armed conflict
- Illegal activities
- Major looting of Iraqi archaeological sites (resolved at Hatra)

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/277/>

Current conservation issues

On 31 January 2022, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, which is available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/277/documents/>. Additional information was submitted on 4 March 2023. Progress in a number of conservation issues addressed by the Committee at its previous sessions is presented, as follows:

- Erosion and deterioration are noted at Allat Temple, and its back wall has an inclination of about 50cm. The middle iwan arch of Samya Temple is at risk due to the movement of its keystone, and the upper parts of the Triad Temple have heavily suffered from weathering;
- The State Board of Antiquities and Heritage (SBAH) is cooperating with the International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage in Conflict Areas (ALIPH) for the implementation of a project to provide urgent first aid to the damage incurred due to the conflict;
- Through the project supported by ALIPH, and implemented by a team from International Association for Mediterranean and Oriental Studies (ISMEO), in cooperation with the Nineveh Inspectorate of Antiquities and Heritage, future conservation work at the property addresses urgent intervention at the western wall of the Allat temple, the central iwan arch and floor of the Samiyah temple and stabilisation works in the Mithra temple;
- Documentation of the site was carried out in 2020 by a team of experts through the support of ALIPH. A three-to-five-year conservation plan is being developed and will be provided once agreed upon;
- Conservation and restoration work at the property has included restoring and re-attaching sculptures to their original places at the Great Temple, commencing the restoration of artifacts, and cleaning the site from the remnants of conflict, as well as general upkeep to remove vegetation. Pilot protection measures were carried out for the alabaster floors of Allat Temple, and by installing iron gates for all entrances to the temples. Solar lighting has been installed at the Temenos;
- Rehabilitation work was carried out at the Italian Expedition House, which included the installation of solar panels, as well as for the Antiquities Protection Police station. A site laboratory for the conservation of artifacts has been established;
- The Hatra Statuary Salvage Project (HaSSP) has successfully restored 99% of the statues damaged during conflict;
- A retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (RSOUV) was finalized by the State Party, and reports on assessment and first aid interventions, carried out through the collaboration with ISMEO and ALIPH, were provided;

A joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission visited the property in June 2023. A copy of the mission report will be available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/277/documents/>.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

The State Party has provided information regarding ongoing and planned actions at the property, including documentation, conservation, rehabilitation projects, and conservation planning. It is clear that some of the reported measures have been carried out as a priority for the protection of the property. These efforts, undertaken in cooperation with international experts and support, are acknowledged.

Some information has also been provided regarding urgent interventions identified at various monuments that should be undertaken to prevent further damage and collapse. It is recommended that the Committee encourage the State Party to pursue such priority actions, noting that any emergency stabilisation work should only be undertaken in cases where collapse or further damage is imminent, and according to the principle of minimal intervention. Remedial and repair work should be guided by a comprehensive Conservation Plan prepared in full consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies.

The State Party has reported that the security situation of Hatra is stable, and following its invitation, a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission visited the property in June 2023, to further assess the damage and to discuss with the State Party the short, medium, and long-term goals and actions required to protect the property, as well as the elaboration and implementation of corrective

measures and achievement of the DSCOR. It is recommended that the State Party implement the mission's recommendations, with particular regard to carrying out investigations related to the water table; finalizing the conservation plan for the Temenos area on the basis of a detailed damage assessment of its monuments, and scientific analyses, after which pilot interventions could be selected and monitored over time to assess the efficacy of any proposed action; elaborating a monitoring programme; carrying out an assessment of potential threats in the area situated between the inner and outer city walls, and accordingly elaborate additional possible protection measures; preparation of a site management plan, with a visitor management plan, and including the necessary human and financial resources, in addition to capacity building; and, elaborating a strategy and resources for documentation management.

Work on the elaboration of the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) was initiated remotely through collaboration between the State Party, the World Heritage Centre, and ICOMOS. Following a preliminary online meeting in January 2021, a second online meeting was organized on 21 March 2022, with the participation of the State Party and the international experts implementing projects at the property. Subsequent to the follow up on this process and the mission undertaken to the property, a proposed DSOCR, corrective measures, and a timeframe for implementation have been established, and are recommended for adoption.

The World Heritage Centre, in collaboration with ICOMOS, has initiated the process to support the State Party in the elaboration of the retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (RSOUV), through an online technical workshop. The State Party has pursued the elaboration of the RSOUV, which is presented in Document WHC/23/45.COM/8E.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7A.28

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7A.Add.2,*
2. *Recalling Decisions **44 COM 7A.7** and **44 COM 7A.9**, adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/Online, 2021),*
3. *Taking into account Decision **45 COM 7A.30** on the World Heritage properties of Iraq,*
4. *Commends the efforts undertaken to address the protection and conservation of the property, and requests the State Party to continue its efforts to the extent possible and to seek any needed further support;*
5. *Encourages the State Party to pursue urgent priority actions, and reminds the State Party that emergency stabilisation work should only be undertaken in cases where collapse or further damage is imminent and according to the principle of minimal intervention, and that remedial and repair work should be guided by a comprehensive conservation plan prepared in full consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, recalling the need to provide details of planned and ongoing projects to the World Heritage Centre for technical review by the Advisory Bodies prior to implementation, in line with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines;*
6. *Takes note of the joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission that visited the property in June 2023, and requests the State Party to implement the mission's recommendations, in particular addressing the following:*
 - a) *Carrying out investigations related to the water table,*
 - b) *Finalizing the conservation plan for the Temenos area on the basis of a detailed damage assessment of its monuments, and scientific analyses, after which pilot interventions, addressing natural deterioration phenomena, could be selected and monitored over time to assess the efficacy of any proposed action,*

- c) *Elaborating a monitoring programme, coupled with a capacity building programme,*
 - d) *Carrying out an assessment of potential threats in the area situated between the inner and outer city walls, including potential illegal access and encroachment, and accordingly elaborate additional possible protection measures,*
 - e) *Initiating the preparation of a site management plan that takes into consideration requirements related to management and conservation, with a visitor management plan,*
 - f) *Elaborating a strategy and resources for documentation management;*
7. Also takes note of the work carried out towards the elaboration of the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) and a set of corrective measures, as well as the recommendations of the mission in this regard;
8. Adopts the following DSOCR and corrective measures:
- a) *DSOCR framework:*
 - (i) *The removal of substantive threats arising from the conflict between 2014 and 2017,*
 - (ii) *Improved site protection and accessibility of the site by the management team, with the reinstatement of site management facilities,*
 - (iii) *Enhanced knowledge and skills with regard to conservation and management at the property,*
 - (iv) *Threats to Hatra's archaeological heritage mitigated and damage incurred as a result of the conflict addressed,*
 - (v) *Damage resulting from conflict repaired;*
 - b) *Corrective measures:*
 - (i) *Reinstating the management of the property by the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage (SBAH) and ensuring its protection and accessibility for the local community and visitors,*
 - (ii) *Enhancing capacities of professional staff of SBAH in heritage conservation and management,*
 - (iii) *Undertaking site documentation, monitoring, and studies for adequate conservation and management,*
 - (iv) *Repair of damage resulting from conflict,*
 - (v) *Assessing risks at monuments indirectly impacted by the conflict and addressing vulnerabilities, including through assessment, studies and urgent stabilization;*
 - c) *Timeframe for the implementation of the corrective measures:*
The implementation of corrective measures should be completed within a period of one year;
9. Also requests the State Party to submit a boundary clarification to the World Heritage Centre, and consider the submission of a minor boundary modification proposal for the designation of a buffer zone, for added protection of the property, in line with paragraphs 163-164 of the Operational Guidelines;

10. Reiterates its appeal to all Member States of UNESCO to cooperate in the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural heritage coming from Iraq as per the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 2199 of February 2015, 2253 of December 2015 and 2347 of March 2017;
11. Calls again on all States Parties to support emergency safeguarding measures, including through the UNESCO Heritage Emergency Fund;
12. Further requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2024**, 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 46th session;
13. **Decides to retain Hatra (Iraq) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.**

29. Samarra Archaeological City (Iraq) (C 276 rev)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2007

Criteria (ii)(iii)(iv)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger 2007-present

Threats for which the property was inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger

State of conflict in the country that does not allow the responsible authorities to assure the protection and management of the property.

Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger

Not yet drafted

Corrective measures identified

Not yet identified

Timeframe for the implementation of the corrective measures

Not yet identified

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/276/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/276/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount granted: USD 100,000 from the Nordic World Heritage Fund for training and documentation aiming at the preparation of the Nomination File

Total amount granted for all World Heritage Sites of Iraq:

- USD 6,000 from the Italian Funds-in-Trust (for cultural heritage, including World Heritage)
- USD 1.5 million by the Government of Japan (for cultural heritage, including World Heritage)
- USD 154,000 by the Government of Norway (for cultural heritage, including World Heritage)
- EUR 300,000 by the Government of Italy (for cultural heritage, including World Heritage)
- USD 35,000 by the Government of the Netherlands (for cultural heritage, including World Heritage)
- USD 100,000 from the Heritage Emergency Fund - support for Iraqi World Heritage properties
- USD 35,782 from the Netherlands Funds-in-Trust (for Strengthening capacities in state of conservation reporting on properties inscribed on the list of World Heritage in Danger)

- USD 50,000 from the Netherlands Funds-in-Trust (Strengthening capacities for the documentation and conservation of Properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger in Iraq)

Previous monitoring missions

June 2011: Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission; June 2023: Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Management systems/management plan
- Armed conflict
- Weathering and lack of maintenance affecting the fragile structures
- State of conflict in the country that does not allow the responsible authorities to assure the protection and management of the property

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/276/>

Current conservation issues

On 31 January 2022, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, which is available at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/276/documents/>. Additional information was submitted on 6 March 2023. Progress in a number of conservation issues addressed by the Committee at its previous sessions is presented as follows:

- In 2015, an explosion caused significant damage to Ashnas Wall, land bulldozing has impacted several archaeological components of the property, and encroachments have increased during the past years due to the unstable security conditions, conflict, and the global pandemic. The Iraqi government and security forces have recently exerted efforts to prevent further encroachment to the property;
- The last excavation carried out at the property was in 2009. Urgent salvage excavations are necessary in Al-Jubairiya section and Al-Isba'ain archaeological site, while a continuation of archaeological excavations is needed in several other important archaeological sites within the property. Conservation and restoration works have not been undertaken at the property for several years due to the challenging security situation;
- Two monuments have been identified as being in need of urgent conservation work: The Palace of Al-Baraka that is part of the Caliphal Palace, and Abu Dulaf Mosque, both of which have deteriorated due to environmental and climatic factors. The threat of collapse may be imminent, and assistance in urgent stabilization work is needed;
- The Great Mosque and the Caliphal Palace have been chosen as priority monuments for restoration and rehabilitation. The works envisaged include fencing off the two sites to ensure protection, building a tourist lounge and completing the restoration works at the Great Mosque, which were halted in 2013. Additionally, the Samarra Governorate funded a project for a drainage system at the Great Mosque (Al-Malwiya);
- The property has witnessed an influx of local and international tourism at the site over the past two years. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on tourism activities overall;
- A comprehensive Conservation Plan is needed to address threats to the property, including urbanization, encroachments, pollution, tourism, vandalism, and looting. An indicative outline and list of recommended actions for a proposed 'simple conservation and management plan' has been provided including enhancing protective measures (fences), cooperating with institutions to promote archaeological expeditions, establishing a museum on site, and undertaking conservation and restoration of archaeological sites and monuments throughout the property.

A joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission visited the property in June 2023. A copy of the mission report will be available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/276/documents/>.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

The State Party has provided some information regarding the condition of the property, including the threats it has been facing during recent years, such as land bulldozing, encroachments, urban sprawl and environmental conditions. The information provided regarding the recent bulldozing and

encroachment activities affecting several archaeological components of the property is alarming and could impact on attributes, which support the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property. The efforts of the State Party to halt these activities is acknowledged; however, further detailed information about their impact should be provided.

It is recommended that the Committee urge the State Party to submit a comprehensive report on the damage incurred at the property, along with a photographic documentation of all affected monuments, including detailed information about areas that have been impacted by bulldozing activities and encroachments, for review by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies. Such information is necessary in order to arrive at a full assessment of the state of conservation of the property, including any impact on its OUV, as a crucial step for the preparation of the proposed Conservation Plan, with priority given to identifying any necessary emergency stabilization work and establishing a road map for longer-term conservation and management actions.

The State Party has highlighted the need to carry out urgent conservation work at the Palace of Al-Baraka and the Abu Dulaf Mosque. As previously requested, remedial and repair works should be guided by a comprehensive Conservation Plan prepared in full consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies. Since an overall comprehensive plan has not been established yet, emergency stabilization and conservation work should adhere to the principle of minimal intervention and only occur in critical cases where there is threat of further accelerated damage and / or collapse.

Additionally, the State Party has reported that the Great Samarra Mosque and the Caliphal Palace have been chosen as priority monuments for restoration and rehabilitation. The envisaged activities include the building of a tourist lounge and completing restoration works. The State Party has also advised about the possible construction of two primary schools within the buffer zone of the property. The State Party provided information on these and other projects, which were subject to multiple technical reviews by ICOMOS, including additional reviews of the State Party responses to initial technical reviews.

The ICOMOS technical review of the works being carried out in the Great Mosque, the Caliphal Palace, Al Hir, and the Bab al-'Ammah, concluded that the works extended beyond maintenance, have potentially damaged significant attributes of the property, including archaeological features, and should be halted in order to plan for future conservation measures. Mitigation of any impacts caused by previous works should be initiated and a road map for future interventions should be devised. As for the proposed reconstruction project for the Great Mosque, and in order to define the degree to which the authenticity and integrity have been affected, ICOMOS has advised that a close on-site analysis is needed and further detailed data on previous interventions need to be provided, informed by new detailed analysis of the previous works. This foundational understanding is essential to guide future mitigation and conservation activities, as is the development of a conservation plan for the monuments at the property. With respect to the proposed school buildings, ICOMOS has advised that full documentation and information should be submitted for review. The State Party should be requested to follow the findings of the technical reviews of the abovementioned projects.

The efforts of the State Party to keep the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies advised of planned and ongoing projects are acknowledged, but it is recommended that the Committee encourage the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, for evaluation by the Advisory Bodies, comprehensive and detailed information on all such projects before making any decisions that would be difficult to reverse, in conformity with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines. For major projects, this information should include Heritage Impact Assessments prepared in accordance with the new Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context.

A joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission visited the property in June 2023, which allowed for an overall assessment of the state of conservation of the property. The State Party should be encouraged to pursue the development of a comprehensive Conservation Plan, the identification of corrective measures and the development of a Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSCOR).

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7A.29

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7A.Add.2,

2. Recalling Decisions **44 COM 7A.8** and **44 COM 7A.9**, adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/Online 2021),
3. Taking into account Decision **45 COM 7A.30** on the World Heritage properties of Iraq,
4. Notes the information provided by the State Party and its efforts in alleviating threats to the property, but reiterates its concern about the lack of comprehensive and detailed information on the property's state of conservation;
5. Expresses its deep concern regarding the condition of the property, recent damage and its deteriorated state, arising from the impact of encroachment, urban sprawl and bulldozing activities, in addition to natural deterioration and weathering;
6. Urges the State Party to submit a comprehensive report on the damage incurred at the property, along with photographic documentation of all affected monuments, including a detailed report on the bulldozed areas and encroachments, for review by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies;
7. Reiterates its request to the State Party that interventions be addressed within the framework of the overall assessment of damage and risks, and a comprehensive Conservation Plan be prepared in full consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, and in the meantime, emergency stabilization and conservation work should adhere to the principle of minimal intervention and only be undertaken in critical cases where there is threat of further accelerated damage and collapse, and requests the State Party to proceed in accordance with the technical reviews undertaken for works being carried out in the Great Mosque, the Caliphal Palace, Al Hir, and the Bab al-'Amma, the proposed reconstruction project for the Great Mosque, and the possible construction of two primary schools within the buffer zone of the property;
8. Also requests the State Party to continue to submit to the World Heritage Centre, for evaluation by the Advisory Bodies, detailed information on all future works that may have an impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, including Heritage Impact Assessments prepared in accordance with the new Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context for any major projects, and to do so before making any decisions that will be difficult to reverse, and to refrain from undertaking the restoration or reconstruction of monuments prior to conducting detailed analyses and studies and to receiving outcomes from ensuing evaluation by the Advisory Bodies;
9. Takes note of the joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission that visited the property in June 2023, and urges the State Party to implement its recommendations and to pursue the development of a comprehensive conservation plan, the identification of corrective measures and the elaboration of a Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSCOR);
10. Reiterates its appeal to all State Parties to cooperate in the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural heritage coming from Iraq as per the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 2199 of February 2015, 2253 of December 2015 and 2347 of March 2017;
11. Calls again on States Parties to support emergency safeguarding measures including through the UNESCO Heritage Emergency Fund;

12. *Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2024, 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 46th session;*
13. ***Decides to retain Samarra Archaeological City (Iraq) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.***

30. General Decision on the World Heritage properties of Iraq

Current conservation issues

The conflict in Iraq, between 2014 and 2017, led to a massive humanitarian crisis and resulted in significant damage to Iraq's cultural heritage through deliberate destruction, illegal excavation and looting, as well as collateral damage. Three of Iraq's World Heritage properties have suffered as a result of this conflict, namely Samarra Archaeological City, Ashur (Qal'at Sherqat) and Hatra. In addition, the archaeological sites of Nimrud and the Ancient City of Nineveh, which are on Iraq's Tentative List, have also been greatly damaged through acts of deliberate destruction. In the Old City of Mosul, also included in the Tentative List since August 2018, significant sites, monuments and buildings were systematically targeted, including historical and religious heritage sites such as Al-Nouri Mosque and its iconic Al-Hadba Minaret.

On 31 January 2022, the State Party submitted state of conservation reports, available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/sessions/45COM/documents/>. Additional information was submitted on 4 and 6 March 2023. The reports provide information about the state of conservation of Samarra Archaeological City, Ashur (Qal'at Sherqat) and Hatra, the efforts undertaken by the State Party, including documentation and conservation projects carried out with the support and collaboration of the international community, and efforts to address the protection needs of each property.

The State Party reiterated its request for missions to be undertaken in order to conduct damage assessments and conservation work, and requests the support of the World Heritage Centre in the development of corrective measures for the eventual removal of the three properties from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Activities undertaken by UNESCO

- Since the extended 44th session of the World Heritage Committee (Fuzhou/Online, 2021), UNESCO has pursued its actions towards the recovery of Iraq's cultural heritage, most notably in Mosul;
- Within the framework of the Netherlands Funds-in-Trust project (USD 35,782), the World Heritage Centre, in collaboration with ICOMOS, has carried out several online workshops for strengthening capacities in state of conservation reporting on World Heritage properties, the preparation of retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), and the elaboration of the Desired state of conservation for removal of properties from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR);
- A joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission to Ashur (Qal'at Sherqat) took place in March-April 2022. The report of the mission can be accessed at: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1130/documents/>, and the recommendations can also be found in Document WHC/23/45.COM/7A, and draft Decision **45 COM 7A.27**;
- Two joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring missions were carried out to Hatra and Samarra Archaeological City in June 2023;
- Following the launch of the Initiative "**Revive the Spirit of Mosul**" in February 2018, UNESCO has pursued its actions towards the rehabilitation and recovery of the Old City of Mosul:
 - Safeguarding cultural heritage in the Old City of Mosul has been carried out through two major projects: "Reviving the Spirit of Mosul by rebuilding its historic landmarks namely the Al-Nouri Mosque and its Al-Hadba Minaret, as well as the Al-Tahera Church and Al-Saa'a

Church” funded by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) (USD 50.4 million for 2018-2023¹), and a major project funded by the European Union (EU) (USD 38.5 million in two phases for 2019-2023) on “Reviving Mosul and Basra Old Cities”, which aims to rehabilitate the historic urban centres of these two major cities, while creating jobs and developing skills of young people in rehabilitation and urban infrastructure,

- In total, 15 UNESCO key partner countries and international organizations have contributed to the initiative, including the EU, Canada, Croatia, France (through ALIPH and Convention France-UNESCO), the Government of Flanders, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Korea (through KOICA), Lithuania, the Netherlands, Qatar (through EAA), Sweden (through SIDA), UAE as well as UNESCO’s Heritage Emergency Fund,
- At the Al-Nouri Mosque Complex and Al-Hadba Minaret, after an intensive phase of preparation, which included demining, documentation, stabilisation and design preparation, the active phase of the reconstruction of Al Hadba Minaret started in February 2022, with stabilization of the Minaret’s base,
- PHASE I has entailed the execution of complex consolidation and reintegration works on the remaining original bases, in addition to the construction of a scale 1:1 sample of the lost shaft, which is almost complete, starting with PHASE II, which consists of the execution of the new foundations with micro piles, as well as preparing for PHASE III (actual reconstruction of the lost shaft),
- The reconstruction of Al-Nouri Mosque, the design of which was selected through an international design competition, was given to a local contractor. The selection of the contractor for the execution of the reconstruction and rehabilitation works on the eastern sector of the Al Nouri Complex was successfully completed in June 2022. The works actively started in August 2022,
- Archaeological excavations were completed along the western side of the Al Nouri Prayer Hall, revealing important layers and structures belonging to the original Mosque, dating back to the 12th century. The excavations were led by the Iraqi Ministry of Culture, in close cooperation with UNESCO, and entailed the joint decision of integrating these important findings in the reconstruction of the destroyed Prayer Hall,
- The detailed design for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the eastern sector of the Al Nouri complex – including the integration of the recent archaeological discoveries on the western side of the Prayer Hall – was completed in May 2022. It was endorsed by the Joint Technical Committee, approved by the relevant authorities (notably, the Sunni Endowments, and Iraqi Ministry of Culture), and presented to the local community during a public event convened in Mosul, at the end of June 2022,
- With regard to the rehabilitation of the two churches, the rubble removal as well as securing the site has been completed for Al-Tahera Church as well as Al-Saa’a Church; damage assessment and technical documentation for restoration and rehabilitation of these two churches were carried out, and the reconstruction of both churches started in March 2022,
- As for the EU-funded project “Reviving Mosul and Basra Old Cities”, following engagement with all levels of concerned national and local government entities and relevant stakeholders, UNESCO is restoring and rebuilding 124 historic houses, including 7 historic houses in the Al-Nouri Mosque complex funded by the UAE. This intervention is global: reconstruction concerns walls, as well as upgrading of electrical network, septic tanks, drainage, road surfacing and public lighting. Before rebuilding, the neighbourhood had to be cleared. So far, 2,107 tons of rubble and 21 items of unexploded ordnance (UXO) have been removed,
- The reconstruction of the first 43 heritage houses, under one package, was completed and handed over to their owners in August 2022. The rehabilitation and reconstruction of the additional 75 heritage houses started in September 2021, under a second package, out of which 53 houses have been completed, as of date, and handed over to their owners. The

¹ The implementation period for the project “The restoration and critical reconstruction of the Al-Nouri Mosque and its Al-Hadba Minaret as a tool to foster social cohesion and community reconciliation” has been extended by 10 months to 4 July 2024.

remaining houses, along with the public infrastructure and the neighbourhood alleyways will be completed in August 2023. An additional package of 4 houses were also completed in May 2023. All these works are carried out using traditional techniques and materials, in order to preserve the identity of the old town,

- UNESCO is also rehabilitating two palatial houses. The rehabilitation of Suliman Al Sayegh House was successfully completed in April 2023. The first phase of the other palatial house, Zyada House, involving the rehabilitation of the superstructure, was completed in May 2023. The second phase of the same property (all exterior and limited interior finishings) will start immediately thereafter, with the goal of completing by the end of summer 2023,
- As for Al-Aghawat Mosque in Mosul, the temporary stabilisation is finalised, the design has been prepared, and implementation of the necessary reconstruction of works awaits further funding,
- These projects related to the reconstruction of Mosul's built heritage have been, and will be, creating immediate employment in Mosul as a relief measure in response to the unemployment caused by the COVID-19 outbreak,
- UNESCO launched a dedicated TVET and on-the-Job training programmes for adult women and men which associates general education, the study of technologies and related sciences, and the acquisition of practical skills (of which 18% were women). More than 1,550 qualified vocational students graduated as of date, exceeding the original target numbers. 93.3% of these graduates eventually joined in on-site apprenticeship programme, working and gaining skills in the rehabilitation of the heritage buildings,
- UNESCO has so far created more than 5,000 local jobs since the start of the Initiative. This is fundamental for building skills and enhancing social inclusion in Iraq at this critical time,
- Within the framework of the Mosul Initiative, UNESCO in partnership with ALIPH, and with generous financial support from the Government of France (USD 1,531,647), is rehabilitating a building known as the House of Prayer, which once housed the first school for girls in Iraq, as a multipurpose educational and cultural center for the local community. The House of Prayer is adjacent to, and part of, the Conventual Church of Our Lady of the Hour (Al-Saa'a Church) complex, belonging to the Dominican Order. The project aims at fostering social cohesion, resilience and livelihood through the rehabilitation of the city's urban heritage and re-using the space for revitalizing cultural and educational life in the Old City,
- UNESCO through its Heritage Emergency fund (USD 48,000) has supported the urgent securing and temporary stabilization measures of the Corner House located within the perimeter of the Al Saa'a Church complex, which includes the Conventual Church, currently being rehabilitated by UNESCO through funds from the United Arab Emirates. The stabilization works started in October 2022 and were successfully completed on 31 December 2022,
- The project has also engaged in training activities targeting young professionals from Mosul in cooperation with ICCROM. The first cycle of the ICCROM training course for young local architects and engineers started in April 2022 and the first graduates received their diplomas on 26 January 2023, in a public event organized in the newly established UNESCO Community Information Center. The training programme is composed of two Tracks: Track 1 targeting young Iraqi architects and engineers (funded by UAE), and Track 2 targeting semi-skilled workers interested in traditional building crafts (funded by EU). The training under Track 2 has been completed. The selection of participants for the second cycle of Track 1 is completed and the course started in February 2023,
- Al Ekhlaas Primary School has been a fixture in the west side of the Old City of Mosul for nearly 60 years. In 2016, the students and their families saw their dreams of a promising future crumble under the weight of war and destruction. With the support of the European Union, UNESCO is rebuilding this facility as the first child-friendly school in Mosul. Students, parents and school administrators contributed their ideas for the design through a consultative process. Reconstruction work is now underway and should be completed by the end of 2023. When it reopens its doors, Al-Ekhlaas Primary School will be a space that provides a safe, clean, healthy, and protective environment for the children of Mosul,

- Also, with support from the Government of Flanders, in 2019, a publication was prepared on damage assessment of cultural and religious heritage affected by violent extremism during 2014 (Governorates of Ninawa, Kirkuk, Salah al-Din, Diyala and Anbar). With regard to the support for the restoration and documentation of the thousands of manuscripts dating from the 14th to the 19th centuries, in 2018, 2019 and 2022 UNESCO provided technical and financial assistance for the preservation of some of the most historically significant manuscripts and materials. The digitisation and conservation equipment was subsequently delivered and installed at the Digital Centre of Eastern Manuscripts in Erbil.
- From 19 to 26 September 2022, UNESCO funded the travel and accommodation costs related to the organization of the training on “Parchments Restoration Technics” by two experts from the Matenaderan Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscript in Armenia at the Digital Centre, to monitor parchment manuscripts in the Centre and practical works on the sample of selected parchment papers. It also included a theoretical part on the use of chemical substances in restoration works and a discussion on the centre’s needs and potential future training preparation,
- The spirit of Mosul is also the living heritage of communities and a vibrant cultural life, from traditional music festival to the street booksellers. UNESCO and its partners have engaged in a comprehensive plan to restore cultural life and cultural institutions. Cinema, Music, and Art are at the heart of UNESCO’s work in Mosul. To support the revival of traditional music in Mosul, UNESCO launched the "Listening to Iraq" programme. It provided training to 24 musicians from different communities of Mosul, leading to the creation of four ensembles who benefitted from grants for music touring in Iraq,
- In partnership with the Theatre of Ghent in Belgium, UNESCO provided 20 students from the Institute of Fine Arts of Mosul training and hands-on experience in each of the different roles that define the fundamental aspects of a cinema production: director, screenwriter, editor, actor, set and costume design, audio and light technician and production assistant. The training led to the production of 9 short movies produced by the students as well as the establishment of a “Film Lab” in the Institute of Fine Arts of Mosul in April 2022, becoming a possible platform for future learning experiences in the cinema field within the city of Mosul.
- UNESCO officially opened in November 2022 a Community Information Center in the Old City, which will serve as a center to organize events, including cultural activities and education programs for the community.

Activities undertaken by the Advisory Bodies

- ICOMOS has actively contributed to online workshops for strengthening capacities in state of conservation reporting for properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger, the preparation of retrospective Statements of OUV and the elaboration of the DSOCR;
- ICOMOS participated in the joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission to Ashur (Qal’at Sherqat) in March-April 2022, as well as to Samarra Archaeological City and Hatra in June 2023.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

The conflict situation in Iraq, between 2014 and 2017, has directly affected its three properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger, and some of its Tentative List sites to varying degrees. In addition, illegal excavations and looting of archaeological sites have caused extensive loss and irreversible damage – although the restitution of the country’s cultural property has been gaining momentum in recent years, notably including the ‘Gilgamesh Tablet’ that was handed back to Iraq in September 2021.

With the liberation of substantial parts of the country in 2017, Iraq has faced the challenges of recovery while addressing the unprecedented humanitarian crisis. This was particularly evident at the Old City of Mosul, where UNESCO is currently engaged within the framework of its flagship initiative “Revive the Spirit of Mosul”.

The State Party has provided updated information about the state of conservation of Ashur (Qal’at Sherqat), Samarra Archaeological City and Hatra, and outlined its efforts in ensuring the protection and conservation of these properties, including the identification of some urgently needed stabilisation work. On the other hand, detailed assessments have not been provided, which are necessary to scope the

required repair and restoration work and to inform the preparation of comprehensive conservation plans and the elaboration of the DSOCR for these properties. In addition, remedial and repair work should be guided by comprehensive conservation plans prepared in full consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, which should comprise an evaluation of all potential risks, including those related to natural deterioration, potential flooding and encroachment, among others.

It is therefore recommended that the Committee reiterate its request to the State Party to submit detailed documentation and condition assessment at World Heritage properties, and to undertake protection and urgent stabilization work only in cases where collapse or further damage is imminent, according to the principle of minimal intervention. The required information includes systematic photographic surveys, drawings, graphics, quantitative data and identification of potential risks.

It is also recommended that the Committee remind the State Party to advise, through the World Heritage Centre, about any future plans for major restoration or new construction, or other projects that may affect the OUV of World Heritage properties, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, before making any decisions that would be difficult to reverse.

Finally, it is recommended that the Committee reiterate its appeal to States Parties to cooperate in the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural property coming from Iraq and to contribute towards the safeguarding of its cultural heritage.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7A.30

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7A.Add 2,*
2. *Recalling Decision **44 COM 7A.9**, adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/Online, 2021),*
3. *Takes note of the reports provided by the State Party regarding the state of conservation of the properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger, and acknowledges with appreciation the efforts of the State Party and the international community to address conservation issues;*
4. *Continues to express its appreciation to the Director-General of UNESCO for the progress made towards rehabilitating and safeguarding cultural heritage in the Old City of Mosul, and for the expertise and resources mobilized so far within UNESCO's "Revive the Spirit of Mosul" flagship initiative, and also expresses its appreciation to the donors for their generous contributions towards this end;*
5. *Reiterates its request to the State Party to provide comprehensive and detailed assessment of the condition of properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger to the fullest extent possible, including systematic photographic surveys, drawings, graphics, quantitative data and identification of potential risks, to safeguard damaged properties according to the principle of minimal intervention, and to refrain from undertaking conservation and restoration work until comprehensive conservation plans have been developed, in full consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies;*
6. *Reminds the State Party about the need to submit to the World Heritage Centre, for examination by the Advisory Bodies, information on any future plans for major restoration or new construction, or other projects that may affect the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of World Heritage properties, in conformity with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, before making any decisions that would be difficult to reverse;*

7. *Requests the State Party to implement the recommendations of the 2022 joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive monitoring mission to Ashur (Qal'at Sherqat), as outlined in Decision 45 COM 7A.27;*
8. *Reiterates its appeal to all States Parties to cooperate in the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural heritage coming from Iraq as per the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 2199 of February 2015, 2253 of December 2015 and 2347 of March 2017;*
9. *Continues to call on all States Parties to provide technical and financial support to safeguarding efforts for Iraq's World Heritage and other cultural heritage sites, including through the "Revive the Spirit of Mosul" initiative, in order to implement short-, medium- and long-term measures;*
10. *Also requests the World Heritage Centre to present at its 46th session a report on the activities related to cultural heritage undertaken within the framework of the "Revive the Spirit of Mosul" initiative;*
11. *Further requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2024, an updated report on the state of conservation of the properties and the implementation of the above.*

31. Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls (site proposed by Jordan) (C 148 rev)

See Document WHC/23/45.COM/7A.Add.3

38. Hebron/AI-Khalil Old Town (Palestine) (C 1565)

See Document WHC/23/45.COM/7A.Add.3

39. Palestine: Land of Olives and Vines – Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir (Palestine) (C 1492)

See Document WHC/23/45.COM/7A.Add.3

46. General Decision on the World Heritage properties of the Syrian Arab Republic

Current conservation issues

The armed conflict in Syria started in March 2011 and escalated leading to significant violence and degradation of humanitarian conditions. It has inflicted damage on the six inscribed properties as well as on the 12 sites inscribed on the Tentative List. Sites have been damaged by shelling, fires, extensive illegal excavations, military use, construction violations, in addition to intentional destruction and inappropriate use of properties by internally displaced populations. Some sites remain at risk, as the

result of the conflict, from both direct impact such as physical damage, but also from indirect implications such as loss of protection, exacerbated weathering or illegal constructions.

On 3 January 2022 and 24 January 2023, the State Party submitted state of conservation reports, available at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/sessions/45COM/documents/>. These reports collate available information from the branches of the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums (DGAM) up to 31 December 2022. In some areas, access is extremely limited, with consequent constraints on available information. In particular, the site of the Ancient Villages of Northern Syria remains inaccessible owing to ongoing presence of armed groups, which prevents full understanding of the extent of damage at this property.

The State Party reported on actions carried out by the DGAM, despite the difficult working conditions, particularly with limited funding to support these efforts for the preservation of cultural heritage. At most of the properties, damage has been assessed and emergency conservation and urgent risk mitigation actions have been undertaken whenever possible. The DGAM has initiated high quality restoration work at a number of properties, although some concerns have been expressed about use of appropriate authentic replacement materials (such as 'like for like' stone in monument repair).

Recalling its intention to update its Tentative List in coordination with the World Heritage Centre, the State Party has provided updated information on the conservation of sites inscribed on the Tentative List as follows:

- For 'Arwad Island', DGAM received no new information about the potential tourism project previously reported ;
- In 'Maaloula', restoration works on residential buildings have been undertaken by inhabitants;
- At the 'Noreas of Hama', boundaries are being updated in order to enhance protection;
- At 'Tartus: the Crusaders Citadel-City', and 'Ugarit (Tell Shamra)', maintenance works are being undertaken;
- At 'Ebla', 'Mari (Tell Hariri) and Dura Europos'; no work has been undertaken;
- No new information is available for 'Qasr al-Hayr ach-Charqi, a desert Castle' and 'Raqqa-Rafiq: the Abassid City';
- No information is provided for 'Apamea (Afamia)'.

The 7.8-magnitude earthquake that struck south-eastern Türkiye, near the Syrian border on 6 February 2023, and the subsequent aftershocks, inflicted devastating damages on Syria's already fragile cultural heritage. Damaged properties include the Ancient City of Aleppo, Crac des Chevaliers and Qalat Salah El-Din, and the Ancient Villages of Northern Syria. Damage was also reported at some sites on the Tentative List, including at Raqqa Rafiq: the Abbsid. City and at Norias of Hama. Possible damage was reported at Arwad Island and Tartus: the Crusaders' Citadel-City.

Activities undertaken by UNESCO

- Since the extended 44th session of the Committee (Fuzhou/Online, 2021), UNESCO has pursued its actions to assist sustained efforts to safeguard cultural heritage of Syria;
- The joint publication with UNITAR "Ten Years of Conflict: the State of Conservation of cultural heritage in Syria" is being finalized.;
- The projects supported by the World Heritage Fund for Qal'at Salah El-Din (March 2020-April 2021) and for the Crac des Chevaliers (March 2019-December 2021) are completed;
- Assistance from the World Heritage Fund for sites in danger has supported a project (July 2021-December 2022) on damage assessment, emergency measures and the enhancement of the buffer zones of the Crac des Chevaliers and Qal'at Salah El-Din, and preparatory studies in view of the restoration of the Kalybe monument in the Ancient City of Bosra (November 2021-December 2022);
- Requests for assistance from the World Heritage Fund have been approved in 2023 for Site of Palmyra, Ancient City of Aleppo and Crac des Chevaliers and Qal'at Salah El-Din;
- Following the positive results of the work undertaken for the elaboration of the Desired State of Conservation for the Removal of the Ancient City of Damascus from the List of World Heritage in

Danger (DSOCR), a number of meetings took place remotely between the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and the DGAM for the elaboration of the DSOOCR for The Crac des Chevaliers and Qal'at Salah El-Din (meetings on 8 June and 20 December 2021) and for the Site of Palmyra (13 December 2021);

- Following the devastating earthquake of 6 February 2023, a UNESCO Rapid Assessment mission was carried out from 25 to 27 February 2023 to Ancient City of Aleppo. In addition, UNESCO led the Culture section of the Syria Earthquake Recovery Needs Assessment (SERNA).

Activities undertaken by the Advisory Bodies

- Since the extended 44th session of the Committee (Fuzhou/Online, 2021), ICOMOS has continued to work with the State Party and the World Heritage Centre to address the longstanding inclusion on the List of World Heritage in Danger of six World Heritage properties. Following the successful initial work to prepare a DSOOCR for the Ancient City of Damascus, attention has been turned to Crac des Chevaliers and Qal'at Salah El-Din and Site of Palmyra, through meetings, preparation of outline documents and review of information provided by the State Party.
- ICOMOS continues to provide technical review of major works within the Ancient City of Aleppo, the Ancient City of Damascus and at Crac des Chevaliers and Qal'at Salah El-Din, that have been referred in conformity with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines;
- A provisional ICOMOS National Committee in Syria was accredited at the beginning of 2022. The expected outcomes of this initiative include fostering professional relations among local heritage experts, and with international experts;
- The ICOMOS Working Group on the Safeguarding of Cultural Heritage in Syria and Iraq continues to monitor conservation challenges and activities. An active participation in international meetings has led to the production of new publications and web recordings. New directions include the impact of community participation, sustainability or climate change;
- ICOMOS participated in the workshop "Restoring Syrian Heritage and Reviving Communities", organised by the Syria Trust for Development during Expo 2020 Dubai in March 2022, which resulted in the adoption of a declaration and recommendations. This was an opportunity to meet national and foreign stakeholders, as well as to better assess present needs. Recommendations were also provided in the framework of UNESCO MONDIACULT 2022 meetings on Arab Countries;
- The 6 February 2023 earthquake in Syria and Türkiye, and its subsequent aftershocks, represent a new challenge. ICOMOS issued statements and organised online Zoom expert meetings. The new ICOMOS Syria committee visited Aleppo with the UNESCO Rapid Assessment mission's team and issued a report with recommendations. The Working Group on Syria and Iraq is trying to raise funds for equipment and urban interventions in historical cities.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

The armed conflict in Syria has affected the six World Heritage properties and has substantially limited capacities to sustain and protect their Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), some of which remain threatened by ascertained and potential dangers. The earthquake of February 2023 has exacerbated the situation of some of the properties and poses an additional challenge to recovery efforts.

Illegal excavations across archaeological sites and tells in Syria have caused extensive and irreversible damage to those sites, a number of which are on Syria's Tentative List. They are also a major source for the illicit trafficking of cultural property, providing looted artifacts to be sold in regional and international black markets.

It is recommended that the Committee commend the DGAM, heritage professionals in Syria and local communities who have made sustained efforts in monitoring and protecting cultural heritage, implementing first aid measures for its safeguarding and proceeding with restoration work for its recovery, despite the constraints. The State Party and the international community should be encouraged to include recovery actions of cultural heritage properties within the overall humanitarian, security and peace building response, and support recovery plans that promote community participation, sustainability and inclusion. In order to plan on the longer term, it is also recommended that the State Party is reminded of the importance of affording priority to overall planning for recovery through Master Plans and Management Plans, to be developed in line with the 2011 UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape, and in consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies.

The World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies will continue to support the identification of the necessary corrective measures and the development of DSOCRs, and have been successfully pursuing more flexible approaches and online engagement that have demonstrated that the preparation of DSOCRs can be progressed, despite the current circumstances and inability to schedule Reactive Monitoring missions at this time.

It is recommended that the Committee further encourage the State Party to plan for the future of the World Heritage properties according to international conservation charters and standards, in full consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, also taking into consideration the 2018 Warsaw Recommendation on Recovery and Reconstruction. It is also appropriate to remind the State Party of its obligation to transmit to the World Heritage Centre, for examination by the Advisory Bodies, detailed information on future projects, before making any decisions that would be difficult to reverse, in conformity with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, and that this obligation includes major restoration works.

It is recommended that the Committee also call for international and national heritage professionals to continue to unite for the safeguarding of Syria's cultural heritage; and to further support its safeguarding through earmarked funds and contributions to the UNESCO Heritage Emergency Fund.

Taking into consideration that some of the cultural heritage sites remain under threat, it is recommended that the Committee repeat its previous call for all parties associated with the conflict in Syria to refrain from any action that could further damage the heritage of the country, in particular all World Heritage properties and sites included on the Tentative List, and to fulfil their obligations under international law, especially the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2347 of March 2017, in part by taking all possible measures to protect such heritage and preventing any damage that may result from targeting World Heritage properties, and support recovery plans that are based on community participation, sustainability and inclusion.

It is also recommended that the Committee reiterate its suggestion that the State Party consider ratifying the Second Protocol (1999) of the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict.

It is further recommended that the Committee also call upon all parties associated with the conflict in Syria and the international community, in particular the countries neighboring Syria, to ensure effective measures for the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural objects, in line with the UN Security Council Resolution 2199.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7A.46

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7A.Add.2,*
2. *Recalling Decision **44 COM 7A.24** adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/Online, 2021),*
3. *Taking note of the reports provided by the State Party regarding the state of conservation of the six Syrian World Heritage properties and the sites included on the national Tentative List, commends the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums (DGAM) and all heritage professionals and local communities in Syria who are working on monitoring, protecting, and conserving cultural heritage, despite the prevailing challenges;*
4. *Expresses its utmost concern about the damage incurred, including additional damage resulting from the impacts of the 2023 earthquake, and the threats still facing several properties;*
5. *Continues to urge all parties associated with the situation in Syria to refrain from any action that would cause further damage to the country's cultural heritage, and to fulfil*

their obligations under international law, in particular the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2347 of March 2017, by taking all possible measures to protect such heritage, including preventing any damage that may result from targeting World Heritage properties, sites included in the national Tentative List and other cultural heritage sites;

6. *Further encourages the State Party and the international community to include recovery actions of cultural heritage properties within the overall humanitarian, security and peace building response, and support recovery plans that promote community participation, sustainability and inclusion, and reminds the State Party of the importance of affording priority to overall planning for recovery through Master Plans and Management Plans, to be developed in line with the 2011 UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape, and in consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies;*
7. *Takes note with satisfaction of the works initiated by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies for the elaboration of a set of corrective measures and the Desired state of conservation for the removal from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) of some of the Syrian properties;*
8. *Reiterates its appeal to all States Parties to cooperate in fighting against the illicit trafficking of cultural property coming from Syria as per the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2199 of February 2015, and, in engaging in the protection of cultural heritage during armed conflict as per the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2347 of March 2017, and reiterates its suggestion to the State Party to consider ratifying the Second Protocol (1999) of the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict;*
9. *Requests the State Party to pursue the systematic documentation of all damage incurred at World Heritage properties, whenever conditions allow, to implement all possible risk mitigation measures;*
10. *Also reminds the State Party about the need to submit to the World Heritage Centre, for examination by the Advisory Bodies, information on any proposed major restoration or new construction project, including infrastructure development projects, that may affect the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of World Heritage properties, in conformity with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, before making any decisions that would be difficult to reverse;*
11. *Reiterates its call upon the international community to further support the safeguarding of Syrian cultural heritage through earmarked funds or through contributions to the UNESCO Heritage Emergency Fund;*
12. *Also reiterates its call upon the international and national cultural heritage professionals to unite for the safeguarding of Syria's cultural heritage, and to pursue their ongoing initiatives in coordination with UNESCO;*
13. *Also requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2024**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the properties and the implementation of the above.*

ASIA AND PACIFIC

51. Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley (Afghanistan) (C 208 rev)

See Document WHC/23/45.COM/7A.Add.3

52. Minaret and Archaeological Remains of Jam (Afghanistan) (C 211 rev)

See Document WHC/23/45.COM/7A.Add.3

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

56. Roșia Montană Mining Landscape (Romania) (C 1552rev)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2021

Criteria (ii)(iii)(iv)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger 2021-present

Threats for which the property was inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger

- Potential resumption of large scale open-caste gold mining
- Potential, cumulative impact of small-scale mining
- Water pollution from old mines

Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger

Proposed for adoption in the draft Decision below

Corrective measures identified

Proposed for adoption in the draft Decision below

Timeframe for the implementation of the corrective measures

Proposed for adoption in the draft Decision below

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1552/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1552/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

N/A

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

Factors identified at the time of inscription of the property:

- Potential large-scale open caste or small-scale gold mining
- Legal issues: pending World Bank arbitration between Gabriel Resources and the Romanian government
- Lack of Planning Controls/lack of Management Plan

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1552/>

Current conservation issues

The State Party submitted a state of conservation report and an update on 31 January 2022 and 1 March 2023 respectively, both available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1552/documents/>. The report provides information on the measures implemented by the State Party in response to the decision adopted by the World Heritage Committee at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021), as follows:

- The process of developing a Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR), including Corrective Measures to address the recommendations of the Committee, started in December 2021 with an online meeting between the State Party representatives, ICOMOS and the World Heritage Centre, and continued with online meetings in 2022 as no Reactive Monitoring mission could visit the property due to

restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, and resulted in a DSOCR draft for submission to the Committee;

- Due to the arbitration process between the mining company Gabriel Resources and the Romanian government that started in 2015 and is still ongoing at the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (World Bank), related to mining permits, the State Party cannot address the following Committee recommendations and their implementation will depend on the outcome of the arbitration:
 - Halting the approval of mining permits at the property,
 - Developing planning controls that prevent further mining at the property;
- The General Urban Plan that was included in the annual programme of the Ministry of Development was initiated in 2022, followed by the Zonal Urban Plan in 2023. Both will be submitted in draft to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies;
- An inspection and maintenance plan for the modern header ponds is to be initiated in 2023;
- A Management Committee was established for the property in 2023. All key stakeholders will now be involved in the management of the property in accordance with the legal and management framework passed in 2021 (Government Decision no. 857/August 21, 2021), and the State Party shall commit adequate human and financial resources for its implementation;
- A comprehensive refinement and augmentation of the Management Plan has been initiated and a revised monitoring programme for the property is being devised and will be integrated into the management plan;
- A tourism management strategy will be initiated in 2023;
- An internationally supported conservation plan for the Roman remains is already under discussion and work has been completed on repairs to the Orlea Roman mining gallery at the Mining Museum;
- A major programme has been initiated to improve the state of conservation of buildings that support the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, the visitor experience and opportunities within the local economy for residents and others.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

As the reasons for the inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger at the last Committee session had been very well considered during the ICOMOS evaluation process, the agreement of the State Party to discuss the creation of a DSOCR through online meetings, rather than waiting for a Reactive Monitoring mission to be undertaken, was welcomed. Based on a process that allowed all key stakeholders to be involved, a DSOCR has been drafted by the State Party, which the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies assessed positively.

In the light of the difficult circumstances relating to the World Bank arbitration process between the mining company Gabriel Resources and the Romanian government, which started in 2015 and is still ongoing, the State Party considers that it cannot set a timeframe for corrective measures relating to halting the approval of mining permits at the property or developing planning controls that prevent further mining at the property until the outcome of the arbitration process is known.

For the remaining corrective measures relating to the other recommendations of the Committee on the management plan, General Urban Plan, Zonal Urban Plan, and safety of the header ponds, work has been initiated and timeframes developed. The State Party is to be commended for planning and initiating this work immediately following the inscription of the property on the World Heritage List, as it is for completing repairs to the Orlea Roman mining gallery at the Mining Museum.

A major programme for conserving key religious and secular buildings within the property that supports its OUV and enhancing infrastructure has been launched. This will also provide visitors with information and improve economic opportunities for local residents. Some projects have been supported directly by the Ministry of Culture while others have involved partnerships with local schools, non-governmental organizations and entrepreneurs. This programme will support sustainable use of the landscape by the community, which is essential for the conservation of the Roman remains.

DSOCR to be reached to allow the property to be removed from the List of World Heritage in Danger

Desired state of conservation	Corrective Measures - Summary	Timeframe for delivering Corrective Measures
1. Approval of mining permits at the property halted	Halting approval of unadjusted mining activities at the property	Not yet defined
2. Planning controls developed and implemented that address the prevention of any activities, including mining, which have the potential to negatively impact the attributes of OUV	Planning controls approved and implemented that address the prevention of any activity, including mining, that has the potential to negatively impact the attributes of OUV	2026
3. Management committee established	Establish a Management Committee	Completed
4. Management Plan revised and strengthened in relation to mining issues	Revise and strengthen the Management Plan that address the prevention of any activity, including mining, that has the potential to negatively impact the attributes of OUV	2024
5. Polluted mine water discharge from the main drainage adit mitigated	Measures to address the issue of polluted mine water discharge from the main drainage adit	2026
6. Inspection and maintenance plan for the 18th/19th century header ponds developed	Developing an inspection and maintenance plan for the 18th/19th century header ponds	2027

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7A.56

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7A.Add.2,*
2. *Recalling Decision **44 COM 8B.26**, adopted at its 44th extended session (Fuzhou/online, 2021),*
3. *Welcomes the organisation of virtual online meetings to discuss the development of the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) between the State Party representatives, ICOMOS and the World Heritage Centre, in the absence of a Reactive Monitoring mission due to restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic;*
4. *Adopts the DSOCR presented in Document WHC/23/45.COM/7A.Add.2, including corrective measures, while noting the need to complete the timeframes for corrective measures relating to mining;*
5. *Notes the difficult circumstances relating to the World Bank arbitration process between the mining company Gabriel Resources and the Romanian government that started in 2015 and is still ongoing, which means that the State Party considers that it cannot address the halting of approvals for mining permits at the property or develop planning*

controls that prevent further mining at the property, as requested by the Committee, until the outcome of the arbitration process is known;

6. *Also welcomes the commitment of the State Party to ensure adequate human and financial resources for management of the property;*
7. *Also notes the major programme that has been developed to conserve key religious and secular buildings that support the Outstanding Universal Value of the property as a means of ensuring sustainable use of the landscape by the community;*
8. *Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2024, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property, including information on progress made in implementing corrective measures, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 46th session;*
9. ***Decides to retain Roşia Montană Mining Landscape (Romania) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.***

57. Medieval Monuments in Kosovo (Serbia) (C 724 bis)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2004, extension 2006

Criteria (ii)(iii)(iv)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger 2006-present

Threats for which the property was inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger

- Lack of legal status of the property;
- Lack of legislative protection of buffer zones;
- Lack of implementation of the Management Plan and of active management;
- Difficulties to monitor the property due to political instability, post-conflict situation (visits under the Kosovo Stabilisation Force / United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (KFOR / UNMIK) escort and lack of guards and security);
- Unsatisfactory state of conservation and maintenance of the property.

Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger

- Full and permanent protection of the property in a secure and stable political environment;
- Agreed medium-term plan for the restoration of wall paintings (including preventive conservation regime) and conservation and rehabilitation of the property;
- Implementation of the Management Plan, and full establishment of buffer zones and boundaries including their legal protection.

Corrective measures identified

Urgent / short-term corrective measures:

1. Put in place appropriate guarding and security arrangements for the Church of the Virgin of Ljeviša;
2. Prepare a conservation status report including a condition survey for the wall paintings and the status of the conservation works and take temporary measures where there is an urgent need (for example the lead roof of the west bay of the nave of the Church of Virgin of Ljeviša, that was partly removed);
3. Prepare a risk preparedness study, in conformity with Paragraph 118 of the *Operational Guidelines* and with Decisions **28 COM 10B.4** and **30 COM 7.2**;

Long-term corrective measures:

1. Ensure the adequate long-term administrative, regulatory protection and management of the property, in conformity with Paragraph 97 of the *Operational Guidelines*;
2. Put in place strong protective regimes for the buffer zones;
3. Adequately delineate the boundaries (e.g. extend the boundaries of the Patriarchate of Peć to include more of its riverside-valley settings);
4. Prepare detailed state of conservation reports as a basis for adapted monitoring, preventive conservation measures, and specific conservation projects to reverse decline;
5. Ensure appropriate and timely implementation of the Management Plan.

Timeframe for the implementation of the corrective measures

- Urgent / short-term corrective measures to be taken by the State Party, in cooperation with UNESCO programmes, UNMIK and Provisional Institutions of Self Government in Kosovo^{2*};
- Regarding the long-term corrective measures to be taken by the State Party, in cooperation with UNESCO programmes, UNMIK and Provisional Institutions of Self Government in Kosovo, no specific timeframe can be given at this stage due to the uncertain political situation.

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/724/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0 (from 2003-2022)

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/724/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount granted: USD 2,798,348 in 2008-2014 following the Donors Conference for the Protection and Preservation of Cultural Heritage in Kosovo, May 2005; USD 693,330 in 2008-2013 by the Italian Government; USD 76,335 in 2008-2013 by the Czech Government; USD 132,833 in 2008-2013 by the Greek Government; USD 2,010,000 in 2011-2014 by the Government of the Russian Federation and USD 45,000 in 2012-2013 by the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria.

Previous monitoring missions

January 2007: UNESCO intersectoral mission to Kosovo; July 2008, January and August 2009, July 2010, July 2012, January and July 2013, January and June 2014, June and October 2015, April 2016, September 2017: missions of the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe.

Main threats identified in previous reports

See above

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/724/>

Current conservation issues

Note: *The Secretariat was informed by UNESCO's Legal Advisor in 2008 that UNESCO is to follow the practice of the United Nations, which considers that the Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999) continues to be applicable to the territory of Kosovo until a final settlement is achieved.*

At its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021), the World Heritage Committee decided to adjourn the debate on the state of conservation of the property (Decision **44 COM 7A.33**) until its next ordinary session. The state of conservation report submitted to the World Heritage Committee at its extended 44th session is available on the World Heritage Centre's website at the following page: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/soc/4033>.

The Permanent Delegation of the Republic of Serbia to UNESCO submitted to the World Heritage Centre a state of conservation report and additional information on the state of conservation on 27 January 2022 and 1 February 2023 respectively. The information is available on the World Heritage Centre's website at the following page: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/724/documents/>

The reported information outlines the following:

² * References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

- The four monuments that comprise the property face ongoing security issues, and their vulnerability were exacerbated by the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- On 5 January 2022, a new Law on Cultural Heritage entered into force, giving particular attention to the preservation and protection of UNESCO World Heritage properties;
- In 2021, no conservation intervention was undertaken at the Dečani Monastery. In 2022, conservation and restoration works were carried out on the wall paintings on the altar of the Dečani Church and included salt extraction. Although plans to construct a main road Dečani-Plav in the vicinity of the Visoki Dečani Monastery Special Protected Zone (SPZ) were suspended in 2020, the area has not yet been restored to its original state. The monastery is secured by Kosovo Stabilisation Force (KFOR); the access road is fenced off by barriers set up by the KFOR. The Republic of Serbia, through the Office for Kosovo and Metohija, is providing legal assistance to the Serbian Orthodox Church. Future for Religious Heritage, a European network for historic places of worship and member of the European Heritage Alliance, has included the Dečani Monastery in the '7 Most Endangered Programme' 2021;
- At the Patriarchate of Peć Monastery, roof reparations were carried out from May to October 2021 and from August to October 2022 on the Saint Apostle church. Due to the damaged lead cladding, humidity had penetrated the fabric of the church, impacting the state of conservation of the wall paintings. The lead cladding was replaced in the nave and on the north and south sides of the bays, and a new gutter was installed. Furthermore, tourist infrastructure has been put in place, including a water fountain and a bilingual information board at the Patriarchate of Peć Monastery;
- At the Church of the Holy Virgin of Ljeviša in Prizren, the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments continues to maintain the state of conservation of the church and the church gate. No conservation works were carried out in 2022. In addition, the Institute foresees the installation of lighting in the altar partition, for which the approval of the World Heritage Centre will be sought. The conservation and restoration work on the wall paintings was developed following research undertaken in 2021, which included physicochemical analysis of the coloured layers using optical microscopy, electron microscopy and spectroscopy. Additional information was provided to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies regarding the proposal for a new iconostasis. In its Technical Review, ICOMOS accepted the plans for the new iconostasis and agreed with the principle of minimal encroachment on the architecture, as well as the clear distinction of the new additions within the medieval church and the schematisation of the form without direct associations or indications of closer stylistic determination. Between the end of May to September 2021, a building was constructed on the allotment next to the church, within the buffer zone of the property;
- At the Gračanica Monastery, no conservation works were undertaken in 2021 and 2022. A bilingual publication *Gračanica, Chronicle of the Painting and Conservation Works 2010-2018* by Miroslav Stanojlović presenting the restoration and conservation works on the wall paintings was published in 2021 thanks to funding of the Ministry of Culture and Media of the Republic of Serbia. An exhibition 'Gračanica, the splendour of art in the era of King Milutin' (Belgrade, December 2022 – February 2023) presented the church's historical and artistic values and the process of its conservation. The Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments monitors the state of conservation of the Gračanica Monastery;
- In June 2021, the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Belgrade organised a conference entitled 'Protection, Preservation and Affirmation of the Serbian Cultural Heritage in Kosovo and Metohija' aimed at defining and analysing the state of Serbian tangible and intangible cultural heritage in the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija. The proceedings of the conference were under preparation at the time of submission of the 2022 report;
- The property, its churches and monasteries remain in an overall less-than-ideal condition and challenges remain with respect to unhindered access for associated communities;
- Due to the complex regional security instability, KFOR remains continuously present at the Dečani Monastery to establish a secure environment in the area and to avoid further endangerment of the site. The Patriarchate of Peć Monastery, the Church of the Holy Virgin of Ljeviša and Gračanica Monastery are also secured daily by local police forces.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7A.57

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7A.Add.2,
2. Recalling Decisions **30 COM 8B.54, 31 COM 7A.28, 32 COM 7A.27, 33 COM 7A.27, 34 COM 7A.28, 35 COM 7A.31, 36 COM 7A.32, 37 COM 7A.34, 38 COM 7A.18, 39 COM 7A.42, 40 COM 7A.30, 41 COM 7A.21, 42 COM 7A.6, 43 COM 7A.46 and 44 COM 7A.33**, adopted at its 30th (Vilnius, 2006), 31st (Christchurch, 2007), 32nd (Quebec City, 2008), 33rd (Seville, 2009), 34th (Brasilia, 2010), 35th (UNESCO, 2011), 36th (Saint-Petersburg, 2012), 37th (Phnom Penh, 2013), 38th (Doha, 2014), 39th (Bonn, 2015), 40th (Istanbul/UNESCO, 2016), 41st (Krakow, 2017), 42nd (Manama, 2018), 43rd (Baku, 2019) and extended 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021) sessions respectively,
3. Acknowledges the information provided in the state of conservation reports between 2009 and 2023, and the results of the missions of the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe to the property, as well as the information received from the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK);
4. Reiterates its request to continue to take long-term corrective measures, in cooperation with UNESCO, the UNMIK and the local Institutions in Kosovo, including ensuring adequate long-term legislative and regulatory protection and management of the property and strong protective regimes for the monuments and buffer zones, adequately delineated boundaries and timely implementation of the Management Plan;
5. Also reiterates its request to continue efforts, in cooperation with UNMIK, to complete the short-term and long-term corrective measures to achieve the Desired state of conservation defined for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger;
6. Requests the State Party to submit, in cooperation with UNMIK, to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2024**, of an updated report on the state of conservation of the property, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 46th session;
7. Decides to retain **Medieval Monuments in Kosovo on the List of World Heritage in Danger and to continue applying the Reinforced Monitoring mechanism until the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee.**