

**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 8 of the Provisional Agenda: Establishment of the World Heritage List and of the List of World Heritage in Danger

INF.8B1.Add.2: ICOMOS notification regarding the Saint Hilarion Monastery/ Tell Umm Amer (State of Palestine) nomination

ICOMOS

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

Our ref. GB/EG/1749/Emergency procedure

Charenton-le-Pont, 18 July 2024

Mr. Lazare Eloundou Assomo
Director of World Heritage
7 Place de Fontenoy
75007 Paris

Subject: Nomination of Saint Hilarion Monastery/ Tell Umm Amer (State of Palestine)

Dear Director, dear Lazare,

First of all, I would like to acknowledge receipt of the nomination dossier of “Saint Hilarion Monastery/ Tell Umm Amer” submitted on an emergency basis by the Delegation of the State of Palestine, which was sent to ICOMOS on 24 June 2024.

I have tasked my team to start the evaluation procedure immediately, bearing in mind that a technical evaluation mission to the nominated property would not be feasible due to the current security conditions.

Please be assured that we are fully committed to providing you with an ICOMOS evaluation report at the earliest opportunity, within the minimum timeframe required by ICOMOS to evaluate nominations submitted on an emergency basis. The evaluation report should be submitted to the World Heritage Centre during the month of October 2024.

At this stage of the process, ICOMOS has identified and contacted a group of international experts, including archaeologists and art historians specialising in Late Antique and Early Christian art and architecture, scholars with expertise in religious studies, particularly early Christianity and the development of Christian monasticism, as well as academics with established research experience in other aspects of the nominated property, such as the intellectual tradition of the Monastic School of Gaza, to provide their views on and critical analyses of the potential Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property, by means of desk review reports.

In addition, and based on some questions and concerns identified in the documentation submitted by the State Party, a letter requesting additional information from the State Party on the justification for inscription, attributes, boundaries and buffer zone, as well as the legal protection of the nominated property has been sent on 15 July 2024.

Also, ICOMOS sought information from varied sources on the impact of the recent intensification of conflict in the Gaza Strip on the cultural heritage of the State of Palestine. In relation to that, on 5 July 2024, information has been requested from the World Heritage Centre on the current or recent state of conservation of the cultural heritage in the Gaza Strip, and in particular for properties included on the

Tentative List of the State of Palestine, as well as any relevant documentation concerning the "provisional enhanced protection" granted to the nominated property on 14 December 2023 by the UNESCO Committee for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, within the framework of the 1954 Hague Convention and its Second Protocol.

Having gathered the relevant documentation, the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel has been consulted on the emergency character of the nomination. In light of available information, some of which cannot be fully verified at this stage in the absence of a technical evaluation mission to the nominated property, but which is sufficient and corroborated through varied sources to constitute a firm basis to draw well-informed conclusions, as well as supported by the decision of UNESCO in line with which the nominated property was put under enhanced protection in December 2023, the ICOMOS Panel has confirmed on 17 July 2024 that, while the nominated property of "Saint Hilarion Monastery/ Tell Umm Amer" does not seem to have suffered substantial damage yet, the threats which it faces due to the ongoing armed conflict are sufficiently serious to justify emergency procedure.

While the emergency character of the nomination has been confirmed by ICOMOS Panel members, the time needed to proceed with the consultation of international experts, receipt of additional information and gathering of Panel members to review this information, does not allow ICOMOS, at this stage, to provide a recommendation on whether the nominated property may unquestionably justify Outstanding Universal Value.

I remain at your disposal to provide any clarification you may require.

Yours sincerely,



Gwenaëlle Bourdin
Director
ICOMOS Evaluation Unit

Copy to: Ms. Teresa Patricio, President of ICOMOS
Ms. Marie-Laure Lavenir, ICOMOS Director General
Mr. Alessandro Balsamo, Head of Nominations Unit, World Heritage Centre