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World Heritage Convention

**46 COM**

**WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add.4**

Paris, 10 July 2024

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**

**Forty-sixth session  
New Delhi, India  
21 – 31 July 2024**

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

**Summary**

This document contains information on the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List. 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/46COM/documents>

All previous state of conservation reports will 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 World Heritage Committee may wish to adopt the draft Decision presented at the end of each state of conservation report.

**Note:** For each section, the reports are presented in the English alphabetical order of States Parties.

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## CULTURAL PROPERTIES

### EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

#### 16. Historic Areas of Istanbul (Türkiye) (C 356bis)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1985

Criteria (i)(ii)(iii)(iv)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/356/documents/>

##### International Assistance

Requests approved: 16 (from 1986-2004)

Total amount approved: USD 452,208

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/356/assistance/>

##### UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount granted: USD 211,900 (Conservation of Hagia Sophia); USD 36,686.30 (Convention France-UNESCO); USD 155,000 (in the framework of the International Safeguarding Campaign for Istanbul and Göreme)

##### Previous monitoring missions

November 1997: ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission; October 1998: World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission; January 2000, May 2001, 2002, December 2003, 2004: World Heritage Centre missions; April 2006, May 2008, April 2009, November 2012: World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission; December 2016: World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission; April 2019: Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Advisory mission; October 2020: UNESCO Advisory mission; January/February 2021: UNESCO Advisory mission; June 2024: World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission

##### Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Commercial development
- Ground/underground transport infrastructure
- Low impact research/monitoring activities
- Management systems/management plan (including need to identify attributes which support the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property)
- Loss of integrity and authenticity: decay and loss of Ottoman/vernacular architecture
- Need for Heritage Impact Assessments for large-scale projects
- Need for referral in conformity with paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*
- Impact of change of status of the Hagia Sophia and the Chora Museum
- Lack of roadmap for projects which may impact the OUV of the property

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/356/>

##### Current conservation issues

On 1 February 2024, the State Party submitted a report on the state of conservation of the property, the executive summary of which is available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/356/documents/>. The report provides information on the measures implemented by the State Party in response to Decision **45 COM 7B.58**, as follows:

- The process of updating the Management Plan has been initiated, as well as the study to define the attributes that convey the property's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), and the work to

prepare a strategic plan for the conservation of timber structures, which will aim to define different approaches and recommendations according to the level of conservation, conditions and functions of the structures. Their results will be incorporated into the revised draft Management Plan that will be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review;

- The Süleymaniye Conservation Strategy has been revised based on scientific contributions. Registered and unregistered cultural assets have been recorded, a database now contains 38,066 documents and, following a situation analysis, it was decided that conservation would be based on a 'holistic approach' perspective, defining short-, medium- and long-term measures and protection strategies;
- Basic maintenance and repair work on wooden civil architecture sample buildings is carried out free of charge, allowing residents to continue to live in the repaired buildings, thus preserving their original function, traditional architecture, building texture coherence and continuity of the street fabric. A project for immediate intervention in derelict buildings has been launched and an urgent action plan has been drawn up to initiate documentation work for 384 derelict buildings without accessible data. A survey of 224 derelict civil structures has been prepared and remaining buildings will be prioritised in 2024;
- A furnishing project for the opening of Hagia Sophia as a mosque included covering the mosaics with retractable curtains and the Harim (Naos) with a carpet and installing a sound system. An Administrative Board will decide on matters relating to the protection, maintenance and management of Hagia Sophia. A Scientific Board will oversee the preparation of holistic projects such as the Visitors Plan, the study of the building's structural movements, the creation of an archaeological garden and the 3D-documentation of all the buildings in the complex and their immediate surroundings. Once these projects have been completed, a Master Plan will be drawn up, including a landscaping plan. Ongoing restoration work at Hagia Sophia includes the restoration of the tombs, the primary school and the muvakkithane. The second phase of the restoration work includes work on the facade, minaret, lead upper cover and marble joinery. Simple repairs are being undertaken to prevent further deterioration of the wooden elements, plaster and marble surfaces. Barriers, safety warnings and transparent and lightweight materials are used to prevent potential contact with the surfaces. Carpet humidity is being checked, ventilation has been installed, electrical installations have been upgraded and a security unit within the Hagia Sophia complex monitors the building 24 hours a day. The number of toilets has been increased and a fountain has been installed. A Visitor Management Plan has been drawn up, entrances to the ground and gallery floors have been separated and a ticket office and a visitor entrance tunnel with a ramp were built to provide paid access to the gallery floor for tourists;
- The projects at the Chora include a restoration work on the roof, installation of a drainage system and covering of the remains of the eastern facade with lead. The third phase of restoration of the Chora is underway. In the Harim (Naos), restoration works include the outer and inner narthexes, the parecclesion, the annex, the draconicon and the prosthesis, the application of colours, the conservation of mosaic surfaces, the replacement of existing cement floors with bricks, and work on the salt intake. The construction of foundations for other buildings is in progress. Documentation studies of the mosaics and frescoes are continuing;
- Restoration and conservation work is being carried out at the Yedikule Fortress (for which a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) was submitted to the World Heritage Centre and is under review), at the Grand Bazaar, and for the Land Walls, (for which a new tourist route of about 1 km is planned when the work is completed), the Yedikule Gas House and the Landwalls Nation Garden;
- Other conservation and restoration work is being carried out at Istanbul's archaeological museums, the Hagia Sophia History and Experience Museum, the Great Palace Mosaics Museum, the former French Prison in Istanbul, numerous cisterns, mosques, madrasas, complexes, fountains and tombs;
- Excavations are planned at Sultanahmet Archaeopark, Yenikapı, Saraçhane, Theodosius Harbour, and an urban design project for the Land Walls will create a continuous green area;
- Major infrastructure projects are continuing. The design for Yenikapı Cruise Port includes eight berths, and the process for its Urban Development Plan is underway, with an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) conducted and an HIA being prepared, which will be submitted to the World Heritage Centre. A final HIA is being prepared for the Kazlıçeşme Marina project, following

an ICOMOS Technical Review. An HIA is being prepared for the Basketball Development Centre project;

- Earthquake studies are continuing for Istanbul province, and a comprehensive programming study has been initiated to strengthen 32 educational institutions in the Istanbul Historical peninsula.

On 27 December 2023, the State Party of Türkiye transmitted to the World Heritage Centre an information note on the Visitor Management Plan for Hagia Sophia, informing that the entrances to the ground and gallery floors would be separated and that from mid-January 2024, the gallery floor would be open to visitors with an entrance fee. Visitors would have a mobile application to receive information about the building in 16 languages, to avoid guided tours that could disrupt the worship. On 29 February 2024, the UNESCO Secretariat wrote to the Minister of Culture and Tourism, noting that the reported statements attributed to the Minister by the press linked this decision by the Turkish authorities to a UNESCO recommendation and that UNESCO had not recommended any specific visitor management measure linked to the payment of an entrance fee, nor was such a measure part of the recommendations of the last UNESCO Advisory missions held in 2020 and 2021. The letter reiterated UNESCO's request to receive the full Visitor Management Plan for review by the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS. At the time of writing this report, the Plan has not been received.

The World Heritage Centre learned through the media about the reopening of the Museum of the Chora as a mosque on 6 May 2024, after four years of restoration work. In accordance with Paragraph 174 of the Operational Guidelines, the World Heritage Centre requested detailed information from the authorities on the restoration works as well as on the implementation of relevant decisions of the Committee and recommendations of previous Advisory missions. Updated information on the restoration work carried out since November 2023 has been received from the State Party and is currently being reviewed by the Advisory Bodies. Information received during and after the June 2024 World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission is not included in the current report.

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

The initiation of the Management Plan update, which will include the definition of the attributes that convey the OUV of the property, and a strategic plan for the conservation of timber structures is welcome. The revised Management Plan should be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies prior to its formal adoption. Since 2017, the Committee has repeatedly requested the State Party to prepare a long-term conservation strategy for timber structures and may wish to invite the State Party to provide regular updates on the progress of its elaboration. The maintenance and repair of wooden civil architecture buildings, emergency interventions and preventive conservation measures for buildings using timber and rubble masonry techniques, and the initiation of a project for interventions in derelict structures are also welcome.

The State Party has reported on work undertaken following the conversion of Hagia Sophia into a mosque. Despite the reference to the use of retractable curtains, the State Party has not provided confirmation that the mosaics on the ground floor are visible to visitors outside prayer times. The second phase of the restoration, the simple repair interventions and the barrier and safety measures to prevent possible contact with surfaces are welcome. The State Party reports that it has established an Administrative Board with decision-making powers and a Scientific Board to technically oversee the planned holistic projects, following which a Master Plan will be prepared. However, no information has been provided on these 'holistic plans', other than the establishment of these two bodies. The Committee may therefore wish to request the State Party to provide further information and to ensure that HIAs are carried out for these projects in accordance with Paragraph 118bis of the Operational Guidelines and on the basis of the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context. On 27 December 2023, the State Party informed the World Heritage Centre of an already-developed Visitor Management Plan, which provides for tourist access through the gallery floor and with an entrance fee. On 29 February 2024, UNESCO requested submission of the full Visitor Management Plan. The State Party also reports that a ticket office and an entrance tunnel with ramps for entry and exit have been constructed, neither of which has been subject to an HIA or prior notification to the World Heritage Centre. The Committee may therefore wish to request that the State Party submit the full Visitor Management Plan to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines.

The third phase of the restoration of the Chora continues, but no timeline has been specified for its completion. At the request of the World Heritage Centre, prompted by the reopening of the Chora as a mosque on 6 May 2024, and as part of the preparations for the joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS

Reactive Monitoring mission in June 2024, the State Party provided updated information on the restoration work carried out since November 2023, which is currently under review by the Advisory Bodies. However, in view of the extensive programme of works reported, it would also be appropriate to request the State Party to submit a comprehensive account of completed, ongoing and planned works and projects at the Chora, as well as relevant information and technical details.

While it is welcomed that the State Party has prepared and submitted HIAs for the Kazlıçeşme Yacht Marina and the Yedikule Fortress, it is regrettable that, despite the Committee's repeated requests, some projects have been implemented without HIAs or proceeded without submitting HIAs and other documentation to the World Heritage Centre in accordance with paragraphs 118bis and 172 of the Operational Guidelines. The State Party should be requested to ensure that HIAs reportedly under preparation (e.g. Kazlıçeşme Marina project, the Yenikapı Cruise Port and the Basketball Development Centre) are submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies as soon as they are available. It would also be appropriate to request the State Party to submit information on planned excavations at Sultanahmet Archaeopark, Yenikapı, Saraçhane and Theodosius Harbour. More generally, it would be appropriate to remind the State Party of the need to undertake HIAs for all large-scale infrastructure and restoration projects and to submit them to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies before irreversible decisions are taken.

Works at the Grand Bazaar, the Land Walls, the Yedikule Gas House and the Landwalls Nation Garden are proceeding without an HIA, which should have been submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by ICOMOS prior to the commencement of work, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines and a previous request by the Committee. It is also noted that other restoration and conservation works are being undertaken in museums, cisterns, mosques, madrasas, complexes, fountains and tombs. The absence of a strategic roadmap for all types of projects, and of a Master Plan for the entire Hagia Sophia area and for the Chora area remains, despite the Committee's previous repeated requests since 2019. The Committee may therefore wish to urge the State Party to submit the requested strategic planning documents to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies.

Overall, the processes that contribute to the effective management of World Heritage properties, as set out in the Operational Guidelines, are not being followed for many of the interventions and works carried out by the State Party. The lack of submission of complete technical documentation and the delay in reporting restoration, conservation and development works on the property's components, which in a number of cases have been submitted to the World Heritage Centre after the works have commenced, is regrettable. The Committee may wish to request the State Party to consistently implement the Operational Guidelines, in particular paragraphs 118bis and 172, for all major restorations or new constructions that may affect the OUV of the property and to do so before making any decisions that would be difficult to reverse, so that the Committee, through the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, may assist in seeking appropriate solutions to ensure that the OUV of the property is fully preserved through appropriate dialogue, consultation and review.

Following Committee Decision **45 COM 7B.58** calling on the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission to the property, the World Heritage Centre proposed to the State Party to conduct the mission in November 2023 and then again in April 2024. The State Party invited the mission to visit the property from 24 to 27 June 2024. The present analysis is not informed by the recommendations of this mission, which will be examined by the Committee at its 47th session.

### **Draft Decision: 46 COM 7B.16**

*The World Heritage Committee,*

1. *Having examined Document WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add.4,*
2. *Recalling Decisions **42 COM 7B.31**, **44 COM 7B.58** and **45 COM 7B.58** adopted at its 42nd (Manama, 2018), extended 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021) and extended 45th (Riyadh, 2023) sessions respectively,*

3. *Welcomes the joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission to the property which took place in June 2024 and notes that its conclusions and recommendations will be presented at its 47th session;*
4. *Welcomes the commencement of the updating of the Management Plan for the property, which will include the definition of attributes that convey the property's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) and a strategic plan for the conservation of the timber structures, and requests the State Party to submit the complete draft Management Plan to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies prior to its formal adoption;*
5. *Regrets the information reported on projects planned or already implemented for Hagia Sophia, such as the new ticket office and an entrance tunnel and ramps, without technical details or Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) having been submitted to the World Heritage Centre prior to the works, and also requests the State Party to submit the Hagia Sophia Visitor Management Plan to the World Heritage Centre in a timely manner for review by the Advisory Bodies ;*
6. *Also regrets the lack of information provided by the State Party prior to the change of status of the Chora Museum, despite numerous requests to comply with paragraphs 172 and 174 of the Operational Guidelines, notes however that updated information on the restoration work at the Chora has recently been submitted to the World Heritage Centre and is currently under review by the Advisory Bodies, but nevertheless further requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre technical details and information on the additional building constructed and a comprehensive account of completed, ongoing and proposed works and projects at the Chora;*
7. *Also reiterates its request to the State Party to implement fully the recommendations of the UNESCO Advisory missions of October 2020 and January/February 2021, including the organisation of an international seminar on the conservation of mosaics and frescoes, the preparation of Master Plans for the areas of Hagia Sophia and the Chora, taking into account the potential impact that changes at Hagia Sophia and Chora may have on the OUV of the property;*
8. *Further regrets that a comprehensive roadmap, including short and long-term strategies covering all types of projects which may have an impact on the OUV of the property, has not been submitted to the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies despite its previous requests, and urges the State Party to develop such a roadmap, in close cooperation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, before any irreversible decisions are taken, and to submit it to the World Heritage Centre no later than **1 February 2025**;*
9. *Also notes the submission of HIAs for the Yedikule Fortress restoration and proposed Kazlıçeşme Yacht Marina, and further reiterates its previous request to the State Party to revise the Kazlıçeşme Yacht Marina project in accordance with the recommendations of the ICOMOS Technical Review, including three-dimensional modelling and preparation of a final HIA in accordance with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, and to submit the revised HIA for the Kazlıçeşme Yacht Marina to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies before the project is implemented;*
10. *Requests furthermore the State Party to submit the HIAs under preparation for the Yenikapı Cruise Port and the Basketball Development Centre, and details of current projects at the Grand Bazaar, the Land Walls, the Yedikule Gas House and the Landwalls Nation Garden, as well information about planned excavations at Sultanahmet Archaeopark, Yenikapı, Saraçhane and Theodosius Harbour, to the World Heritage*

Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, and also reiterates its previous request to the State Party to undertake HIAs for all large-scale infrastructure and restoration projects and to submit them to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies before irreversible decisions are taken;

11. Further notes the large number of infrastructure and other development/reconstruction/restoration projects proposed for the property and further regrets that, despite the Committee's repeated requests, completed project documentation and associated HIAs continue not to be submitted to the World Heritage Centre in a timely manner and in accordance with paragraphs 118bis and 172 of the Operational Guidelines, and therefore also urges the State Party to conduct HIAs in accordance with Paragraph 118bis of the Operational Guidelines and based on the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context for all proposed projects that may have an impact on the OUV of the property;
12. Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2025**, 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.



## AFRICA

### 24. Stone Town of Zanzibar (United Republic of Tanzania) (C 173rev)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2000

Criteria (ii)(iii)(vi)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/173/documents/>

#### International Assistance

Requests approved: 1 (from 1998-1998)

Total amount approved: USD 15,000

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/173/assistance/>

#### UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount provided to the property: 2009: USD 24,000 for the inventory of the public spaces in Zanzibar; 2011: USD 14,000 for capacity-building in managing digital inventory; 2013: USD 49,935 for participatory mapping of HUL (Netherlands Funds-in-Trust). 2010-2013: USD 400,000 for Zanzibar and two other African sites under the World Heritage Cities Programme (Flemish Funds-in-Trust), USD 40 000 for Zanzibar for emergency works and capacity building (Oman FiT), USD 400 000 (JFiT) and USD 100 000 (the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Saudi Fund for Culture at UNESCO) for Majestic Cinema Rehabilitation Project

#### Previous monitoring missions

May 2008: Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS mission; January 2011: ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission; September/October 2013: ICOMOS Advisory mission; October/November 2014: Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM Reactive Monitoring mission; February 2016: Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM Reactive Monitoring mission; October 2017: Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Advisory mission; December 2019: Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM Reactive Monitoring mission; July 2023: Joint World Heritage Centre/ICCROM/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission; April 2024 Joint: World Heritage Centre/ICCROM Advisory mission

#### Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Management system/management plan
- Major visitor accommodation and associated infrastructure
- Development and environmental pressures, particularly in relation to the Malindi port project (issue resolved)
- Natural disasters and lack of risk-preparedness
- Visitors/tourist pressures
- Housing pressure
- Lack of human and financial resources
- Lack of legal framework
- Commercial development (large shopping mall) particularly in relation to the Darajani Corridor project
- Lack of maintenance of the built fabric

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/173/>

#### Current conservation issues

A joint World Heritage Centre/ICCROM/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission visited the property in July 2023. The mission report is available online at the following web address: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/173/documents/>. On 1 February 2024, the State Party submitted a state

of conservation report, an executive summary of which is available at the aforementioned address. Progress in a number of issues addressed by the Committee at its previous sessions is presented in those reports, as follows:

- Legislative changes have been implemented, including to amend the 2010 Stone Town Conservation and Development Authority Act;
- Departmental directors and heads of sections have been appointed in line with the Stone Town Conservation and Heritage Management Plan (STCHMP);
- The STCHMP has been amended to include Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) and mandatory conservation by building owners;
- A new proposal for the Darajani Bazaar project has been submitted to the World Heritage Centre and this proposal is being assessed through an HIA;
- The State Party is seeking an investor for the Malindi Port who will consent to work in line with conservation guidelines;
- The State Party is developing an integrated mobility program to connect Stone Town with other towns of Zanzibar. A central parking area will be constructed at Kijangwani. A multistorey parking building structure, envisaged in the 2020 Master Plan, and a Bus Stand will be constructed inside the property at Malindi. Designs are being prepared. These will be assessed through HIAs. These will be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for the review before the commencement of the projects;
- Four of the mitigation measures at the Mambo Msiige/Park Hyatt conversion have been implemented;
- Details for the reconstruction and restoration of the House of Wonders and Tippu Tip House have been submitted to the World Heritage Centre and the development of a reuse plan for the House of Wonders is being expedited and plans for the renovation of the Palace Museum are being developed, both in collaboration with the State Party of Oman.

The State Party also affirms its commitment to safeguard the state of conservation of the property and to communicating with the World Heritage Centre in accordance with the invitation extended by the Committee in Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines.

A joint World Heritage Centre/ICCROM Advisory mission visited the property in April 2024. The mission report is available online at the aforementioned address.

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

Finalisation of the 2023 Reactive Monitoring mission report was delayed, and the State Party has not yet, at the time of writing, been able to fully implement its recommendations. The mission reports progress in strengthening the management system, improving the lives of the inhabitants of the Stone Town, redressing the negative impacts of traffic, implementation of past Committee Decisions and addressing the concerning state of conservation of the built fabric of the property, but also notes that conservation work is progressing at a slow pace and the number of buildings requiring urgent attention is increasing. At the same time, the mission notes a tendency of gentrification, in part due to the costs of building maintenance. A further point of concern, and a new tendency, that the Committee may start to see as a concern, is the continuous erosion of public open space, including but not limited to parks, open spaces and courtyards. These breathing spaces and part of the historic landscape of the Stone Town are being acquired and built on. The mission advises that the State Party continue implementing the measures in place and previous recommendations. In addition, it strongly recommends strengthening the capacity of all responsible institutions and authorities involved in the development process of the Stone Town to effectively manage the property and avoid a lapse in the implementation of the proposed actions that may threaten and jeopardize the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property.

The reforms of the management system reported by the State Party are very welcome. The amendment of the 2010 Stone Town Conservation and Development Authority (STCDA) Act now gives the property management authority greater power in the day-to-day operations of the property. The appointment of new staff will capacitate the STCDA to respond to the challenge of improving the state of conservation of the property, which has been a point of concern since its inscription. These developments, and the progress made in the implementation of the mitigation measures at the Mambo Msiige/Park Hyatt Hotel,

indicate a renewed commitment to the maintenance of the property's OUV and better management of its attributes.

The Management Plan amendment, which mandates HIAs as recommended by ICOMOS in a technical review and grants the STCDA powers to enforce building maintenance, is likewise a significant enhancement of the management system. However, the Committee may wish to repeat its request that the State Party resubmit the final STCHMP to the World Heritage Centre following its amendment in response to the ICOMOS technical review and advice which also recommended placing the protection and maintenance of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) central to the aims of the STCHMP.

The general state of conservation of the built fabric of the property remains concerning, despite the efforts of the government to address critical cases, which in the extreme, can lead to building collapses. The Darajani development project was not implemented according to the design assessed in the HIA and has subsequently been halted.

The continued support of the State Party of the Sultanate of Oman for capacity-building for nominations and promotion of World Heritage in Eastern Africa, including the rehabilitation of both the Palace Museum and the House of Wonders, is vital. The State Party has submitted detailed reports on the state of conservation and technical details on the latter, but the rehabilitation of both buildings requires a thorough understanding of their construction phases as requested by the Committee for the House of Wonders in Decision **45 COM 7B.37**, as well as an assessment of their building pathologies and clear integral vision on the future use of the buildings as museums. The need for an integral vision was highlighted by the 2024 Advisory mission. The World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies remain available to advise the State Party on these complex projects.

In May 2024, the State Party, through financial support from the Governments of Japan (JFiT) and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Saudi Fund for Culture at UNESCO), launched the spearheaded Majestic Cinema Rehabilitation Project. The project, the launch of which was facilitated as a pilot project for UNESCO Priority Africa activity on good conservation and socioeconomic development, will rehabilitate the Majestic Cinema into a cultural hub, providing a cultural and social impulse to support social economic development in the property. For further information, see: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/news/2691/>.

Mobility remains an enduring challenge in the property and in its buffer zone. The new transport plan, of which the Inception Report was reviewed by ICOMOS in January 2022, may be able to address this. The details of the "Safe Mobility Program for Stone Town" and the reported 5-year implementation plan, which the 2023 Reactive Monitoring mission reports as being implemented, have not yet been submitted for review, as requested by the Committee. The construction of a parking structure and bus exchange terminal inside the property at Malindi may provide relief but also have a negative impact on the property's OUV. The State Party's commitment to submit the details of the design as well as an HIA for the Malindi Bus Stand project is appropriate, but the same should be undertaken for the multistorey parking building at Malindi. Such an HIA may provide an occasion to explore all possible mitigation measures, including alternatives long term measures.

The submitted material on the Tippu Tip House was reviewed by ICOMOS in 2021, which concluded that the proposal reuse project as a hotel and restaurant and recommended represents an inappropriate use that will greatly and permanently negatively impact the OUV of this property and, recalling past advice, encourage the State Party again to ensure that the building be given a public cultural or educational use.

The relocation of the harbour will open opportunities in the Malindi Port but also remove an economic driver for the city. The Committee may wish to recall its previous request that the redevelopment be conceptualized with a focus on local communities and the property to ensure its long-term sustainability.

The 2024 Advisory mission made a key recommendation on improving the level of communication between the State Party, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, including a regular series of on-site coordination meetings with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies regarding the monitoring of the rehabilitation of the House of Wonders and establishing a quick feedback system to be operationalised through the appointment of an independent expert to support management authority in the follow-up.

To that effect, the State Party has invited a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM Advisory mission to visit the property in December 2024.

**Draft Decision: 46 COM 7B.24**

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add.4,
2. Recalling Decision 45 COM 7B.37, adopted at its extended 45th session (Riyadh, 2023),
3. Welcomes the progress reported by the State Party on improving the legislative framework of the management of the property through amending the 2010 Stone Town Development Authority Act and strengthening the management system through the appointment of staff to the Stone Town Development Authority as well as progress made on the implementation of the mitigation measures at the Mambo Msiige/Park Hyatt Hotel and encourages the State Party to continue with the implementation of the agreed to mitigation actions;
4. Also welcomes embedding the requirement to undertake Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) into the Stone Town Conservation and Heritage Management Plan (STCHMP), as recommended by ICOMOS, as well as mandatory building conservation by owners, and reiterates its requests that the State Party to resubmit the final STCHMP to the World Heritage Centre following its amendment, as recommended by ICOMOS, including placing the protection and maintenance of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) central to the aims of the STCHMP, to the World Heritage Centre for advice;
5. Further notes the State Party's commitment to addressing the mobility problems at the property and the commitment to submit design documentation and the HIA for the design of and the HIA for the Malindi Bus Stand and, recalling that impact assessments are pre-requisite for development projects and activities that are planned for implementation within or around a World Heritage property, requests that design documentation and the HIA also be submitted for the Malindi Parking Building, should this be approached as a stand-alone project, and also reiterates its requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies the documentation of the "Safe Mobility Program for Stone Town" and the reported 5-year implementation plan;
6. Further reiterates its requests that the Malindi Port area redevelopment be conceptualized with a focus on local communities and the property to ensure its long-term sustainability and capitalize fully on the opportunity for the future development of the city;
7. Also notes the State Party's commitment to the state of conservation of the property and ensuring timely notification in conformity with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines;
8. Encourages again the State Party, in collaboration with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies and other partners, to:
  - a) Continue undertaking effective conservation measures towards improved management and governance of the property in addressing the prevailing urban developmental pressures,
  - b) Continue developing the projects for the rehabilitation of the House of Wonders and the Palace Museum based on an assessment of their building pathologies and clear integral vision of the future use of both buildings as museums and submit these investigations and rehabilitation plans to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies,

- c) *Ensure that the Tippu Tip House reuse results in the building being given a public cultural or educational use;*
9. *Further welcomes the commencement of the rehabilitation project of the Majestic Cinema as part of UNESCO Priority Africa activities on good conservation for economic development;*
10. *Notes furthermore that the Darajani Bazaar project has been halted pending a new HIA and commends the State Party for halting the project and committing to submitting this new HIA on the project;*
11. *Notes with satisfaction the financial and technical support provided to the property and reiterates again its call for increased mobilization of the international community to provide more financial and technical support to the State Party to implement the short- and medium-term measures to improve the state of conservation of the property;*
12. *Acknowledges the invitations extended by the State Party for a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM Reactive Monitoring mission to the property in June 2023 and for a joint World Heritage Centre/ICCROM Advisory mission to the property in May 2024, and also requests that the State Party implement the recommendations contained in these reports, including but not limited to:*
- a) *Establishing a series of regular onsite meetings regarding the rehabilitation of the House of Wonders with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies,*
  - b) *Establishing a quick feedback system to be operationalised through the appointment of an independent expert to facilitate the coordination between parties,*
  - c) *Establishing support processes to assist inhabitants of the property to rehabilitate and retain their properties in Stone Town,*
  - d) *Halting the loss of public open space and covering over of courtyards;*
13. *Also acknowledges the invitation by the State Party for a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM Advisory mission to visit the property in December 2024 to monitor the rehabilitation of the House of Wonder and other major development projects in the town;*
14. *Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2025**, 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 48th session.*

## **MIXED PROPERTIES**

### **EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA**

#### **44. Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid region (Albania, North Macedonia) (C/N 99quarter)**

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1979

Criteria (i)(iii)(iv)(vii)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/99/documents/>

##### International Assistance

Requests approved: 3 (from 1986-2021)

Total amount approved: USD 86,720

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/99/assistance/>

##### UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount granted: USD 20 000 (UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, Venice)

##### Previous monitoring missions

September 1998: Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/IUCN mission; December 2013: Joint ICOMOS/UNESCO Advisory mission; April 2017: Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission; December 2019: Joint ICOMOS/IUCN Advisory mission; January 2020: Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission; April 2022: ICOMOS Advisory mission; March 2024: Joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission

##### Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Management systems/management plan
- Buildings and development
- Ground transport infrastructure
- Major visitor accommodation and associated infrastructure (proposed Galičica Ski Centre)
- Impacts of tourism/visitor/recreation

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/99/>

##### Current conservation issues

On 22 February 2024, the States Parties submitted a joint state of conservation report, available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/99/documents/>, complemented by ten annexes, which reported as follows:

Transboundary activities:

- Revision of the Strategic Recovery Plan based on the requests of the Committee, including the extension to Albania of several activities previously reported only for North Macedonia;
- Exchanges on modification of the road Corridor VIII route and connection by tunnel;
- Planning of a feasibility study for an alternative route of railway Corridor VIII in the section Struga – Albanian/North Macedonian border (expected in 2024);

- Cross-border project COOLTOUR (IPA II programme) to strengthen joint promotion of tourism and cultural heritage, involving the municipalities of Struga (North Macedonia) and Pogradec (Albania);
- First activities for the development of a transboundary WEBGIS database for the registration of cultural heritage and archaeological sites in the Lake Ohrid region;
- Four transboundary meetings were held: three technical meetings on the occasion of other events and meetings and one high-level meeting of the Ministers responsible for cultural heritage on preservation of cultural heritage and restitution of illegally exported cultural objects.

#### North Macedonia:

- 18 emergency measures were adopted in September 2023;
- Preparation of new draft laws on property management, cultural heritage protection and the declaration of the Old City Core of Ohrid as cultural heritage of particular importance; the latter allows for a change in the protection regime and subsequent interim protection until the Detailed Urban Plans (DUP) for the 19 complexes are finalised;
- Ongoing procedures for the adoption of new laws on fisheries and aquaculture, on the declaration of Studenčišča Marsh in Ohrid as a Nature Park, and on the declaration of Lake Ohrid as Monument of Nature;
- Planned amendment of the Law on Inland Navigation (expected in 2024);
- Preparation of a feasibility study for Urban Plans for areas and buildings of national importance for the protected zone in the coastal belt of Lake Ohrid (yet to be completed);
- First steps to ensure compliance of DUPs for 18 urban communities with the management plan and to prepare an Urban Plan for areas and buildings of national significance in 12 cadastral municipalities;
- Upgrading the monitoring infrastructure by installing automatic instruments at several hydrological stations;
- Development of an orthophoto-based detection and monitoring system for illegal building activities in Galičica National Park;
- Ongoing development of a priority list of key habitats of national and European importance and species status;
- Work continued on the diversion of the Sateska River;
- Installation of equipment related to sewage and wastewater management;
- Seasonal lake monitoring campaigns;
- Removed abandoned fishing gears from natural trout spawning grounds;
- Inventoried inappropriate technical installations and commercial billboards for removal;
- Translation of the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context into Macedonian;
- Preparation of a guide for owners/holders of immovable cultural heritage properties on heritage protection legislation and procedures.

#### Albania:

- Progress in maintenance and restoration works implemented by the Protected Areas and Cultural Heritage Administration and the Municipality of Pogradec;
- Development of the Drilon-Tushemisht Water Park project continued;
- Information on a project proposal for the conservation and enhancement of the Early Christian Church and mosaics in Lin to improve visitor experience;
- Preparation of documentation for the declaration of the Lin village as a protected landscape;

- Monitoring of birds, tree cutting and extraction, unauthorised grazing, wastewater discharge, fires, etc.;
- Regular cleaning of the shoreline and of the city water streams;
- Partial rehabilitation of water streams near Rrëmenj and Çërravë;
- Closure and surface arrangement of the Peshkëpi dumpsite;
- The Municipality of Pogradec has set up a task force to monitor rivers to prevent water pollution;
- Adoption of a law requiring business holders to install independent sewerage systems if not connected to the municipal sewage grid;
- Various awareness-raising activities.

A joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission to the property took place (25-29 March 2024), the report of which will be available at the above link.

On 12 January 2024, at the request of the State Party of Albania, an online meeting was organised to present the Waterscape Park Design of the Drilon-Tushemisht project to UNESCO and the Advisory Bodies. Representatives of the then Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Tourism and Environment and the Albanian-American Development Foundation (AADF) participated.

On 21 March 2024, the World Heritage Centre transmitted to the State Party of North Macedonia information from third parties presenting activities and projects that would have been initiated since 2021, such as urban plans, illegal constructions that have been legalised and beach bars that have reopened, a visual report concerning the erosion of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property due to lake pollution, overfishing, tourism infrastructure projects and solid waste as well as information and visual material of urbanisation of the Lake Ohrid region and specific cases of construction projects. The State Party of North Macedonia replied on 7 May 2024 that non-permanent structures that were easily dismantled and made of natural materials have been granted short-term leases in accordance with the applicable legal provisions, and that equipment was installed on land and not on Lake Ohrid using installations already that existed in the past. The State Party further informed that the construction of a sewage treatment plant in the village of Trpejca was planned and would be easily connected to the wider sewage system, and that a building plot referred in the annexes to the World Heritage Centre's letter had received the appropriate opinion and been sent to the Ministry of Culture.

On 21 March 2024, the World Heritage Centre transmitted a second letter to the State Party of Albania containing information from a third party concerning alleged planned development projects in the lakeside town of Pogradec and a potential adverse impact on the environmental, ecological and cultural heritage of a motorboat race for powerboats on Lake Ohrid. In the context of the submission of documents following the Reactive Monitoring mission in March 2024, the State Party of Albania denied the veracity of both pieces of information.

#### *Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies*

While welcoming some progress by the States Parties in responding to the Committee's request in 2021, which noted that the 'legacy of erosion of the attributes over decades, combined with the continuing impact of the development in both parts of the transboundary property, represent actual and potential danger' and called for the development of a Strategic Recovery Plan (SRP) with an associated phased Action Plan, to address the identified severe and multiple threats to the OUV of the property, progress remains worryingly limited. The 2024 revised SRP and the strengthening of its governance mechanisms in North Macedonia is a positive step. However, there is an urgent need to implement the SRP without delay and to prioritise its most urgent actions. The Committee may also wish to recommend that Albania upgrade the status of the SRP, including through clear and reinforced governance, e.g., through governmental endorsement, to ensure the effectiveness of its implementation.

Transboundary cooperation remains limited. Reinforcing transboundary cooperation, including through the regular functioning of the Transboundary Watershed Management Committee, involving high-level representatives, would provide the Transboundary Working Group with the necessary mandate to implement and address urgent transboundary challenges in a timely and effective manner. The commitment of both States Parties to establish a public webpage detailing progress on the SRP will be an important transparency mechanism.



It is noted that the feasibility study for the alternative route of Corridor VIII, which has not progressed sufficiently since 2023, should be prepared in 2024 and that the contractor will be required to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and/or an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to assess potential impacts on the OUV. The Committee may wish to request the States Parties to submit all assessments and relevant technical information to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies before any irreversible decisions are taken.

The delayed completion of the 'Feasibility Study for an Urban Plan for Areas and Structures of State Significance for the protected coastal zone in the Ohrid Region', financially supported by various United Nations agencies and programmes, including UNESCO, as a prerequisite for urban plans of State significance in North Macedonia, in accordance with the 2020 Law on Urban Planning, is noted. The Committee may wish to recall its previous request to the State Party to submit it to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, upon completion.

Pending the finalisation of the report of the 2024 mission, analysis of documentation and information available for the preparation of the present report indicates that the state of conservation of the property has not improved since 2020, despite some steps taken by the States Parties and local improvements in the implementation of measures to protect the attributes that convey the OUV of the property. The cumulative threats to the OUV of the property persist, while new threats have emerged that continue to make the state of conservation of the property vulnerable.

In North Macedonia, the sewage system has been improved and expanded, and progress has been made on the draft laws for Studenčišča Marsh and Lake Ohrid, although they have yet to be completed. The DUPs for the 19 urban complexes in Ohrid have yet to be developed, which has triggered the need for an additional law to address development pressures in the old city core. Dismantling of the platforms encroaching on the lake had begun but is not completed. With the lifting of the building moratorium that followed the approval of the Management Plan for the property, construction has resumed, including in sensitive areas such as near Studenčišča Marsh and Gorica, without a cumulative impact assessment as requested by the Committee since 2016. In this regard, it is recommended that the Committee request the suspension of both projects until an SEA and project-specific impact assessments have been prepared to assess their impacts on the attributes that convey the property's OUV.

As the inventory of illegal structures is not yet complete and criteria have not been developed to assess their negative impacts, to decide whether and which structures can be legalised or need to be removed, and to prioritise their removal, both States Parties should be recommended to eliminate the negative impacts of illegal structures on the OUV of the property.

The unique ancient urban entity of the old town centre of Ohrid remains negatively affected by innumerable interventions that cumulatively have been eroding its preservation and authenticity.

In Albania, new large-scale development seems to be continuing. The impacts of widening the road between Qafatan and Pogradec still need to be reversed. The bypass road between Pogradec, Tushemisht and the North Macedonian-Albanian border is planned next to the outlet of Drilon Springs, with the risk of run-off. The master plan for Drilon-Tushemisht Water Park includes development on agricultural land that the 2020 mission recommended should not be developed, and road infrastructure and construction in the Drilon Springs area have not been definitively ruled out. Provisions for urban development in the Pogradec General Local Plan, recommended for removal by the 2020 mission remain in place, although projects proposals are to be submitted to the World Heritage Centre. The extension of the sewage network is progressing slowly, and although the new law for private businesses is positive, there appear to be no provisions to ensure compliance. It is therefore unclear how and when the key issue of uncontrolled sewage leakage will be addressed. Emergency measures to address existing threats and prevent new ones, as requested by the Committee, have not yet been put in place.

There are still shortcomings in the management of the property, including in fully recognising the significance of Lake Ohrid as a transboundary property. Large-scale development around the lake, particularly near the main urban centres, has eroded the qualities of the exceptionally harmonious ensemble, reducing understanding and appreciation of the qualities that supported the long development of ecclesiastical life along the shores of the lake.

The high level of vulnerability of the property is not recognised by key decision makers. The implementation of the Committee's requests, in particular in relation to the implementation of the SRP and its Action Plan, is not sufficient to reverse the danger identified by the Committee in 2021. The state of conservation of the property is not improving and there is no positive trend to begin to restore its integrity.

The report of the Reactive Monitoring mission will be available after the present 46th session of the Committee and its conclusions and recommendations will be presented at the 47th session. The determination of the urgency of the conservation needs of this property requiring a broad mobilisation to preserve its OUV, including the possible inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger, is therefore deferred to the 47th session.

**Draft Decision: 46 COM 7B.44**

*The World Heritage Committee,*

1. *Having examined Document WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add.4,*
2. *Recalling Decisions **40 COM 7B.68, 41 COM 7B.34, 43 COM 7B.36, 44 COM 7B.77 and 45 COM 7B.104** adopted at its 40th (Istanbul/UNESCO, 2016), 41st (Krakow, 2017), 43rd (Baku, 2019), extended 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021) and extended 45th (Riyadh, 2023) sessions respectively,*
3. *Takes note that the March 2024 joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission visited the property and that its conclusions and recommendations will be presented to the Committee at its 47th session;*
4. *Also welcomes the revision of the Strategic Recovery Plan (SRP) based on the Committee's recommendations, but notes that there is an urgent need to implement the SRP without delay and to prioritise its most urgent actions, in order to reverse the severe and multiple threats to the property that the Committee considered in 2021 as posing an actual and potential danger;*
5. *Requests the State Party of Albania to upgrade the status of the SRP, including through clear and reinforced governance, e.g. through government endorsement, to ensure the effectiveness of its implementation, and to promptly implement urgent measures to address existing threats to the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) and to improve the overall state of conservation of the property;*
6. *Urges the States Parties to reinforce the transboundary dialogue from high institutional level to the operational level to ensure its effective implementation, and also urges the States Parties to ensure that the Transboundary Watershed Management Committee operates on a regular basis, in a two-way dialogue with and supported by a transboundary working group, to ensure that transboundary issues are addressed promptly and effectively and that the pace of progress is monitored and reported;*
7. *Reiterates its request to the State Party of North Macedonia that:*
  - a) *Amendments to Detailed Urban Plans and approval of Local Development Plans outside settlements be suspended until a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) at the strategic level is carried out and demonstrates that the attributes underlying the property's OUV are not adversely affected by these plans,*
  - b) *The General Urban Plans for Ohrid and Struga and the spatial planning instruments for non-built-up areas be elaborated as a matter of urgency and in full respect of the attributes underlying the OUV of the property,*
  - c) *Systematically examine, based on explicit criteria, the extent of negative impacts of illegal buildings and decide how to eliminate or mitigate those adverse effects, including through by removing the illegal constructions or parts thereof,*

- d) *To submit to the World Heritage Centre, upon completion, the feasibility study for the Urban Plan for areas and buildings of State importance in the coastal belt of the Ohrid region for review by the Advisory Bodies;*
8. *Also reiterates its request to the State Party of Albania to formally remove:*
- a) *From the provisions of the Pogradec General Local Plan, the possibility of urban development in the areas along the lakeshore between Pogradec and Tushemisht and in Lin via an amendment of the GLP,*
- b) *From the Master Plan of the Drilon Spring Waterscape Park, the provision for the construction of a building on top of the hill near Drilon and of any infrastructure above and around it,*
- c) *The possibility of urban development in the rural area between Tushemisht and Drilon Area;*
9. *Further reiterates its request to the States Parties to urgently prepare a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) that comprehensively assesses the cumulative impacts of all infrastructure and development plans and other major projects on the property's OUV and to submit it to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies;*
10. *Further urges the State Party of North Macedonia to halt construction near Studenčišča Marsh and Gorica North and Gorica 3 complex until the above-mentioned SEA is undertaken and a project-specific HIA is completed;*
11. *Urges again the State Party of North Macedonia to finalise the proclamation of Studenčišča Marsh as a nature park and Lake Ohrid as a Monument of Nature, and to ensure that management measures preserve the key ecological processes and features which contribute to the property's OUV;*
12. *Also requests to the State Party of Albania and the State Party of North Macedonia to submit to the World Heritage Centre for review by ICOMOS all project documentation concerning the project proposal for the conservation and enhancement of the Early Christian Church in Lin and the project for the rehabilitation of the promenade along the lake in Struga, respectively;*
13. *Urges furthermore the States Parties to undertake an SEA and/or an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to assess the potential impact on the OUV of any alternative route of the railway Corridor VIII, for which the feasibility study should be prepared in 2024, and to submit all assessments and relevant technical information to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies before any irreversible decisions are taken;*
14. *Finally requests the States Parties to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2025**, an updated joint report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above and in response to the recommendations of the mission report, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session, **considering that the urgent conservation needs of this property require a broad mobilisation to preserve its OUV, including the possible inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger.***

## 45. Laponian Area (Sweden) (C/N 774)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1996

Criteria (iii)(v)(vii)(viii)(ix)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/774/documents/>

### International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/774/assistance/>

### UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

### Previous monitoring missions

N/A

### Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Proposed Kallak mining development in the vicinity of the property
- Identity, social cohesion, changes in local population and community
- Management systems/management plan

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/774/>

### Current conservation issues

On 30 January 2024, the State Party submitted a report on the state of conservation of the property, which is available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/774/documents/>, and reports the following:

- In March 2022, the Swedish government granted an exploitation concession for the Kallak K No.1 area for the right to extract and exploit iron in the wider setting of the property based on 12 conditions. The concession determines who has the right to extract, but does not give the right to start operations, which would require a permit under the Swedish Environmental Code. The conditions require the company concerned to engage in dialogue with the Swedish National Heritage Board and the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency to ensure that any development takes into account the World Heritage status of the property (condition 9) and to undertake a detailed Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in accordance with the principles of the IUCN World Heritage Advice Note on Environmental Assessment (condition 12), now superseded by the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context (Guidance);
- In June 2022, the concession was appealed to the Supreme Administrative Court by the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation and the Sámi village of Jåhkågasska, and has therefore not gained legal force. The authorities have made initial contact with the company pending the appeal, but are awaiting the court's decision and the impact assessment before the required dialogue can begin;
- Concerns raised by the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples and the UN Special Rapporteur on the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment regarding the free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) of the Sámi people have been addressed by including specific conditions in the terms of the concession to minimise negative impacts on reindeer husbandry. These include consultation with the Sámi reindeer herding communities and the Sámi Parliament, using the smallest possible area of land (condition 3), compensating affected reindeer herding communities (conditions 4 and 5), and facilitating reindeer migration past the concession area as much as possible (condition 6). Regular consultations aimed at reaching a consensus with reindeer husbandry communities on how to avoid disruption to reindeer husbandry are required, and an annual report on consultations is required (condition 8). The impact assessment will need to address the rights of Sámi as indigenous peoples in accordance with the

aforementioned Guidance and the 2022 Act on consultation on issues concerning the Sámi people, which contains specific consultation provisions on the rights of the Sámi to influence matters affecting them;

- The joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to the property was invited in October 2023;
- In accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, the State Party reports on plans to extend and reinforce the National Grid's energy transmission system, including within the Stubba Nature Reserve, which is part of the World Heritage property. A concession application for a power line between Porjusberget and Vitafors was submitted in December 2023. The company will need to obtain a permit from the Land and Environment Court for any activities or measures that may have a significant impact on the natural environment in a Natura 2000 protected area. The planned extension of a second powerline through the Stubba Nature Reserve to Naalojärvi-Messaure is at an early stage of planning, with a consultation process to identify potential impacts on the property, including an impact assessment;
- Other reported issues that may impact the property include climate change and general anthropogenic influence, as well as off-road vehicles associated with reindeer husbandry.

In accordance with Paragraph 174 of the Operational Guidelines, on 2 April 2024, the World Heritage Centre sent a letter to the State Party regarding a media article about the Government's official endorsement of the Kallak mining concession. This was confirmed by the State Party in a response dated 14 May 2024.

Due to climatic conditions in the Laponian Area, the joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/IUCN Reactive Monitoring Mission to the property took place from 27 to 31 May 2024.

#### *Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies*

The proposed Kallak mining development and exploitation concession in the vicinity of the property remains a cause for concern. It is noted that at the time of the joint Reactive Monitoring mission, the concession, which had been granted by the Government in 2022, had not entered into force pending the outcome of an appeal brought to the Supreme Administrative Court in the same year by the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation and the Sámi village of Jåhkågasska. The World Heritage Centre has since learned through the media that on 25 June 2024, the Court decided to dismiss the appeal and uphold the previous government's decision to approve the concession.

It is noted that the concession determines who has the right to extraction, but that a further environmental permit would be required under the Swedish Environmental Code before any mining could take place, and that the concession requires the proponent to undertake an impact assessment in accordance with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context. The concession also includes a number of conditions relating to indigenous Sámi communities and reindeer herding practices, which are recognised as part of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property.

It is recommended that the Committee reiterate its request that the revised impact assessment, focusing on the potential impacts on the OUV of the property and specifically addressing the Statement of OUV of the property and its supporting attributes, be completed and submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies before any decision is taken that would be difficult to reverse, including an application for an environmental permit for a mining operation. It is recommended that the State Party submit the Terms of Reference for the revised impact assessment to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies. Overall, a permit that would allow mining should not be issued if the project will have a negative impact on the OUV of the property.

The information that the State Party is addressing the concerns raised by the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples and the UN Special Rapporteur on the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment regarding the FPIC of the Sámi through specific concession conditions is noted. Whilst noting that the mission report will provide further recommendations on this matter, it is recommended to reiterate the request to the State Party to ensure that any further consideration of the proposed mine guarantees the FPIC of the Sámi indigenous people, in accordance with international norms and standards, including the Convention.

Regarding the two planned extensions of the national grids to Gallivare and Kiruna and to Naalojärvi-Messaure, it should be noted that one of them cuts through the Stubba Nature Reserve within the World Heritage property and the other one crosses its immediate vicinity and could therefore impact its OUV,

in particular the scenic value of the property according to criterion (vii). While an impact assessment is foreseen for the second power grid to Naalojärvi-Messaure, no such impact assessment has been notified for the powerline to Gallivare and Kiruna. It is therefore recommended that the Committee request the State Party to ensure that both projects are assessed for their potential impacts on the OUV in accordance with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context and that the project documentation and associated impact assessments are submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies.

In addition, in the questionnaire for the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting, the State Party indicated that a new hydrogen manufacture located on the border of the World Heritage property and a windmill upgrade that might affect the visual sightline are both in the planning stage. This information, including project documentation and exact location, should be communicated to the World Heritage Centre, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, before any decisions are taken that would be difficult to reverse. It is recommended that the Committee reiterate the importance of undertaking impact assessments for any development that may impact the OUV, in accordance with the aforementioned Guidance and Toolkit, before authorising these projects.

The World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies note that there are numerous existing and potential extractive and energy-related infrastructure developments and other interventions within and around the property, and that it is essential to ensure that effective means are in place to fully and comprehensively consider the cumulative impacts of multiple developments on the OUV of the property. The State Party should not permit individual projects on a case-by-case basis, if the cumulative impact on the OUV is likely to be unacceptable. It is noted that the mission report will provide further recommendations on this matter, including possible actions in relation to Strategic Environmental Assessment or project-based impact assessment, and it will be important for the State Party to act on these recommendations in a timely manner, prior to the 47th session of the Committee, in order to ensure the conservation of the OUV of the property.

The full report of the Reactive Monitoring mission will be available after the present Committee session and its conclusions and recommendations will be presented to the Committee at its 47th session.

### **Draft Decision: 46 COM 7B.45**

*The World Heritage Committee,*

1. *Having examined Document WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add.4,*
2. *Recalling Decision **CONF 201 VIII.B** adopted at its 20th session (Merida, 1996), by which the Committee recommended that the Swedish authorities continue to work with local Sámi people, Decision **37 COM 7 (Part III)** adopted at its 37th session (Phnom Penh, 2013), which urges all States Parties and leading industry stakeholders to respect the International Council on Mining and Metals “No-go” commitment by not permitting extractive activities within World Heritage properties and by making every effort to ensure that extractive companies located in their territory cause no damage to World Heritage properties, in accordance with Article 6 of the Convention, and Decision **45 COM 7B.32**, adopted at its extended 45th session (Riyadh, 2023),*
3. *Takes note that the World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to the property was undertaken in May 2024, and that its conclusions and recommendations will be presented to the Committee at its 47th session;*
4. *Reiterates its concern that the State Party has granted an exploitation concession for the proposed Kallak mining development in the vicinity of the property which, if implemented, could impact on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, which is dependent on the wider cultural practices of reindeer husbandry that are important to the integrity and authenticity of the property and the attributes that underpin criteria (iii) and (v);*

5. Expresses further its concern that the Kallak mining concession may gain legal force now that the Supreme Administrative Court has dismissed an appeal by the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation and the Sámi village of Jåhkågasska against the approval of the concession;
6. Notes that a further Environmental Permit would be required under the Swedish Environmental Code for any mining operations to proceed, and that the concession stipulates that the proponent must complete an impact assessment in accordance with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, and that various conditions must be met in relation to indigenous Sámi communities and reindeer herding practices recognised as part of the OUV of the property;
7. Reiterates its request to the State Party to ensure that a revised impact assessment of the potential impacts of the proposed Kallak mine on the OUV of the property is completed in accordance with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, specifically addressing the Statement of OUV of the property and its supporting attributes, and to submit the assessment to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies prior to making any decision that would be difficult to reverse, including in relation to the Environmental Permit that would be required for the mining operation to proceed;
8. Invites the State Party to submit the terms of reference for the revised Impact Assessment to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies;
9. Takes note of the State Party's position that it is addressing the concerns raised by the UN Special Rapporteurs on the rights of Indigenous Peoples and the UN Special Rapporteur on the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment regarding the free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) of the Sámi indigenous peoples as part of the conditions for the proposed Kallak mining concession, and that the Reactive Monitoring mission will provide further recommendations on this matter, and reiterates its request to the State Party to ensure that any further consideration of mining permits guarantees the FPIC of the Sámi indigenous peoples, in accordance with international norms and standards, including the Convention;
10. Expresses concern about the planned extensions of the national grids to Gallivare and Kiruna and to Naalojärvi-Messaure, one of which passes through the Stubba Nature Reserve within the World Heritage property, and which could impact the OUV of the property, as well as the new hydrogen manufacture and the upgrading of a windmill, which might affect the OUV of the property in particular its visual integrity, and requests the State Party to provide project documentation and associated impact assessments to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies;
11. Requests the State Party to ensure that there is an effective means in place for the full and complete consideration of the cumulative impacts of multiple developments on the OUV of the property, to not permit individual projects on a case-by-case basis, if the cumulative impacts on OUV have the potential to be unacceptable, and to take timely action in response to the recommendations of the 2024 Reactive Monitoring mission in this regard;
12. Reiterates the importance of assessing the potential impacts of any proposed development within the property or in its immediate or wider setting that may impact on its OUV, through an impact assessment conducted in accordance with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, in line with Paragraph 118bis of the Operational Guidelines, before making any decision that would be difficult to reverse;

13. *Urges the State Party not to approve any permits or licences related to the Kallak mining concession or any other proposed development with potential negative impacts on the OUV of the property, until the recommendations of the May 2024 Reactive Monitoring mission have been considered by the Committee at its 47th session;*
14. *Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2025**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above and in response to the recommendations of the mission report, for examination by the Committee at its 47th session.*



## AFRICA

### 48. Ngorongoro Conservation Area (United Republic of Tanzania) (C/N 39bis)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1979

Criteria (iv)(vii)(viii)(ix)(x)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger 1984-1989

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/39/documents/>

#### International Assistance

Requests approved: 16 (from 1979-2014)

Total amount approved: USD 290,386

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/39/assistance/>

#### UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount provided to the property: USD 50,000 from Switzerland, USD 35,000 from the Netherlands, USD 20,000 from the United Nations Development Assistance Plan (UNDAP) and USD 8,000 self-benefitting funds from the United Republic of Tanzania for community consultative process in 2013-2014; USD 50,000 from the Flanders Funds-in-Trust for sustainable tourism strategy in 2014-2015

#### Previous monitoring missions

April 1986: IUCN mission; April-May 2007 and December 2008: World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring missions; February 2011: World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission; April 2012: World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission; August 2017: ICOMOS/IUCN Advisory mission; March 2019: Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission; February 2024: Joint UNESCO/ICOMOS/IUCN Advisory mission

#### Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Geothermal energy development project (issue resolved)
- Buildings and Development (potential impact of a lodge development project on the crater rim, proposed museum building at Laetoli)
- Transportation infrastructure (impact of the project for upgrading Lodoare Gate to Golini Main Road, construction of the southern bypass road and access road to Olduvai museum)
- Biological resource use/modification (poaching, grazing pressure)
- Social/cultural uses of heritage (relevance of Maasai traditional knowledge to the management of the area, increased human population, tourism pressure, challenges facing community livelihoods)
- Invasive/alien species (spread of invasive species)
- Management System/Management Plan (including governance of the property and community involvement/collaboration, condition and conservation of the Laetoli hominid footprints)

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/39/>

#### Current conservation issues

On 23 February 2024, the State Party submitted a report on the state of conservation of the property, available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/39/documents/>, which reports the following:

- The government continues to facilitate the voluntary relocation of local residents from the property. As of 30 January 2024, 764 households consisting of 4,444 individuals and 20,022 livestock have voluntarily moved from the property to Msomera Village in Handeni District. The government continues to construct houses in the villages of Msomera, Kitwai, and Saunyi to support additional voluntary relocations;

- It is stated that the relocation plan is voluntary and involves prior and informed consultations including a voluntary registration process. All international good practices, norms and standards, such as compensations, and other rights have been carefully observed and implemented. The State Party assures that there are no forced evictions in the implementation of the plan, and welcomes the Advisory mission to visit the property;
- The voluntary relocation plan includes compensation for those who voluntarily register for relocation, such as free transportation of belongings including livestock, free housing and land for cultivation, ten million Tanzanian shillings [approximately USD 3,800] disturbance allowance, free maize for 18 months. Free communal livestock grazing land with infrastructure is provided to ensure the relocated communities continue to maintain their pastoral life. It is emphasised this is beyond the normal compensation provided to people who are relocated in line with international good practices and Tanzanian laws. It is stated that the relocation process is the result of a fair, equitable and consultative approach aimed at finding an interdisciplinary solution that takes into account the needs of people, particularly their wellbeing, the improvement of alternative livelihoods, and the protection of conservation efforts;
- The report of the Multiple Land Use Model (MLUM) review (dated 2020) is appended.
- The State Party assures that there is no violation of human rights in the property and refers to its rebuttal letter from 28 December 2022 (UNESCO/NC/CLT/WHC/F/22/08);
- The State Party has not received the final report of the 2023 African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) mission to the property;
- The State Party continues to manage and control invasive species within the property;
- Regarding the upgrading of the Lodoare Gate to Golini main road through the property and related 2017 mission recommendations, baseline environmental studies have been conducted and archaeological investigations scheduled, in line with the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) addressed in previously shared reports. This will allow the identification of archaeological materials, road re-alignment, and a sensitisation/training activity for the road upgrade team. This will save time and money by not repeating the activity before the construction contract, which is funded by the property;
- Resources are being mobilised to carry out the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to evaluate development impacts. The findings will be submitted when available;
- It is stated that a matrix of progress in implementing the recommendations of the 2017 and 2019 missions and earlier Committee decisions (Appendix II), and the feasibility study for the southern bypass route (Appendix III *Serengeti Southern Bypass: Transport Options and Trunk Road Concepts to Reduce Traffic Crossing the Serengeti National Park*) are appended (however neither were submitted with the report);
- The State Party will initiate the formulation of comprehensive policies on tourist carrying capacity once resources become available. The monitoring framework for these policies will be integrated into the operations of the existing monitoring unit of the property;
- Investigations into the Laetoli footprints conservation and its sustainable use continues. Experiments on the conservation of tuff are ongoing. The *2024 Laetoli Conservation and Sustainable Use Roadmap* is appended.

On 4 to 9 February 2024, on the invitation of the State Party, a joint UNESCO/ICOMOS/IUCN Advisory mission was undertaken to advise the State Party on the review of the MLUM and the resettlement process which is being implemented as a result, including how the resettlement is respecting the matters related to human rights and relevant international norms matters related to human rights concerns raised regarding the relocation of local communities including indigenous residents from the property (see **44 COM 7B.171**; **45 COM 7B.30**).

In February and March 2024, the World Heritage Centre received several letters from Maasai leaders (comprising Councillors, Village Chairpersons, Traditional Leaders of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA), and representatives of the Ngorongoro Pastoral Council (NPC)) (dated 6 February and 7 March respectively); from the Pastoralists Indigenous Non-Governmental Organizations (PINGOs) Forum (7 February); as well as from the Maasai International Solidarity Alliance (MISA) (6 February) and Members of the European Parliament (MEP) (7 February). On 23 February 2024, the World

Heritage Centre responded to MEP and MISA letters confirming that a follow-up meeting is being explored to ensure the views of local communities and NGOs are fully taken into consideration.

### Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies

Whilst noting the State Party's reiterated position that the relocation of local communities from the property is voluntary, in line with international best practices, and provides compensation measures including financial compensation, free housing and land for cultivation and livestock grazing for residents, it remains of significant concern that the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies continue to receive concerns from local communities on this matter.

The MLUM Review, undertaken by the State Party in 2020, and appended to the most recent State Party report, had been requested by the World Heritage Committee since its extended 44th session. The Review focuses on two potential management options for the property, to either (a) maintain an MLUM with some adjustments, or (b) to change the protected area category of NCA, which would consequently prohibit human settlement and development in the property and imply the abolition of multiple land use and the complete relocation of people from the property. The Review recommends that the first option of maintaining an MLUM with some adjustments has *"more advantages economically, socially, culturally, politically and internally than the one that advocates for changing NCA to other protected area category"*.

The World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies concur that the continued implementation of a multiple land use model, that is developed in consultation with stakeholders and rightsholders, and ensures a clear human rights-based approach, is appropriate, and note that the details of the adaptations proposed require more detailed consideration.

Any option which would include abolishing the MLUM approach that has been in place since before inscription and would require the relocation of all residents from the property, would mark a dramatic and highly concerning change in the management of the property. Furthermore, such an option would be in contradiction with the State Party's position that relocation is entirely voluntary, as it is apparent that there are residents who opposed to relocation.

The Advisory mission which took place from 4 to 9 February 2024 was mandated to meet with local community representatives in order to review and assess the progress on the implementation of MLUM and that such meetings were facilitated by the State Party. However, during and after the mission, the World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Bodies and the mission representatives have continued receiving extensive and continuous concerns from local, national and international organisations that many representatives of the communities in the property were neither clearly informed of the mission nor were arrangements made for them to be adequately consulted during its visit, as per the aforementioned letters. A report with preliminary observations of the Advisory mission is currently being prepared based on the February visit. However, it is clear to the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and IUCN that further in-person engagement on site is required to ensure that the views and concerns of communities are adequately heard in order to inform an accurate view of the situation at the property, including in relation to the State Party's proposed approach to the voluntary relocation.

Further dialogue is required to better assess the changes being contemplated regarding the MLUM. To that effect, it is recommended that a Reactive Monitoring mission be requested by the Committee. This will enable the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, in dialogue with the State Party and with inclusion and consultation necessary with local communities, to make recommendations to the Committee on the steps to be taken to address the significant concerns noted above, and to formulate appropriate recommendations. The outcomes of this further anticipated mission will be reported to the 47th session of the World Heritage Committee.

In relation to other conservation issues, which were not part of the matters considered by the Advisory mission, the analyses are presented in the following paragraphs.

Regarding the Lodoare Gate-Golini road through the property, whilst noting that baseline environmental studies are reported to have been conducted and archaeological investigations scheduled, no information is provided regarding the action plan to manage road use, nor have the results of the studies been submitted, as requested. While the feasibility study for the southern bypass route was not appended to the State Party report as stated, it was provided to the Reactive Monitoring mission visiting the adjacent Serengeti National Park World Heritage property in January 2024, which made recommendations regarding the road crossing both NCA and Serengeti National Park (see Decision **45 COM 7B.59**).

It is also noted with concern that the State Party did not provide any further information on the proposed translocation of southern white rhino into the property, which was raised in the previous state of conservation report. It is recommended that the State Party provide an update on any plans for translocation of southern white rhino into the property and not to proceed with the introduction without addressing the concerns raised by the IUCN SSC African Rhino Specialist Group (AfrRSG).

The timely completion of an SEA to evaluate current and future impacts of developments across all sectors in the region including the property and the wider Serengeti ecosystem remains important to inform management decisions for the property. The confirmation that resources for the SEA are being mobilised are appreciated and its completion should remain a priority.

The *2024 Laetoli Conservation and Sustainable Use Roadmap*, appended to the State Party report, has four stated aims, including to legitimize the State Party's ambition to reopen the footprints to visitors, while monitoring them as part of a long-term conservation strategy. This brief document provides an overview of the potential benefits and drawbacks of five scenarios for the conservation at site G. An important factor in the State Party's analysis is the assertion that the experts are of the opinion that the footprints at site G have lost their significant scientific value due to changes of the shape and other anthropogenic imperfections on their surface – a conclusion for which no further information is provided. The roadmap proposes the total re-excavation of the footprint tuff at site G and building of a permanent enclosure, but many questions remain on the details and consequences of this proposal. It is advisable to continue research and engagements to come to an agreed-to solution that will safeguard the footprints.

It is regrettable that the information regarding implementation of the recommendations of the 2017 and 2019 missions was not appended to the State Party report as stated.

### **Draft Decision: 46 COM 7B.48**

*The World Heritage Committee,*

1. *Having examined Document WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add.4,*
2. *Recalling Decisions **44 COM 7B.171** and **45 COM 7B.30**, adopted at its extended 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021) and extended 45th (Riyadh, 2023) sessions respectively;*
3. *Also recalling the provisions of the Operational Guidelines and the previous decisions taken by the World Heritage Committee regarding human rights-based approaches that embody the participation of a wide variety of stakeholders and rights-holders, including indigenous peoples and other interested parties and partners in the identification, nomination, management and protection processes of World Heritage properties, as well as the relevant international norms;*
4. *Notes that the State Party's Review of the Multiple Land Use Model (MLUM) management system, undertaken in 2020 and made available only in 2024, states that maintaining a multiple land use model has "more advantages economically, socially, culturally, politically and internally than the one that advocates for changing NCA to other protected area category";*
5. *Considers that the continued implementation of a multiple land use model, that is developed in consultation with stakeholders and rightsholders, and ensures a clear human rights based approach, is appropriate in principle, and further considers that it is essential that there is full engagement, including effective and adequate consultation with all relevant stakeholders and rightsholders, including those who oppose relocation, in relation to the development of the General Management Plan (GMP) and the implementation strategy going forward following the review of the MLUM;*

6. Thanks the State Party for having invited a joint UNESCO/ICOMOS/IUCN Advisory mission in February 2024 to advise on the review of the MLUM and the voluntary resettlement scheme, also notes that the February 2024 mission, was mandated to meet with local community representatives and that some of such meetings were facilitated by the State Party, but notes with concern that the World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Bodies and mission representatives have continued receiving extensive and continuous concerns, both during and after the mission, from representatives of the local communities in the property, that they did not meet the mission team nor were they adequately consulted during the visit to the property;
7. Notes moreover that, although a report with the preliminary observations of the Advisory mission is currently being completed based on the February visit, further in-person and on-site engagement is required to ensure that the views and concerns of all local communities and stakeholders on the review of the MLUM and the voluntary resettlement scheme are adequately heard;
8. Also takes note that baseline ecological studies are reported to have been undertaken and archaeological investigations scheduled regarding the upgrading of the Lodoare Gate to Golini main road through the property, and again reiterates its request to the State Party to fully implement the 2017 mission recommendations concerning the road and submit to the World Heritage Centre, for review by the Advisory Bodies, the action plan to manage road use, and the results of archaeological investigations and baseline ecological and environmental data before starting the upgrading works;
9. Further takes note that resources are being mobilized to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), and also reiterates its request for the State Party to ensure the timely delivery of the SEA in order to evaluate the current and future impacts of developments across all sectors in the region, including the property and the wider Serengeti ecosystem so that the findings can inform management, and submit the SEA to the World Heritage Centre for review;
10. Further reiterates its request to the State Party to:
  - a) Provide an update on the implementation of all recommendations from the 2017 and 2019 missions and previous Committee decisions based on a revised work plan,
  - b) Provide an update on the development of integrated policies and guidelines on tourism carrying capacity and monitoring framework,
  - c) Implement the recommendation of the Serengeti Reactive Monitoring Mission on the southern bypass road to downgrade the status of the Karatu – Nyamusa road as a trunk road to a protected area road, closing it for heavy transit traffic from Arusha to Musoma and by disincentivizing other vehicle transit traffic, fully implement the 2017 mission recommendations concerning the upgrading of the Lodoare Gate to Golini main road through the property and submit to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies the action plan to manage road use and the results of archaeological investigations and baseline ecological and environmental data before starting the upgrading works;
  - d) Provide an update on any plans for translocation of southern white rhino into the property and not to proceed with the introduction without addressing the concerns raised by the IUCN SSC African Rhino Specialist Group (AfrRSG);
11. Requests furthermore the State Party to not yet implement the 2024 Laetoli Conservation and Sustainable Use Roadmap, which proposes the re-excavation of the Laetoli Footprints (site G) and the construction of an enclosure, but to:

- a) *Continue to further define clearer conservation approaches for the Laetoli footprint site and for the overall archaeological landscape,*
  - b) *Engage the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies in the evaluation of further developed options before any decisions are made on the presentation of the footprints or the construction of a museum building at the site;*
12. *Requests the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to the property, in order to examine the overall state of conservation of the property, and to address the above issues regarding adequate consideration of views and concerns of all local communities and stakeholders on the review of the MLUM and the voluntary resettlement scheme;*
13. *Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2025**, 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

### 49. The Ahwar of Southern Iraq: Refuge of Biodiversity and the Relict Landscape of the Mesopotamian Cities (Iraq) (C/N 1481)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2016

Criteria (iii)(v)(ix)(x)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1481/documents/>

#### International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1481/assistance/>

#### UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

2017: UNESCO Heritage Emergency Fund – support to Iraqi World Heritage properties: USD 100,000

#### Previous monitoring missions

March 2024: Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission

#### Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Legal Framework
- Need to conduct further studies regarding minimum water flows, to confirm the biodiversity within the property and its surrounding landscapes
- Incomplete designation of all the components of the property as legally protected areas
- Need to regulate oil and gas concessions, and other potentially impacting activities in the buffer zones of the property
- Highly unstable conservation conditions of the archaeological sites
- Need for a detailed master plan/road map that ensures the conservation of the property on a sustainable basis
- Need for an effective implementation of the consolidated Management Plan

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1481/>

#### Current conservation issues

On 30 January 2024, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, which is available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1481/documents/>, and which reports the following progress:

- At the archaeological site of Uruk, and in the framework of the research and conservation programme of the German Archaeological Institute, conservation work was carried out at the White Temple, the northwestern side of Anu Ziggurat, as well as the western corner of Eanna Ziggurat. A trench was excavated to the northeast of the Stone Building, confirming that water drainage pipes can be inserted there with no impact on the archaeology;
- Facilities to enhance visitor access and visitation have been installed, and the training programme focusing on the conservation of archaeological and historical architecture has continued;
- An area providing shelter and information panels for tourists next to the expedition house at Uruk was prepared by raising an earth layer which will protect the archaeological layers. Existing dams were repaired for use as visitor pathways;
- A proposal for the Management and Conservation of the archaeological sites of Ur and Tell Eridu is annexed to the report. It outlines activities for the implementation of conservation measures at Ur, in addition to the design of new visitor facilities and interpretation. For Tell Eridu, the proposal

addresses enhancing site protection, survey and assessments, conservation planning, and planning of essential infrastructure and facilities;

- Water scarcity has continued for the fourth consecutive year as a result of negative impacts from dams, and the implementation of irrigation projects by upstream countries. The strategic study of water and lands (i.e. the roadmap for water consuming sectors) is being updated to include climate change and increasing water demands, and will consider development variables in upstream countries on water resources in Iraq. The resulting strategy for managing flood and drought would ensure integrated management of water resources for all sectors and mitigate negative effects on the natural components. Several mitigation measures have been undertaken;
- Research efforts continue, including to prepare various studies on the natural components, a special session at the Third Baghdad International Water Conference (May 2023), and on the biodiversity of the marshes;
- A drought study, which includes socio-economic impacts on local residents and a monitoring model for the natural components, is being completed with funding from World Food Programme (WFP). Regarding the requested Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) at the basin-wide level, the State Party welcomes the World Heritage Committee to invite the riparian countries (Türkiye, Islamic Republic of Iran and Syrian Arab Republic) to undertake the evaluation with Iraq;
- Efforts to engage in dialogue with upstream countries on joint technical cooperation for transboundary water management, are continued. In 2023, meetings were held with Türkiye, including the first joint permanent committee meeting, and an agreement from Türkiye to supply Iraq with the required water needs for the next summer. Various other engagement with riparian states is reported, however timeframes are unclear;
- The State Party affirms its commitment to assess impacts of large projects on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property in line with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context. In this regard, the Makhul Dam project was stopped due to potential impacts affecting World Heritage properties. It is noted that comprehensive information on current and future developments in upstream countries that may impact the property is required, however, it has not been provided to the State Party;
- The State Party reiterates its commitment to ensuring legal protection for the natural components under the national legal framework, which enables the authorities to take legal measures against violators. The Wildlife Protection Law is being amended to ensure broader protection of the property including regarding hunting licenses and regulations. UNESCO will be informed when this is completed;
- Efforts to reduce overfishing and address hunting and poaching are continued, including to monitor fishing activities, raising awareness among local residents, legal prosecution of poaching cases, and discussions on a permanent ban of hunting in the hunting areas within the property;
- The State Party asserts its commitment to ensuring that no oil activity or exploration is carried out that may cause damage to the property and is implementing the requirement for oil companies to not undertake such activities within the property, to not undertake oil activities outside the property without coordination with the National Committee, and to not cause damage to the property. Monitoring of oil companies that have been obliged to submit Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) reports for projects outside the property continues and there has been no case in the last year that would impact the OUV. The State Party will provide a full response in an official letter;
- The process for the preparation of an updated Integrated Management Plan (IMP) and individual management plans for the components of the property has been initiated with technical support from the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage (ARC-WH);
- Monitoring includes bimonthly monitoring of water discharge into and out of the natural components, water quality, and the impact on biodiversity, as well as monthly monitoring of flooded areas and vegetation cover. The purification of feeder rivers and the maintenance of dykes and regulators have continued;
- Regarding the development of a comprehensive Tourism Management Plan, visitor routes are being identified and a plan is being developed to organise tourism within the natural components, and tourism activities are organised in the property. Draft instructions for the regulation for ecotourism in the natural components have been submitted to the Ministry of Environment for



review and revision. Workshops are being organized regarding unsustainable use of natural resources by tourism and the need to safeguard OUV;

- The tourism project in Chabayish city is located in the buffer zone and has been assessed to have no impact on the OUV;
- Several activities of the project 'Human Resilience and Biodiversity in the Mesopotamian Marshes' (inaugurated in 2023) are being implemented in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme, focusing on ecosystems and indigenous people in the marshes, including climate change adaptation, biodiversity protection, women's rights, sustainable livelihoods and habitat restoration.

On 28 March 2024, the World Heritage Centre received a report from the State Party of Türkiye on the 'Iraqi Marshlands', which provides an overview of alterations of the Marshlands in recent history, the current situation, wetland dynamics and water resources of the Euphrates-Tigris basin, impact of climate change, dams and reservoirs in Türkiye and Iraq, and water cooperation efforts.

The joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission visited the property from 2 to 8 March 2024. At the time of drafting this report, the mission report is being finalized and will be available at the above- mentioned link. Its findings and recommendations will be presented to the 47th session of the Committee.

#### *Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies*

The progress in implementing conservation work at the archaeological site of Uruk, in addition to enhancement of visitor accessibility and site presentation are all positive steps, particularly as they have been implemented in conjunction with capacity building activities. The submitted proposal for planning for protection and conservation interventions at Ur and Tell Eridu, is also positive. The State Party is to be encouraged to pursue such activities, with the opportunity to replicate the approaches and methodologies undertaken at Uruk, in particular, with the emphasis on long-term conservation, rather than new excavation. It is also encouraged to continue to plan for visitor services in a way that is compatible with OUV and as part of an overall and proactive strategy of tourism management.

It is highly concerning that water continues to remain scarce for a fourth consecutive year. The various reported actions to mitigate the impact of water scarcity, as well as the ongoing process to update the strategic study for water and lands, the drought study, and the continued transboundary cooperation with bordering States Parties, are noted with appreciation. It is however important to ensure that any proposed mitigation measures, such as the reported concrete canvas lining of irrigation canals, do not negatively impact the marshes. Given the ongoing water scarcity, it is positive that the updated study for water and lands intends to provide a strategy that would ensure an integrated management approach of water resources across all sectors, including the allocation of water requirements to the marshes, as well as to mitigate negative effects on the marsh components. The study is an opportunity to comprehensively analyse hydrology, water requirements and water management, and to inform suitable measures needed for achieving sustainable adequate water flows that ensure the protection of the OUV of the property.

Recalling the previously reported concerns regarding potential impacts of upstream dam developments on the OUV of the property, it is appreciated that the Makhul dam, which could have impacted the OUV of the property, was halted. Noting that the State Party has continued to express its concern regarding potential impacts of projects in countries upstream of the property, that no information on development projects has been provided, further consideration of the wider basin hydrology, water requirements, and development pressures would help to inform strategic planning and management decisions that ensure the protection of the OUV. The requested basin-wide SEA therefore remains important for establishing a comprehensive scientific basis for long term water management. Noting that the aforementioned study for water and lands also includes an assessment of upstream developments, the findings of the study should also inform the requested SEA. It is reiterated that all concerned parties should ensure that activities upstream of the property have no negative impact on its OUV. Hence, the continued constructive technical cooperation with neighbouring States Parties is essential.

The State Party's commitment to ensure legal protection for the marsh components and its efforts to reduce over-fishing and prohibit poaching, are noted with appreciation. An update on the amendments to the Wildlife Protection Law and how these ensure the effective protection of the property should be provided in its next report, and it is recommended that the State Party continues monitoring, and strengthens legal protection, enforcement and management capacity to control illegal activities.

Recalling concerns about the vulnerability of the property to oil and gas developments, the State Party's continued commitment to ensure that oil activities outside the property do not damage the property, as well as the confirmation that EIAs are required and there has been no negative impact in the last year, are appreciated. It is recommended to reiterate the request for the State Party to ensure that all proposed extractive projects are fully assessed for their potential impacts on OUV, in line with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, prior to any decisions to proceed, and to ensure that negative impacts are avoided. Noting that the State Party will provide a full response on this matter in an official letter, it is important to highlight again the requested overview of oil and gas developments in the vicinity of the property, including the assessment of potential impacts on the OUV in line with the aforementioned Guidance. The State Party should also be urged again to make a permanent commitment to ban all extractive industries (oil and gas) within the property. The reported monitoring of existing oil activities adjacent to the property should be continued and any negative impacts immediately addressed.

Acknowledging that the preparation of an updated IMP is underway, it is recommended to finalise this process, as well as the individual management plans for individual components, as a matter of priority.

Whilst the various actions undertaken to regulate ecotourism in the property are acknowledged, a more strategic and structured approach to tourism planning, including the implementation of an overall tourism plan for the whole property to regulate visitation, and to ensure sustainable tourism practices, infrastructure and facilities, remains essential. Noting that the State Party reported that the tourism project in Chabayish city is situated in the buffer zone of the property and that the related EIA concluded that the project does not impact the OUV, and recalling that the Committee had requested a revision of the EIA, the State Party should provide an update on the status of the project. The reported engagement of local communities in management processes, educational, and awareness raising activities is welcomed and is to be further encouraged.

The conclusions and recommendations of the recent joint Reactive Monitoring mission to the property on the above matters will be presented to the 47th session of the World Heritage Committee.

### **Draft Decision: 46 COM 7B.49**

*The World Heritage Committee,*

1. *Having examined Document WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add.4,*
2. *Recalling Decisions **44COM 7B.73** and **45 COM 7B.31**, adopted at its extended 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021) and extended 45th (Riyadh, 2023) sessions respectively,*
3. *Notes with appreciation that the process to prepare an updated Integrated Management Plan (IMP) for the entire property, and updated management plans for each component has been initiated, and reiterates its request to the State Party to finalise, as a matter of priority, drafts of these plans and submit them to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies;*
4. *Notes with concern that water scarcity in the property has continued for a fourth consecutive year, and recalls again that significant fluctuations in water flows may pose a major threat to the property and non-fulfilment of minimum water requirements could represent a potential danger to the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, in accordance with Paragraph 180 of the Operational Guidelines;*
5. *Welcomes that measures are being implemented to mitigate the impact of water scarcity, and that the update of the strategic study for water and lands intends to develop a strategy to ensure an integrated management approach of water resources across all sectors, including the allocation of water requirements to the marshes, and to mitigate negative effects on the marsh components, and also requests the State Party to:*

- a) *Urgently implement management measures that demonstrate that adequate flows to the property are ensured in the short and long-term as a matter of utmost priority,*
  - b) *Finalise the study on water and lands and the resulting strategy for an integrated water management approach, and submit these to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, and ensure these inform the preparation of a basin-wide Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in line with the principles of the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context;*
6. *Continues to encourage the continued implementation of technical and scientific studies that inform the effective management of the property, ongoing monitoring and research collaborations;*
  7. *Requests the State Party to continue strengthening its technical cooperation with the States Parties located upstream of the property for long-term sustainable transboundary water management measures, and also requests that transboundary cooperation remains a matter of priority to ensure effective water management that is informed by science and can guarantee minimum water supplies to sustain the OUV of the property;*
  8. *Recalling the concerns raised by the State Party regarding dam and irrigation projects upstream of the property that could further exacerbate water scarcity and negatively impact the OUV of the property, also welcomes that the Makhul dam, which could have impacted the OUV of the property, has been halted, notes however that information on other upstream developments and their impacts on the OUV remains unclear, and further requests the States Parties located upstream of the property to ensure that any projects that may negatively impact the OUV are assessed in line with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, and that any projects which would impact the OUV are avoided;*
  9. *Further welcomes the commitment of the State Party to ensure legal protection for the marsh components within its national legal framework, and its efforts to reduce overfishing and prohibit poaching, and requests furthermore the State Party to provide an update on the amendments to the Wildlife Protection Law to ensure broader effective protection of the property, and to continue strengthening its monitoring, legal protection, enforcement and management capacity to control illegal activities such as bird hunting and overfishing;*
  10. *Also recalling its significant concern over the continued vulnerability of the marsh components and the related natural values of the property to oil and gas developments, acknowledges the State Party's continued commitment to ensure that oil activities outside the property do not damage the property, as well as the reported monitoring of existing activities, and reiterates its request to the State Party to:*
    - a) *Ensure that any proposed extractive activities that may impact on the OUV are assessed for their potential impacts in line with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, prior to taking any decisions to approve such projects, and not to approve any project that would have an adverse impact on the OUV,*
    - b) *Continue monitoring existing extractive activities in the vicinity of the property, report on any potential or actual impacts on OUV as previously requested, and immediately address any negative impacts and undertake remediation activities as required,*
    - c) *Provide an overview of oil and gas developments within or in the vicinity of the property, including the assessment of potential impacts on the OUV of the property*

*in line with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context,*

- d) *Extend its commitment to a permanent ban on all extractive industries, including oil and gas, within the property, and ensuring no negative impacts on the OUV from activities beyond the boundaries;*
11. *Further acknowledging steps to regulate ecotourism in the property, also reiterates its request to the State Party to develop and implement an overall Tourism Management Plan for the whole property to regulate visitation, and to ensure sustainable tourism practices, infrastructure and facilities, and requests moreover the State Party to provide an update on the status of the tourism project located in the buffer zone of the property;*
12. *Welcomes furthermore the activities undertaken to engage with local communities in management issues, and further encourages the State Party to continue engagement, including on matters concerning hunting and fishing, water usage, rights-based approaches to management and for the application of traditional ecological knowledge to any planned new constructions;*
13. *Takes note that the joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission visited the property in March 2024 and its recommendations will be presented to the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session;*
14. *Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2025**, 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.*