

# ICOMOS

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES  
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MONUMENTS ET DES SITES  
CONSEJO INTERNACIONAL DE MONUMENTOS Y SITIOS  
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ СОВЕТ ПО ВОПРОСАМ ПАМЯТНИКОВ И ДОСТОПРИМЕЧАТЕЛЬНЫХ МЕСТ

Our Ref. GB/EG/1720/IR

Charenton-le-Pont, 19 December 2023

H. E. Mr Richard M. Bosire  
Ambassador Extraordinary and  
Plenipotentiary, Permanent Delegate  
Permanent Delegation of the Republic of  
Kenya to UNESCO  
Maison de l'UNESCO  
1 rue Miollis  
75732 Paris Cedex

## **World Heritage List 2024**

### **The Historic Town and Archaeological Site of Gedi (Kenya) – Interim report and additional information request**

Dear Ambassador,

As prescribed by the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* and its Annex 6, the Advisory Bodies are requested to submit a short interim report for each nomination by 31 January 2024. We are therefore pleased to provide you with the relevant information outlining issues related to the evaluation procedure.

The ICOMOS technical evaluation mission to “The Historic Town and Archaeological Site of Gedi” was carried out by Mr. Ashton Sinamai (Zimbabwe) in September 2023. The mission expert highly appreciated the availabilities and support provided by the experts in your country for the organisation and implementation of the mission.

On 4 October 2023, an additional information letter was sent by ICOMOS to request further information regarding the comparative analysis, community engagement issues, planned and approved development projects, and the management system. Please convey our thanks to all the officials and experts for the additional information you provided on 22 November 2023 and for their continued cooperation in this process.

At the end of November 2023, the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel evaluated the cultural and mixed properties nominated for inscription on the World Heritage List in 2024. The additional information provided by the State Party, together with mission and desk review reports were carefully examined by the Panel members. This process will conclude in March 2024.

We thank you and your Delegation for your availability and your participation in the meeting held on 25 November 2023 with some representatives of the ICOMOS Panel. The exchanges during this meeting were of great help for the third part of the ICOMOS Panel meeting. During this last part of the meeting, the Panel has identified areas where it considers that further information is needed.

Therefore, we would be pleased if the State Party could consider the following points:

### **Site plans**

ICOMOS would be pleased if the State Party could provide one or more detailed site plans that would show the layout of the town and the spatial arrangement of the attributes. The existing plans and maps that have been provided are presented at a scale that usefully shows the whole property, its buffer zone and wider setting, but it would also be helpful to have one or more maps that show the recorded structures at a larger scale.

### **Research plan**

ICOMOS is aware that Gedi has been the subject of research for many years, and that recent research has begun to illuminate important dimensions of its social and architectural history. However, it is apparent that there is still much more to learn about Gedi, including its relationship with its hinterland and the coast. ICOMOS recommends that a longer-term research plan be developed and included in the management system. Additional information about any existing research strategy/plan would be appreciated, as well as any longer-term plans to further develop a research strategy, including a timeline.

### **Interpretation strategy**

ICOMOS notes the importance of interpretation for the future of the conservation and presentation of Gedi and recommends that an interpretation strategy should be a priority if the nominated property is inscribed on the World Heritage List. When it is fully developed, this strategy should include the modalities of communication, but also the thematic framework, including the importance and layout of Gedi, the exchanges and operations of the Swahili trading networks, the spatial expression of the social stratification of the town, and evidence of fusion between African and other cultural influences. ICOMOS would be pleased if the State Party could provide additional information on current plans and progress toward an interpretation strategy.

### **Conservation management plan**

ICOMOS notes that the conservation approach is outlined in the management plan but considers that a detailed conservation management plan should be developed to further strengthen the management system and the planned capacity building initiatives. It is envisaged that this would include a more detailed outline of the approach to restoration, use of materials, vegetation management, and maintenance of above-ground elements. ICOMOS would be pleased if the State Party could provide a response to this suggestion, including a realistic estimate of the timeframe for completion following the potential inscription on the World Heritage List.

### **Heritage Impact Assessment**

The nomination dossier does not specifically outline the provisions in place for Heritage Impact Assessment. ICOMOS notes the information provided during the meeting with the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel confirming that Heritage and/or Environmental Impact Assessments are carried out when developing proposals for new works. Could the State Party please provide summary information about these processes, including how these are embedded in the frameworks for legal protection and site management?

### **Ritual and religious practices**

ICOMOS appreciates the recently provided additional information about the religious and other cultural practices that occur at Gedi. It is noted that people sometimes pray at the mosques, and that the local ritual practices are not considered to pose challenges to the protection or management of the nominated property. However, ICOMOS suggests that these uses could be more explicitly described in the

nomination dossier and supported in the management plan. Could the State Party please provide additional information about whether this suggestion can be accommodated?

We look forward to your responses to these points, which will be of great help in our evaluation procedure.

We would be grateful if you could provide **ICOMOS** and the **World Heritage Centre** with the above requested information by **28 February 2024 at the latest**, the deadline set out in paragraph 148 of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* concerning additional information on nominations to be received. Please note that any information submitted after this statutory deadline will not be considered by ICOMOS in its evaluation for the World Heritage Committee. It should be noted, however, that while ICOMOS will carefully consider any additional information submitted within the statutory deadline, it will not be possible to properly evaluate a completely revised nomination or a large amount of new information submitted at the last minute. ICOMOS would therefore be grateful if the State Party could keep its response concise and respond only to the above requests.

We thank you for your support of the World Heritage Convention and the evaluation procedure.

Yours faithfully,



Gwenaëlle Bourdin  
Director  
ICOMOS Evaluation Unit

Copy to            National Museums of Kenya  
                         UNESCO World Heritage Centre