



Republic of Iraq
Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Antiquities
State Board of Antiquities & Heritage
World Heritage Department
State of Conservation Report
Samarra
in response to the extended 45th session of the World
Heritage Committee, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia 2023
Decision 45 COM 7A.29

by
Saba S. Omari
World Heritage Department/Head
and
East Conservation & Development,
Consultancy for Conservation & Development

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**FORMAT FOR THE SUBMISSION OF
STATE OF CONSERVATION REPORTS
BY THE STATES PARTIES**

Name of property (State(s) Party(ies)) (Identification number)

Samarra Archaeological City

Samarra ID: 276

Constituent elements of the core area:

ID	Name & Location▼	State Party	Coordinates	Property	Buffer Zone
276rev-006	Qubbat al-Sulaibiyya	Iraq	N34 13 39.54 E43 47 56.09	0.6 ha	31,414 ha
276rev-002	Samarra Centre Zone	Iraq	N34 13 34.59 E43 52 57.26	1,265 ha	
276rev-001	Samarra North Zone - al-Mutawakkiliyya	Iraq	N34 20 27.56 E43 49 24.76	4,478 ha	
276rev-003	Samarra South Zone	Iraq	N34 7 21.42 E43 55 50.23	8,953 ha	
276rev-008	Tell Umm al-Sakhr	Iraq	N34 15 59.82 E43 48 6.33	2 ha	
276rev-010	al-Huwaysilat Lower	Iraq	N34 17 56.90 E43 47 21.64	4 ha	
276rev-009	al-Huwaysilat Upper	Iraq	N34 17 40.06 E43 47 19.81	5 ha	
276rev-004	al-Istablat	Iraq	N34 4 49.04 E43 54 56.12	155 ha	
276rev-007	al-Ma'shuq	Iraq	N34 14 31.14 E43 48 34.02	20 ha	
276rev-005	al-Quwayr	Iraq	N34 13 55.63 E43 50 23.53	11 ha	

Samarra Archaeological City

Samarra Archaeological City WH site Information

Samarra Township, Salah al-Din Governorate

Coordinates N34 20 27.562 E43 49 24.755

Date of Inscription: 2007

Criteria: (ii)(iii)(iv)

Property: 15,058 ha

Buffer zone: 31,414 ha

Ref: 276rev

Region: ARB

Country: IQ

Type: C

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1 Executive Summary

This report is submitted in response to the Committee Decision 45 COM 7A.29 in its 45th Extended Session (Riyadh, 2023), which requests the State Party to implement the recommendations of the June 2023 Joint UNESCO / ICOMOS Monitoring Mission.

In this report, we will review the details of the property (Samarra) and the sections that have been encroached upon within Samarra site. Our 2022 SoC Report mentions the corrective measures and implementation details in response to the recommendations and requests given in decision 44 COM 7A.8, together with the legal measures taken by the Iraqi government to stop the encroachments and urban sprawl, in accordance with the Iraqi Antiquities Law No. 55 (2002). Samarra was exceptionally inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger in 2007 for reasons related to conflict and lack of security that affected the property in general. With the improvement in the security situation, now is the time to implement a full range of conservation and management measures to conserve, protect and promote the site, especially, if we know that its Outstanding Universal Values of Samarra are still preserved, as well as its integrity and authenticity. Our 2024 SoC Report therefore focusses on the steps needed to develop a Desired State of Conservation (DSOCR) for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger and the identification of corrective measures to achieve the DSOCR, in accordance with the recommendations of the Joint Monitoring Mission.

Samarra is a large archaeological World Heritage property, in terms of the area of the historic city – a total of 46.5 km² (core area and buffer zone). The overall recommendation of the Joint Review Mission (Mission Report Section IV, issue 4) is:

It is recommended that a framework for a Desired state of conservation for removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger, with a set of corrective measures and timeline for implementation is initiated.

The present SoC Report sets out our proposed structured framework for achieving DSOCR for this large WH property in three phases over 3 years, with a set of corrective measures addressing each of the recommendations of the Joint UNESCO / ICOMOS Monitoring Mission report in three phases:

Phase 1

2. Response to the Decision of the Committee

[Note: The State(s) Party(ies) is/are requested to address the most recent Decision of the Committee for this property, paragraph by paragraph.]

If the property is inscribed on the List of Danger, please provide detailed information on the following:

a) Progress achieved in implementing the corrective measures adopted by the Committee

[Note: please address each corrective measure individually, providing factual information, including exact dates, figures, etc.]

If needed, please describe the success factors or difficulties in implementing each of the corrective measures identified

b) Is the timeframe for implementing the corrective measures suitable? If not, please propose an alternative timeframe and an explanation why this alternative timeframe is required.

c) Progress achieved towards the desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of Danger (DSOCR)

2- Response to the Committee Decision (45 COM 7A.29)

Decision: 45 COM 7A.29

The 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

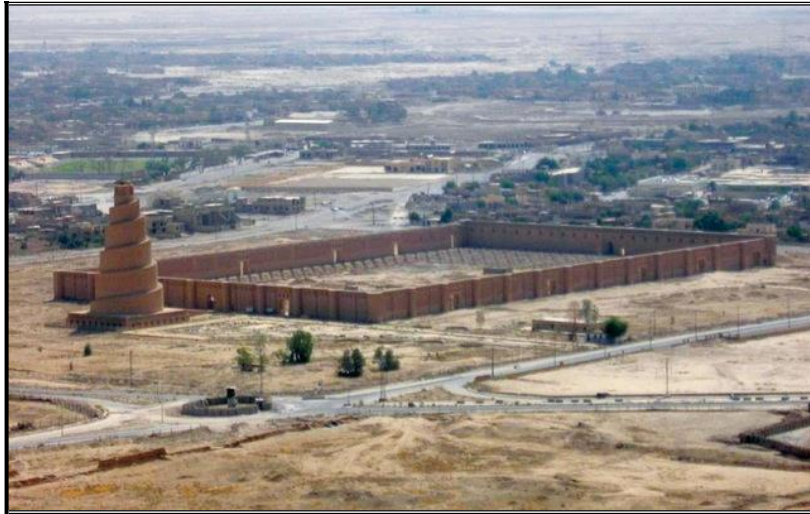
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at the property, along with photographic documentation of all affected monuments, including a detailed report on the bulldozed areas and encroachments, for review by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies;

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 Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessment s 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;

Samarra Archaeological City

12. Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 **February 20 24**, 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.

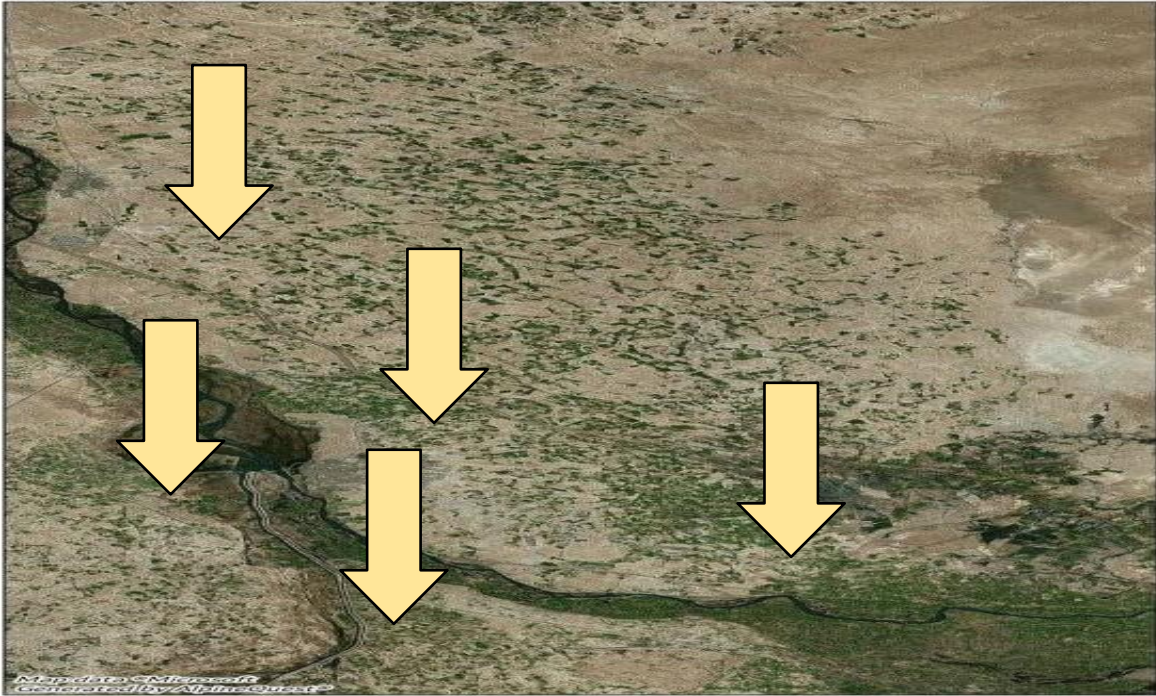


The Great Mosque of Samarra in its modern setting (SBAH)

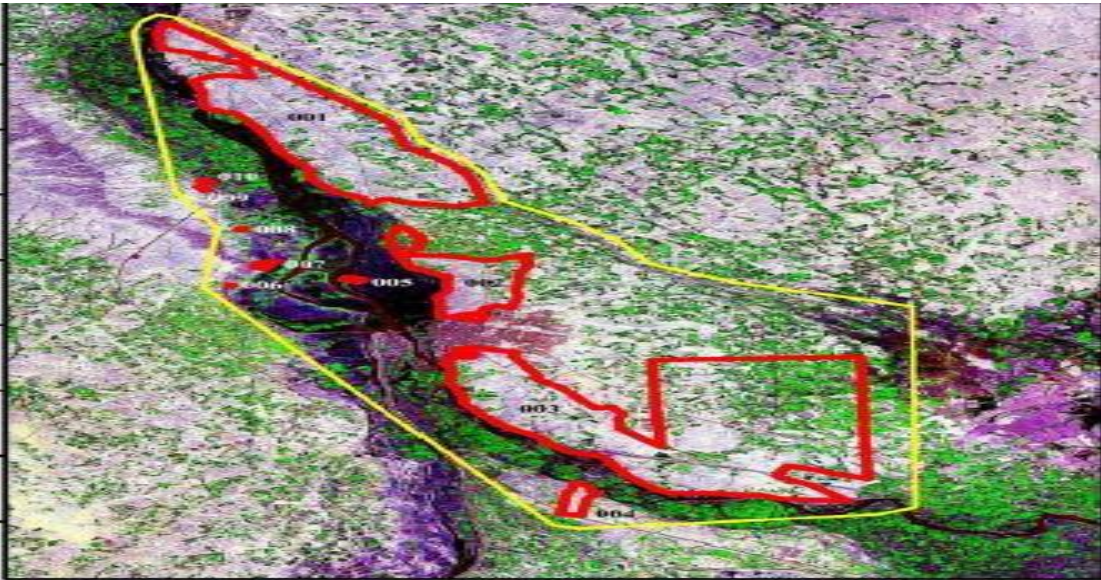


Archive photograph taken from the air showing the close relationship of the Great Mosque with the historic city of Samarra (British Royal Air Force)

Samarra Archaeological City



Samarra Archaeological City boundaries



Samarra Archaeological City elements

Samarra Archaeological City

2. Particulars of Samarra Archaeological City World Heritage Site

The site is divided into sections, each of which includes a group of covered and uncovered (tells/hills) archaeological features, as follows: -

Series	Section Name	Number
1.	Umm al-Talaib	1
2.	Alkala'a	4
3.	Qadiriya	6
4.	Samarra Centre Zone	14
5.	Tell al-Quwayr	17
6.	Banat Alhasan	21
7.	al-Jubairiya	22
8.	al-qadisiya	23
9.	Taqtaq	24
10.	Alarmoshia	25
11.	Tell al-Alij	26
12.	Hawi Albisat	27
13.	Ashnas	29
14.	Alzangour	30
15.	Abo Dulaf	31
16.	Alrafeea'	37

Samarra Site Sections:

Samarra property includes a large number of archaeological sites and archaeological Tells approximately 40, the most prominent of which are distributed according to the sections as in the following table: -

Series	Property and archaeological hills (Tells)	Section
1.	Great Mosque	14/ Aldakhil
2.	al-Isba'ain	14/ Aldakhil
3.	Abu Dulaf Mosque	31/ Abu Dulaf
4.	Al-Ja'faria Palace	31/ Abu Dulaf
5.	Ashnas Wall (Sur Ashnas)	29/ Ashnas
6.	Shaikh Wali Wall (Sur Shaikh Wali)	29/ Ashnas
7.	Tell Tokan	29/ Ashnas
8.	Caliphal Palace (Qasr Alkhalifa)	27/ Hawi Albisat

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9.	Alzakharif Palace	27/ Hawi Albisat
10.	Madaq Altabul Palace A-B-C-	27/ Hawi Albisat
11.	Esa Wall (Sur Esa)	27/ Hawi Albisat
12.	Tell al-Alij	26/ Tell Al-alij
13.	Tell al-Khazaf	20/ Zarir
14.	Tell Aswad	20/ Zarir
15.	Tell Shaykh Mohammed	20/ Zarir
16.	Tell al-Aith	20/ Zarir
17.	Archaeological Tells and monuments adjacent to the river	30/ Zangour
18.	Tell al-Suwwân	22/ Al-Jubairiya
19.	al-Qa'im Minaret (Burj al-Qâ'im)	22/ Al-Jubairiya
20.	al-Manqur palace (Balkuwara)	22/ Al-Jubairiya
21.	al-Jubairiya Wall (Sur Al-Jubairiya)	22/ Al-Jubairiya
22.	Almateera Tells and monuments	22/ Al-Jubairiya
23.	Hayr al-Wohoosh	22/ Al-Jubairiya
24.	Octagonal Fort al-Qadisiyyah	23/ Qadisiyyah
25.	Tell Al-Musharrahahat	23/ Qadisiyyah
26.	Tell Alora	18/ Tell Alora
27.	Tell al-Quwayr	17/ Tell al-Quwayr
28.	Alharoni Palace	5/ Al- al-Quwayr
29.	Tell Masoud	1/ Um Altalaeb
30.	Tell Al-Bandari	2/ Alraga wa Ma'ejil
31.	Al-Istablat	1/ Um Altalaeb
32.	Al-Ma'shuq Palace	6/ Al-Qadriya
33.	Qubbat al-Sulaibiyya	6/ Al-Qadriya
34.	Al-Huwaysilat (Qasr al-Juss)	7/ Sumoom
35.	Tell Muhajir	8/ Mukashifa
36.	Tell Jama'an	8/ Mukashifa
37.	Tell Alwazir	27/ Hawi Albisat
38.	Bab Alwastani	22/ Al-Jubairiya
39.	Complex of al-Mutawakkiliyya Palaces	31/ Abu Dulaf+30/Zangour
40.	Khan Alsa'ewiah	16/ Alsa'ewiah

3. Framework for achieving DSOCR and corrective measures addressing the recommendations of the Joint UNESCO / ICOMOS Monitoring Mission

3.1 PHASE 1: Establish the current condition of the component heritage elements

Phase 1 strategic approach (2024):

- Undertake basic overall surveys and studies of the WH property to identify threats and remedial actions required;
- Plan the financial commitments and commitment in personnel needed to establish the On-Site Heritage Unit;
- Undertake studies and documentation of particular WH elements to establish their current condition, threats and the remedial actions required to meet the Desired State of Conservation (DSOCR) the Site's removal from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

1. **Buffer Zone Definition and Mapping** (*Recommendation 1*): Define the attributes of OUV, map these attributes and conduct an overall mapping of monuments and archaeological sites in the buffer zone. This process should align with the 2011 UNESCO Recommendations on the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) and include a 'views' study.
2. **Encroachment Assessment** (*Recommendation 6*): Prepare a detailed map assessing existing encroachment on the property and potential threats of encroachment, to aid in the monitoring process and ensure a timely response.
3. **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA)** (*Recommendation 3*): Conduct a Strategic Environmental Assessment followed by a Heritage Impact Assessment in line with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context. This will inform the decision-making process for establishing a Master Plan for the city.
4. **Onsite Management Unit** (*Recommendation 5*): Finalise the proposal for the establishment of an onsite management unit with sufficient skilled personnel and equipment to oversee and monitor all aspects related to the property, including documentation, protection, research, conservation, and interpretation. Identify the location for the office, plan and commit the financial and personnel resources required on a long-term basis.
5. **Documentation and Condition Assessment** (*Recommendation 10*): For major monuments undergoing interventions, conduct a complete data collection, mapping of previous interventions, and detailed condition assessments. The survey and assessment

will inform the programme of emergency repairs, utilising materials and techniques compatible with original ones (*see activity XX below*).

6. **Analysis of Excavated Sites** (*Recommendation 13*): Conduct a full analysis of the conservation state of excavated or partially excavated sites. Develop a conservation plan based on vulnerabilities, focusing on minimal intervention measures.
7. **Comprehensive Conservation Planning** (*Recommendation 8*): Develop an overall comprehensive conservation planning framework with a clear conservation approach. This will include mapping of attributes, an overall assessment of condition, and prioritizing emergency interventions, to bring together all the studies and surveys carried out during Phase 1 to incorporate in the overall Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the WH property to be prepared in Phase 2.

3.2 PHASE 2: Plan the long-term conservation and management of the heritage elements

Phase 3 strategic approach (2025):

- Prepare the Comprehensive Conservation Plan to provide the framework for the sustainable conservation and management of the WH property and the protection of its OUV;
 - Following the establishment of the Onsite Management Unit, implement sustainable management of the WH property, in partnership with local stakeholders;
 - Implement conservation planning for Samarra city and the buffer zone, based on the Urban Design Guidelines;
 - Following the preparation of site-specific conservation plans for individual monuments and other WH elements, initiate conservation projects on a priority basis to address threats, based on the principle of minimum intervention.
1. **Prepare the Comprehensive Conservation Plan** for the WH property (*Recommendation 4*), combining the studies and surveys carried out during Phase 1 into a single document prepared meeting the requirements of the Operational Guidelines or the property and its buffer zone. The plan will include a monitoring system and a risk mitigation plan, following an overall assessment of condition, risks, and threats and will address the specific requirements for protecting, conserving, managing and interpreting the complex WH property, measures addressing encroachment, looting and environmental factors and the maintenance of its OUV.
 2. **Onsite Management Unit** (*Recommendation 5*): Following the identification during Phase 1 of the human and financial resources required to establish an on-site Management Unit, the premises identified will be brought into use and appropriately qualified personnel will be recruited.

3. **Urban Design Guidelines** (*Recommendation 2*): Use the buffer zone definition prepared during Phase 1 to establish Urban Design Guidelines for the city of Samarra and its expansion area. These Guidelines will inform the preparation of the Master Plan for the city, considering the approach in the HUL Recommendations and will create synergies between the WH property and the city. Conserving the remaining built heritage in the city will involve establishing conservation guidelines and guidelines on the beneficial reuse of historic structures and the conservation of their settings. In the expansion areas, there will be a focus on the height of new structures and the materials and design of new structures visible from the WH property.
4. **Site-Specific Conservation Plans** (*Recommendation 9*): Develop site-specific conservation plans based on priority sites. Focus on preventive conservation measures and avoid further reconstruction unless necessary for protection.
5. **Preventive Conservation** (*Recommendation 11*): Focus on preventive conservation measures rather than further reconstruction. Any planning for reinstating architectural elements should be preceded by detailed studies and analyses.
6. **Stakeholder Coordination** (*Recommendation 7*): Improve coordination among various stakeholders involved in the management of the property and its buffer zone to ensure stakeholder participation in all aspects of the decision-making process.

3.23 PHASE 3: Implement the long-term sustainable conservation and management of WH Site in partnership with local stakeholders

Phase 3 strategic approach (2026):

- Implement the Comprehensive Conservation Plan which will provide the framework for the sustainable management of the WH property;
- Develop partnership with local stakeholders for the safeguarding and development of the Site;
- Implement site interpretation within the framework of a tourism development plan;
- Irrigate green areas while protecting archaeological remains;
- Submit the required documentation to the World Heritage Centre for transmission to ICOMOS and, following ICOMOS's review, for submission to the World Heritage Committee for approval the remedial actions meeting the Desired State of Conservation (DSOCR) and the Site's removal from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

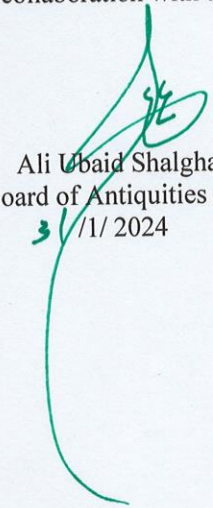
Samarra Archaeological City

1. **Implementation of conservation and management by the Onsite Management Unit:**
The Unit will implement the sustainable conservation and management of the site in accordance with the Comprehensive Management Plan, in collaboration with local stakeholders.
2. **Capacity Building** (*Recommendation 15*): A capacity-building programme will be implemented to establish an on-site team with the skills needed for WH site management, security and protection, cultural heritage conservation, restoration and site interpretation.
3. **Build Trust and Collaboration with local stakeholders** (*Recommendation 7*) so that they become partners with the Onsite Management Unit in the safeguarding of the Site and it becomes a local resource, not only for tourism, but also for education, e.g. local schools and a strong source of local pride.
4. **Site Interpretation** (*Recommendation 14*): Site interpretation and the proposals for presentation of individual monuments open to the public will be developed to provide effective communication of the property's history and significance within the overall framework of a visitor strategy and Tourism Development Plan for the WH property.
5. **Undertake a desk-top study of historical information** (e.g. from the internet) to commence the development of a local database of information on the site, e.g. aerial photographs, satellite imagery, historic photographs etc. to assist in its interpretation and presentation. Local stakeholders will be involved in this process.
6. **Collaborate with international and national research institutions**, universities etc. to develop the understanding and interpretation of the Site.
7. **Irrigation System for Green Areas** (*Recommendation 12*): Studies for the implementation of an irrigation system for green areas will be prepared, avoiding potential impact on archaeological remains and monuments, to enhance the overall attractiveness of the site for visitors whilst avoiding damage to heritage elements.
8. **Documentation Submission** (*Recommendation 16*): All documentation, assessments, and the overall Conservation Management Plan will be transmitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by ICOMOS before implementation.
9. **Desired State of Conservation Framework** (*Recommendation 17*): The framework for a Desired state of conservation for removal of the property from the List of World Heritage


Samarra Archaeological City

Samarra Archaeological City

in Danger will be transmitted to the World Heritage Centre, with details of corrective measures already undertaken and a timeline for continuing implementation, in collaboration with the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS.



Ali Ubaid Shalgham
State Board of Antiquities and Heritage
31/1/2024



Saba S Omari
World Heritage Department/Director
31/1/2024