

WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add Paris, 11 June 2025 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-seventh session UNESCO, Paris 6 – 16 July 2025

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

Summary

In accordance with Section IV B, paragraphs 190-191 of the Operational Guidelines, the Committee shall review annually the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger. This review shall include such monitoring procedures and expert missions as might be determined necessary by the Committee. This document contains information on the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger. The World Heritage Committee is requested to review the reports on the state of conservation of properties contained in this document. The full reports of Reactive Monitoring missions requested by the World Heritage Committee are available at the following Web address in their original language: http://whc.unesco.org/en/sessions/47COM/documents

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

Decision required: The 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.

TABLE OF CONTENT

NATURA	L PROPERTIES	3
ASI	A-PACIFIC	3
1.	Tropical Rainforest Heritage of Sumatra (Indonesia)	3
2.	East Rennell (Solomon Islands)	3
EUF	ROPE AND NORTH AMERICA	4
3.	Everglades National Park (United States of America)	4
LAT	IN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN	5
4.	Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve (Honduras)	5
5.	Islands and Protected Areas of the Gulf of California (Mexico)	
AFF	RICA	14
6.	Manovo Gounda St. Floris National Park (Central African Republic)	14
8.	General Decision on the World Heritage properties in the Democratic Republic of Congo	the
10	. Kahuzi-Biega National Park (Democratic Republic of the Congo)	20
11		
12	5 (1 5)	
13		
14		
16		
CULTUR	AL PROPERTIES	30
ASI	A AND PACIFIC	30
17	. Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley (Afghanistan)	30
18	. Minaret and Archaeological Remains of Jam (Afghanistan)	30
EUF	ROPE AND NORTH AMERICA	31
22	. Roșia Montană Mining Landscape (Romania)	31
23	. Medieval Monuments in Kosovo (Serbia)	31
24	. Kyiv: Saint-Sophia Cathedral and Related Monastic Buildings, Kyiv-Pechersk La (Ukraine)	
25	. L'viv – the Ensemble of the Historic Centre (Ukraine)	31
26	. The Historic Centre of Odesa (Ukraine)	31
LAT	IN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN	32
27	. City of Potosi (Bolivia, Plurinational State of)	32
28	. Fortifications on the Caribbean Side of Panama: Portobelo-San Lorenzo (Panama)	35
29	. Chan Chan Archaeological Zone (Peru)	35
30	. Coro and its Port (Venezuela, Bolivarian Republic of)	39
AFF	RICA	42
31	. Old Towns of Djenné (Mali)	42
32	. Timbuktu (Mali)	42
33	. Tomb of Askia (Mali)	42
ARA	AB STATES	46
34	. Abu Mena (Egypt)	46
38		

40.	Archaeological Site of Cyrene (Libya)	46
41.	Archaeological Site of Leptis Magna (Libya)	50
42.	Archaeological Site of Sabratha (Libya)	50
43.	Old Town of Ghadamès (Libya)	50
45.	Hebron/Al-Khalil Old Town (State of Palestine)	50
46.	Palestine: Land of Olives and Vines – Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, E (State of Palestine)	
47.	Saint Hilarion Monastery/ Tell Umm Amer (State of Palestine)	54
49.	Ancient City of Bosra (Syrian Arab Republic)	54
50.	Ancient City of Damascus (Syrian Arab Republic)	57
53.	Site of Palmyra (Syrian Arab Republic)	57
54.	Historic Town of Zabid (Yemen)	57
55.	Landmarks of the Ancient Kingdom of Saba, Marib (Yemen)	57
56.	Old City of Sana'a (Yemen)	60
57.	Old Walled City of Shibam (Yemen)	60

NATURAL PROPERTIES

ASIA-PACIFIC

1. Tropical Rainforest Heritage of Sumatra (Indonesia)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add.2

2. East Rennell (Solomon Islands)

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

3. Everglades National Park (United States of America)

LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN

4. Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve (Honduras)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1982

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

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger 1996-2007, 2011-present

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

- Illegal logging
- Illegal occupation
- Lack of clarity regarding land tenure
- Reduced capacity of the State Party
- General deterioration of law and order and the security situation in the region

<u>Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger</u> Adopted, see page <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/6236</u>

Corrective measures identified

Adopted, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/6236

Timeframe for the implementation of the corrective measures Adopted, see page <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/6236</u>

Previous Committee Decisions see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/196/documents/

International Assistance

Requests approved: 8 (from 1982-2015) Total amount approved: USD 223,628 For details, see page <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/196/assistance/</u>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount granted: USD 80,000 (in addition to approximately USD 100,000 of in-kind technical assistance) under the management effectiveness assessment project "Enhancing our Heritage"

Previous monitoring missions

November 1995 and October 2000: IUCN Reactive Monitoring missions; 2003, 2006 and 2011: Joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring missions; October 2017: Advisory mission facilitated by the World Heritage Centre

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Financial resources
- Human resources
- · Identity, social cohesion, changes in local population and community
- Illegal activities (settlements, livestock grazing and agricultural encroachment, drug trafficking, logging, commercial fishing, poaching and wildlife trade)
- Invasive/alien terrestrial species
- Land conversion (deforestation and forest degradation)
- Legal framework (lawlessness and lack of law enforcement)
- · Livestock farming / grazing of domesticated animals
- Management systems/ management plan (lack of clarity of the boundaries of the property, lack of clarity regarding land tenure and access to natural resources)
- Water infrastructure (potential impacts from hydroelectric development projects Patuca I, II and III)

• Overlap with important archaeological sites implying a need to harmonize management of cultural and natural heritage

Illustrative material see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/196/

Current conservation issues

On 3 February 2025, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, available at <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/196/documents</u> and reports the following:

- In December 2024, the land titling process for indigenous peoples and Afro-Hondurans residing in the cultural zone of the Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve was concluded by delivering the final land title documents;
- The Inter-institutional Subcommission for Mosquitia Region continues to address issues of land ownership and occupation by third parties within the area to guarantee the legal security of land ownership;
- Land tenure regularization in the buffer zone is ongoing, following up on established Family Usufruct Contracts and process new requests received in 2024;
- Institutional presence and law enforcement capacity to monitor and control illegal activities have strengthened, with 55 control activities in 2024, up from 11 in 2023;
- A National Forest Restoration Strategy 2023-2030 (ENRF) and a national Zero Deforestation by 2029 Strategy were announced to reduce forest loss, restore degraded areas and improve governance and conservation of forested areas vital to the livelihoods and rights of indigenous peoples and other local communities;
- In 2024, 3,415 ha was affected by new deforestation, almost double the 1,790 ha reported for 2022-2023, but lower than the 5,358 ha in 2021-2022;
- An analysis on developing "Regulations for Community Forest Management in Private Inter-Community Territories of Indigenous Peoples" was undertaken in 2024, which concluded that a strengthened legal framework for forestry management is urgently needed and must also respect the rights of indigenous peoples and support their capacity for forest governance in their territories;
- The State Party recognizes the need for a Significant Boundary Modification, for which technical and financial resources need to be secured, and is working to establish a new national protected area in the region, the Indigenous Anthropological Reserve Miskitu Warunta, which aims to promote conservation and protect cultural values for local indigenous communities;
- The State Party requested technical support from the State Party of Panama on conducting a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Patuca III Hydroelectric Power Plant (HPP); the first training activity is scheduled to take place in 2025, and draft Terms of Reference have been developed for the SEA to assess potential impacts and inform an adaptive management approach;
- The Patuca III HPP project continues implementing environmental conservation and monitoring actions, such as wastewater and solid waste management, reforestation and monitoring of water quality;
- Progress updates towards achieving the Desired state of conservation of the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) are presented in the report, with proposed modifications to the indicators.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN

The completion of the land titling process giving property rights to indigenous and Afro-Honduran peoples in the cultural zone of the larger Biosphere Reserve is an important achievement. In the buffer zone, the State Party should ensure that management responsibilities and usage rights are assigned through continued issuance and maintenance of Family Usufruct Contracts, as appropriate. The recent launch of the Mosquitia Subcommission addressing issues of land tenure is also encouraging.

The strengthened and ongoing inter-institutional actions to address illegal activity in the property, notably poaching, deforestation and illegal settlements, are noted with appreciation, and the State Party should

be requested to continue these efforts through ongoing enforcement actions and engagement with local communities.

The launch of the ENRF and Zero Deforestation by 2029 Strategies is a positive step towards addressing forest loss in the property and throughout the country, especially given that the reported rate of deforestation in the property in 2024 presents a marked increase. In order to generate tangible results for the property, these initiatives will require adequate financial resources and technical capacity, as well as coordination with existing management and conservation initiatives for the Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve. It is noted with concern that deforestation persists, and the State Party should be urged to strengthen measures to address illegal deforestation and promote restoration through these new and ongoing initiatives. The analysis concluding the need for a strengthened legal framework for forestry management, respecting indigenous peoples' rights and supporting their governance capacity, is also noted and should be taken into account in relation to other ongoing management initiatives.

The State Party reports that efforts to develop a proposal for a Significant Boundary Modification are paused for the upcoming years until the necessary technical and financial resources required for consultations, especially with indigenous and Afro-Honduran territorial councils, are secured. Whilst appreciating the State Party's intention to undertake this process as requested by the Committee, the continued delay is of concern. It is recalled that in addition, the Committee has requested the State Party to ensure full consideration of the archaeological heritage of the property in this process. While the pending establishment of the new Indigenous Anthropological Reserve Miskitu Warunta protected area in the region is noted, both its location and the management approach in relation to the World Heritage property are unclear and should be coordinated to ensure complementarity of objectives and use of resources.

The collaboration with the State Party of Panama for capacity building in undertaking a SEA for the HPP project is welcomed. The State Party of Honduras should be urged to advance the SEA process, in consultation with the World Heritage Centre and IUCN, to identify and monitor any actual and potential impacts of the project on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property and inform management decisions accordingly.

Along with a progress update, it is noted that the State Party has again submitted draft modifications to the DSOCR indicators with the state of conservation report, which will require careful assessment by IUCN. Recalling that a dialogue with IUCN, the World Heritage Centre and the site manager is required to ensure that the proposed modifications adequately reflect the required corrective measures in response to the concerns indicated by the Committee in its Decision **35 COM 7B.31**, **and** also noting the ongoing illegal activities, it is recommended that a joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to the property be requested. The mission would also be an opportunity to assess the progress made in the SEA for the Patuca III HPP, particularly in relation to assessing impacts on the values and attributes of the OUV in line with Committee Decision **46 COM 7A.42**, so that appropriate mitigation measures can be identified.

Draft Decision: 47 COM 7A.4

The World Heritage Committee,

- 1. <u>Having examined</u> Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add,
- 2. <u>Recalling</u> Decision 46 COM 7A.42, adopted at its 46th session (New Delhi, 2024),
- 3. <u>Notes with appreciation</u> the progress made towards addressing issues of land tenure, including the completion of the land titling process in the cultural zone of the Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve, the continued issuance and maintenance of Family Usufruct Contracts in the buffer zone and the ongoing work of the Mosquitia Subcommission, and <u>encourages</u> the State Party to continue these efforts and ensure that management responsibilities and usage rights are assigned through continued issuance and maintenance of Family Usufruct Contracts, as appropriate;

- 4. <u>Also notes with appreciation</u> the increase in law enforcement actions undertaken in 2024 for the surveillance, intervention and prevention of illegal activities in the property, notably poaching, deforestation and illegal settlements, and <u>requests</u> the State Party to continue these efforts in coordination with relevant authorities and local and indigenous communities;
- 5. <u>Notes with concern</u> nonetheless, that the reported rate of deforestation in the property has almost doubled since the last reporting period, and <u>urges again</u> the State Party strengthen efforts to halt deforestation and promote recovery of forest cover in the property;
- 6. <u>Notes</u> the launch of the National Forest Restoration Strategy 2023-2030 and Zero Deforestation by 2029 Strategy as a positive step towards addressing forest loss in the property and throughout the country, and <u>also requests</u> that adequate financial resources and technical capacity, as well as coordination with existing management and conservation initiatives for the Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve, are secured for the implementation of these new strategies;
- 7. <u>Also notes with concern</u> that the process to develop a proposal for a Significant Boundary Modification is reportedly paused for the coming years, and <u>reiterates its request</u> to the State Party to secure the necessary technical and financial resources required for consultations, especially with indigenous and Afro-Honduran territorial councils, and to fully consider the archaeological heritage of the property in this process;
- 8. <u>Also notes</u> the intention to establish the Indigenous Anthropological Reserve Miskitu Warunta protected area in the region, and <u>further requests</u> the State Party to clarify the new reserve's location and management approach in relation to the World Heritage property, and ensure that conservation and management activities are complementary and coordinated, where appropriate;
- 9. <u>Welcomes</u> the capacity building efforts offered by the State Party of Panama to support the State Party of Honduras in the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to assess potential impacts of the Patuca III Hydroelectric Power Plant (HPP) on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, and <u>urges</u> the State Party of Honduras to advance the SEA process, in consultation with the World Heritage Centre and IUCN, and implement adequate management decisions according to the assessment's findings;
- 10. <u>Further notes</u> the proposed revisions to the indicators for the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) and <u>requests furthermore</u> the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to the property to review the proposal to ensure that revisions adequately reflect the required corrective measures to address the concerns indicated in Decision **35 COM 7B.31** upon the property's inclusion on the List of World Heritage in Danger, and also assess the situation with regards to the continued deforestation and illegal activities, and the progress made in the SEA for the Patuca III HPP, particularly in relation to assessing the impacts on the OUV;
- 11. <u>Finally requests</u> the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2026**, 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;
- 12. <u>Decides</u> to retain Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve (Honduras) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

5. Islands and Protected Areas of the Gulf of California (Mexico)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2005

Criteria (vii)(ix)(x)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger 2019-present

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

- Imminent extinction of an endemic porpoise species (vaquita) and conservation status of a marine fish (totoaba)
- Insufficient capacity to control illegal fishing and trafficking activities
- Presence of unsustainable fishing practices that endanger non-target marine species

<u>Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger</u> Adopted, see page <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/8512</u>

Corrective measures identified

Adopted, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/8512

Timeframe for the implementation of the corrective measures Adopted, see page <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/8512</u>

Previous Committee Decisions see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1182/documents/

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0 Total amount approved: USD 0 For details, see page <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1182/assistance/</u>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

<u>N/A</u>

Previous monitoring missions

April 2017: joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission; February 2018: joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Fishing/collecting aquatic resources
- Illegal activities (illegal fishing)
- Serious concerns about the imminent extinction of an endemic porpoise species (vaquita) and conservation status of a marine fish (totoaba)

Illustrative material see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1182/

Current conservation issues

On 30 January 2025, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, available at <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1182/documents/</u>, which reports as follows:

- In 2024, the State Party allocated funds through the Programme for the Protection and Restoration of Ecosystems and Species at Risk (PROREST) and the Programme for Sustainable Development (PROCODES), supporting community projects focused on ecological restoration, turtle nesting beach protection, surveillance, training, waste management, species conservation, sustainable fishing gear, and ecotourism;
- Community networks of environmental guardians were established;

- Cooperation between federal, state, and local governments, along with civil society organizations, was strengthened, involving local communities in conservation efforts;
- Interinstitutional coordination was enhanced between the Mexican Navy Secretariat (SEMAR), National Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission (CONAPESCA), Federal Attorney for Environmental Protection (PROFEPA), National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP), and the Attorney General's Office (FGR). These efforts align with Mexico's Plan of Compliance to prevent the illegal fishing and trade of totoaba, approved by CITES;
- A total of 5,191 vessel verifications were conducted, leading to the confiscation of 44 illegal gillnets and fines for environmental violations. From 2018 to 2024, there has been 30 prosecution files, with 17 people sentenced to prison;
- In 2021, new penalties for dealing with totoaba parts were introduced in the Federal Penal Code;
- In the Zero Tolerance Zone (ZTZ) and its surroundings, 416 concrete blocks were placed to prevent illegal gillnetting, which, combined with other measures, resulted in a 49% decrease in vessels detected in the ZTZ in 2023, and a 95% decrease in the Vaquita Refugee Zone (VRZ). In 2024, four vessels were detected in the ZTZ;
- The 'Upper Gulf of California Fishers Registration Program' is being developed to improve control of fishing operations. Training on alternative fishing systems for local fishers is ongoing;
- The 'Passive Acoustic Monitoring Program' recorded 455 acoustic detections, showing a reduced decline in the vaquita population. The 2024 Vaquita Observation Cruise, involving local fishers and experts, estimated a 75% probability that there are 6-8 vaquitas remaining in good physical condition, including a one-year-old vaquita. Half of the estimated nine individuals sighted in 2024 were recorded outside ZTZ;
- The Trilateral Contact Group (TCG) was established in 2024 to combat illegal totoaba trafficking, involving Mexico, the United States of America, and the People's Republic of China;
- Invasive species continue to threaten the island systems, with successful eradication campaigns against rats, cats, and goats;
- Four protected areas within the property have been certified on the IUCN Green List.

On 25 February 2025, the World Heritage Centre transmitted third party concerns regarding a proposed gas development "Saguaro Energía" which would include the transportation of gas through the Gulf of California. On 11 March 2025, the State Party provided a response, stating that any activities related to this project would not be located inside the components of the property.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN

The State Party has made commendable efforts in addressing the conservation challenges of the property and it is welcome that four component parts have been recognised on the IUCN Green List, but ongoing risks continue to threaten its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). Despite these various efforts, significant gaps remain in enforcement, legislative frameworks, and community involvement, hindering full OUV protection in all components of the property.

Progress has been made in updating the Federal Penal Code in 2021 to impose stricter penalties for illegal totoaba fishing and trafficking. However, no further advances are reported under corrective measure 2, which addresses legislative responses to protected wildlife capture and trade. Implementing these legal provisions fully remains a challenge. While improved surveillance and enforcement have led to reduced vessel presence and the deployment of concrete blocks, illegal fishing persists. Current enforcement strategies show positive trends, but further strengthening is needed to ensure rapid and effective action against violations. Enhanced coordination among SEMAR, PROFEPA, and CONAPESCA is crucial to increase effectiveness. Expanding the use of technology and vessel monitoring systems, along with increased authority presence, could be key tools in combating ongoing illegal activities and should be urgently prioritized.

Whilst it is encouraging that the overall rate of population decline of the vaquita has significantly decreased in recent years, it is highly concerning that the May 2024 survey within the ZTA and Extension Area detected only 6–8 individuals, a concerning decrease from the 10–13 observed in 2023. Acoustic research in the summer of 2024 detected vaquitas both within the ZTA, which is effectively protected from gillnetting by concrete blocks with entangling hooks and collaborative enforcement by the Navy

and Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, and within the Vaquita Refuge but outside the ZTA, which remains unprotected from gillnetting. Thus, it remains critically important that measures are continued to ensure the protection and recovery of this species, which remains highly vulnerable. The sighting of a one-year-old and individuals in good condition is encouraging, yet the overall population remains at risk of imminent extinction. Ongoing threats from illegal gillnet fishing and slow species recovery demand immediate and more effective conservation responses. With half of the 2024 sightings occurring outside the ZTZ, it is recommended that the State Party assess the possibility of expanding the zone to enhance protection. This situation calls for sustained and intensified conservation and monitoring efforts. In line with Committee requests, it is also essential to monitor the performance of the concrete blocks with hooks and ensure that trapped nets are regularly removed to prevent entanglement risks to vaquita and other marine species.

Promoting alternative fishing gear and engaging local communities are vital to reducing entanglement risks. Initiatives like the Upper Gulf of California Fishers Registration Program and training efforts are positive steps, but the adoption of alternative gear has been insufficient and requires prioritization. Effective protection of vaquita and other marine species depends on scaling up sustainable fishing practices across all fishing communities. The State Party should incentivize adoption and provide additional support to ease the transition.

The formation of the TCG to combat illegal totoaba trafficking is a positive step. Greater cooperation between the States Parties of Mexico, the United States of America, and the People's Republic of China is essential to counter cross-border wildlife trafficking. Furthermore, all transit and destination countries also play a key role in supporting Mexico's efforts to prevent vaquita extinction and curb illegal totoaba trade. Enhanced communication between source, transit, and destination countries is vital for effective enforcement. Transit countries should use available information to identify routes and implement legal actions to deter trafficking, as recommended by the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Secretariat in its 2024 study on vaquita and totoaba.

Whilst noting the State Party's response that activities related to the proposed gas development project in Puerto Libertad, Sonora would not be located within the boundaries of the property, it is important to highlight that the potential impacts of such a project on the OUV of the property would need to be appropriately assessed through an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) before making any decision that would be difficult to reverse. For example, it would be important to consider the potential impacts of shipping in the vicinity of the property on key attributes of the OUV such as the marine biodiversity recognised under criterion (x) (e.g. marine mammals including sea lions, dolphins and whales). It is therefore recommended that the State Party be requested to provide further details and to ensure that an ESIA be undertaken in line with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context.

Draft Decision: 47 COM 7A.5

The World Heritage Committee,

- 1. Having examined Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add,
- 2. <u>Recalling</u> Decisions **45** COM **7B.97** and **46** COM **7A.43**, adopted at its extended 45th (Riyadh, 2023) and 46th (New Delhi, 2024) sessions respectively,
- 3. <u>Commends</u> the State Party for its interinstitutional coordinated response to address the conservation challenges affecting the property;
- <u>Welcomes</u> the initiatives to actively involve local communities, fishers, and civil society organizations in the conservation and sustainable management of the property, and to improve the management effectiveness of components of the property;
- 5. <u>Reiterates its utmost concern</u> about the critical status of the vaquita, specifically recognized as part of the property's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) and endemic to

the Gulf of California, and that illegal fishing of totoaba has continued in the Upper Gulf of California resulting in a threat of imminent extinction of the vaquita species;

- 6. <u>Notes with concern</u> that the 2024 vaquita survey detected only 6–8 individuals and <u>considers</u> it essential that the remaining vaquita are fully protected through all means necessary, in particular by eliminating the illegal use of gillnets in their habitat;
- 7. <u>Again notes with concern</u> that, despite renewed commitments and improvements to interinstitutional surveillance and law enforcement efforts, illegal fishing in the property persists, and <u>reiterates again its requests</u> to the State Party to strengthen law enforcement efficiency through increased surveillance and inspection accompanied by improved criminal prosecution procedures and development of necessary legislation to increase the penalties foreseen for illegal traffic, capture, possession, import and export of wildlife species, parts and products considered, threatened, endangered or specially protected and/or regulated under national law, or by international treaties adopted by the State Party;
- 8. <u>Urges</u> the State Party to implement vessel monitoring systems and other technologies to complement ongoing enforcement efforts, accompanied by adequate training and technical capacity-building to ensure their effective operation;
- 9. <u>Also reiterates its request</u> to the State Party to urgently expedite the production and deployment of alternative gear and provide information to the World Heritage Centre on the uptake of alternative gear across all fishing communities of the Upper Gulf of California;
- 10. <u>Recommends</u> that the State Party assess the possibility of expanding the Zero Tolerance Zone (ZTZ) to encompass areas where vaquita sightings were reported outside the current boundaries, to ensure more effective and comprehensive habitat protection;
- 11. <u>Also welcomes</u> the cooperation between the State Party with other relevant States Parties, notably the United States of America and the People's Republic of China, to combat illegal trafficking of totoaba products, and <u>encourages</u> its further development, including within the framework of Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), and <u>strongly recommends</u> that the State Party of Mexico, together with all the States Parties of transit and all destination countries, take urgent action in line with all CITES decisions to effectively address the illegal totoaba bladder trade;
- 12. <u>Also requests</u> the State Party to implement, with utmost priority, all of the corrective measures for the property, included in the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) approved by the Committee;
- 13. <u>Further requests</u> the State Party to provide details of the proposed gas development which would include the transportation of extracted gas in the vicinity of the property, and to ensure that the potential impacts of such a project on the OUV of the property, including the marine biodiversity and ecosystems, be assessed through an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA), in accordance with Paragraph 118bis of the Operational Guidelines and the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, before making any decision that would be difficult to reverse, and to avoid approving any activities that would negatively impact the OUV;

14. <u>Finally requests</u> the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2026**, 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;

15. <u>Decides</u> to retain Islands and Protected Areas of the Gulf of California (Mexico) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

AFRICA

6. Manovo Gounda St. Floris National Park (Central African Republic)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1988

Criteria (ix)(x)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger 1997-present

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

- Illegal grazing
- Uncontrolled poaching by heavily armed groups and the subsequent loss of up to 80% of the Park's wildlife due to the deteriorating security situation
- Halt to tourism

Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger Not yet identified

<u>Corrective measures identified</u> Adopted in 2009 and revised in 2019, see page <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/7463</u>

<u>Timeframe for the implementation of the corrective measures</u> Adopted in 2019, see page <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/7463</u>

Previous Committee Decisions see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/475/documents/

International Assistance

Requests approved: 4 (from 2001-2012) Total amount approved: USD 225,488 For details, see page <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/475/assistance/</u>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount provided: USD 2,250,000 from the Government of Norway from 2021 to 2026

Previous monitoring missions

May 2001, April 2009 and March/April 2019: Joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring missions

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Insecurity and porosity of borders
- Poaching
- Artisanal mining
- Transboundary transhumance and illegal grazing
- Illegal fishing
- Illegal occupation of the property
- Lack of protection and management measures
- Petroleum exploration activities

Illustrative material see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/475/

Current conservation issues

On 12 February 2025, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, which is available at <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/475/documents/</u>, which provides the following information:

• Progress has been made in implementing the corrective measures updated in 2019 and the indicators defined in the action plan (2022–2024) drawn up at the workshop held in Kinshasa in

2022 to support the process of removing natural properties from the List of World Heritage in Danger in French-speaking African countries;

- A number of initiatives have been implemented by the managing authority, the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), with the support of technical and financial partners such as the European Commission, the JRS Biodiversity Foundation and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), with various objectives including maintaining the ecosystem services provided, regulating cross-border transhumance, conserving wildlife and ecosystems, supporting ecological monitoring and law enforcement;
- Biomonitoring data on key species was collected during 2024 from on-foot and aerial surveys;
- Around 11,000 km² of the property's 17,500 km² (i.e. 63 per cent of its surface area) have been reclaimed and secured, particularly in the Koumbala and Gounda sectors. In addition, the Manovo-Nzamza village hunting reserve (*Zone Cynégétique Villageoise* ZCV) and the Idongo-Ngassa Conservation area, both of which serve as ecological corridors between the property and the Baminigui-Bongoran National Park to the west, have been secured;
- The managing authority's operational capabilities have been strengthened, particularly in terms of law enforcement (382 poachers arrested, 91 camps destroyed, arms, ammunition and trapping cables seized), rehabilitation of infrastructure (surveillance operations control room, opening of 1,500 km of tracks) and the acquisition of navigation, communication and data collection equipment. In terms of staffing, 24 eco-guards, 56 eco-supervisors and 80 "tango" transhumance regulators have been deployed in the field to explore the perimeters of the priority zone (the heart of the property) and the buffer zone and to facilitate dialogue with transhumant herders;
- Efforts have been made to promote sustainable community development around the property (micro-projects and green industries), benefiting 95 people;
- An awareness-raising mission was organized to promote dialogue between traditional miners and the property managers and a joint commission was set up to identify the boundaries of the oil block in the northern part of the property.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN

The progress made in implementing the corrective measures updated in 2019 and the activities planned in the 2022–2024 action plan is noted. It is recommended that the State party and its technical and financial partners be encouraged to continue these efforts to ensure that they are implemented in full. However, although the State Party indicates in the state of conservation report submitted in February 2025 that 11,000 km² (63 per cent) of the property has been secured for the period 2021–2023, these figures differ from those reported last year (around 50 per cent reported in 2024). It is therefore unclear whether the 63 per cent target has actually been achieved and further clarification should be provided in the next state of conservation report regarding the actual coverage secured up to the end of 2024, or even 2025.

The efforts made to deal with the threats posed by oil exploration and illegal mineral exploitation, in particular the creation of a joint commission to identify the boundaries of the oil block in the north of the property, and the organization of an awareness-raising mission to encourage consultation between the mining players and the property managers, have been noted. However, they do not provide an effective response to these threats. In particular, the State Party has not responded to the Committee's request to clarify the situation of oil block A and exploration blocks I, II and III, which straddle the property, and to ensure that no oil or mining exploration is permitted within the property. Furthermore, the lack of information on the current impact of mining and oil activities is worrying, particularly in view of its World Heritage status. It is recommended that a more detailed report be provided on the extent of these activities and their impact on the outstanding universal value (OUV) of the property, as well as on the results of the efforts undertaken.

Noting that on-foot and aerial inventories carried out in 2024 enabled data to be collected on a number of wildlife species, the lack of sightings of certain key OUV species (lion, leopard, cheetah and wild dog) previously reported is concerning. It is advisable to ensure that inventory and reporting methodologies are consistent each year and enable population abundance, distribution and trends to be determined. Concerning the desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR), it is recalled that the indicators established in the 2022–2024 Action Plan simply represented guidelines for immediate action by the State Party and its partners. It is therefore

also recommended that the State Party be requested to finalize the draft DSOCR as soon as possible, on the basis of reliable indicators on key species, and submit it to the World Heritage Centre and IUCN for review, with a view to its adoption by the Committee.

It is regrettable that several of the 2019 mission's recommendations have not yet been implemented. Furthermore, in the absence of detailed responses to several crucial requests made in Decision **46 COM 7A.44**, it remains difficult to assess the progress made by the State Party, particularly with regard to: assessment of the extent and impact of mining activities on the property; progress made towards finalization of the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) for the project to rehabilitate national road 8 Ndélé–Birao and its submission to the World Heritage Centre for review by IUCN; the situation of oil block A and exploration blocks I, II, and III, which straddle the property; and the submission of an application for a minor boundary modification of the property to create a buffer zone for the property that is consistent with the zoning of the biosphere reserve. It is therefore recommended that the Committee reiterate the other main requests made in Decision **46 COM 7A.44**.

Finally, in line with the recommendation of the 2019 mission on the four-year time frame and previous analyses by the World Heritage Centre and IUCN, it is recommended that the State Party, during the course of 2025, invite a joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to assess the state of conservation of the property and the effective progress made and to review the corrective measures and their implementation schedule in light of the continuing challenges.

Draft Decision: 47 COM 7A.6

The World Heritage Committee,

- 1. Having examined Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add,
- 2. <u>Recalling</u> Decisions **45 COM 7A.3** and **46 COM 7A.44** adopted at its 45th extended session (Riyadh, 2023) and its 46th session (New Delhi, 2024) respectively,
- 3. <u>Welcomes</u> the efforts made by the State Party and the managing authority, the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), to implement the corrective measures updated in 2019 and the activities provided for in the 2022–2024 action plan, and to secure and improve the management and monitoring of the property, in particular the strengthening of operational capacity, community development initiatives around the property and the regulation of transboundary transhumance, and <u>encourages</u> the State Party and its partners to continue their efforts and accelerate full implementation of the corrective measures and activities provided for in the 2022–2024 action plan;
- 4. <u>Acknowledges</u> the significant efforts made by the State Party and its partners to increase the secured area of the property, with a view to achieving the 63 per cent target (11,000 km²) initially set, <u>but notes however</u> that the areas reported for the period 2021–2023 are inconsistent with the state of conservation reports submitted in 2024 and 2025 and thus do not permit a decision to be taken as to whether the target of 63 per cent of the area secured has actually been achieved, <u>therefore urges</u> the State Party to clarify the progress made in this regard and <u>calls upon</u> the international community to provide greater support for the efforts of the State Party and its partners to provide sustainable funding to fully secure the property;
- 5. <u>Takes note</u> that on-foot and aerial surveys carried out in 2024 enabled data to be collected on a number of wildlife species, <u>notes with concern</u> the lack of recent sightings of key species of outstanding universal value (OUV) including lion, leopard, cheetah and wild dog and <u>requests</u> the State Party to standardize survey methodologies to ensure comparability of data, and to provide analyses of population abundance, distribution and trends;

- 6. <u>Recalling</u> that the indicators established in the 2022–2024 Action Plan simply represented guidelines for immediate action by the State Party and its partners, <u>also requests</u> that the State Party, on the basis of reliable indicators on the key species of the property's OUV and as soon as possible, finalize the drafting of the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) and submit it to the World Heritage Centre and IUCN for review, with a view to its adoption by the Committee;
- 7. <u>While noting</u> the establishment of a joint commission to identify the boundaries of the oil block to the north of the property and the organization of an awareness-raising mission to encourage consultation between the mining stakeholders and the managers of the property, <u>notes with concern</u> that the threats posed by oil exploration and illegal mining activities have still not been resolved and <u>once again reiterates its request</u> to the State Party to clarify the situation regarding oil block A and exploration blocks I, II and III, which straddle the property, and ensure that no oil or mineral exploration activity is authorized within the property;
- 8. <u>Is concerned</u> about the lack of information concerning the current impact of mining and oil activities on the property and the effectiveness of the various actions undertaken to exclude these activities, <u>reiterates once again its established position</u> that mineral or oil exploration or exploitation are incompatible with World Heritage status and <u>furthermore requests</u> that the State Party provide a more detailed report on the extent of these activities and their impacts on the property's OUV;
- 9. <u>Regrets</u> the absence of detailed responses from the State Party to several key requests made in Decision **46 COM 7A.44**, which makes it difficult to clearly assess the progress made in their implementation;
- 10. <u>Also urges</u> the State Party to provide an up-to-date answer regarding the implementation of Decision **46 COM 7A.44**, particularly regarding:
 - a) Assessment of the extent and impact of mining activities on the outstanding universal value of the property,
 - b) Progress made in finalizing the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) of the project to rehabilitate national road 8 Ndélé–Birao and its submission to the World Heritage Centre for review by IUCN,
 - *c)* Submission of an application for a minor boundary modification of the property to create a buffer zone for the property that is consistent with the zoning of the biosphere reserve;
- 11. <u>Further requests</u> the State Party, during the course of 2025, to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to assess the state of conservation of the property and the effective progress made, review the updated corrective measures of 2019 and their implementation schedule in light of the continuing challenges;
- 12. <u>Finally requests</u> the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2026**, 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;
- 13. <u>Decides</u> to continue to apply the Reinforced Monitoring Mechanism to this property;
- 14. <u>Also decides</u> to maintain the Manovo-Gounda St Floris National Park (Central African Republic) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Note: the following reports on the World Heritage properties of the Democratic Republic of the Congo need to be read in conjunction with Item 8 below.

8. General Decision on the World Heritage properties in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Current conservation issues

The State Party did not submit a separate report on the General Decision on the World Heritage properties in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN

Although the State Party did not submit a separate report in response to Decision **46 COM 7A.46**, it is appreciated that individual reports were submitted for the five World Heritage properties in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), providing information on their state of conservation, progress made, and challenges encountered. That said, and emphasizing that this was also the case for Decisions **45 COM 7A.9** and **44 COM 7A.46**, it is important to remind the State Party once again of the need to also submit a separate report on the General Decision dealing with cross-cutting issues relating to the state of conservation of the properties and the implementation of the 2011 Kinshasa Declaration.

Already highly unstable due to the presence of several armed groups, the security situation deteriorated significantly again in early 2025 in eastern DRC with the offensive by the M23 group in Goma and Bukavu, as recognized by the United Nations Security Council. This instability affects conservation efforts in Virunga and Kahuzi-Biega National Parks, located in the east and close to the conflicts, as well as in Okapi Wildlife Reserve, located slightly further northeast of the country, thereby inhibiting the State Party's ability to effectively implement the Convention, particularly Article 4. Despite this difficult context, the State Party's resilience is to be commended, in particular for its efforts to maintain conservation achievements in areas that are still accessible and to continue to implement the corrective measures for each of the properties. It is recommended that the State Party be encouraged to intensify its efforts to ensure the continuity of conservation actions and the full implementation of the corrective measures.

Various advances have been made in strengthening the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) in accordance with the recommendations of the report of the Commission of Inquiry into alleged violations by the Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation (ICCN) staff at Kahuzi-Biega National Park (PNKB), and those of the 2019 Bukavu Dialogue in favour of the Batwa. However, additional efforts are needed, particularly regarding the 2022 Decision (Communication 588/15) of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR). In the interest of preserving the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property and respecting the rights of the Batwa communities to use their ancestral lands, it is important that the World Heritage Committee urge the State Party to implement all the actions requested in the above-mentioned decision. It is also requested that ongoing actions be continued to train all staff on human rights issues and to involve the IPLCs in the management processes of the properties, in accordance with international standards and the 2015 Policy on World Heritage and Sustainable Development.

The exploitation of natural resources remains a critical threat to World Heritage properties in the DRC. This is illustrated by the failure to cancel the 2022 tender for oil exploitation in blocks overlapping Virunga National Park, and the continued presence of active mining sites within Okapi Wildlife Reserve. It is recommended that the Committee reiterate its position that oil, gas and mining exploration or exploitation is incompatible with World Heritage status, a policy

supported by commitments made by leaders of these industries not to undertake such activities in World Heritage properties, and urge the State Party once again to cancel all oil block concessions and mining concessions that encroach on World Heritage properties.

Progress has been noted in the state of conservation of Garamba National Park, and a new nomination of the property to the World Heritage List was submitted by the State Party in January 2025. A field assessment mission led by IUCN will be carried out there shortly.

Finally, aware of the current challenges related to conservation funding, particularly with the withdrawal of key financial partners such as USAID, which contributes significantly to certain properties in the DRC, including Salonga National Park, it is recommended that the Committee call on the international community to further support the State Party in its ongoing efforts to protect all World Heritage properties on its territory, which are facing various security, social, environmental but also financial challenges.

Draft Decision: 47 COM 7A.8

The World Heritage Committee,

- 1. Having examined Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add,
- 2. <u>Recalling</u> Decisions **44** COM **7A.46**, **45** COM **7A.9**, and **46** COM **7A.46**, adopted at its extended 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021), extended 45th (Riyadh, 2023) and 46th (New Delhi, 2024) sessions respectively,
- 3. <u>Notes</u> that no separate report has been submitted by the State Party in response to Decision **46 COM 7A.46**, as was the case for Decisions **45 COM 7A.9** and **44 COM 7A.46**, and <u>appreciates</u> that individual reports have been submitted for the five World Heritage properties in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), providing information on their state of conservation, progress made and challenges encountered;
- 4. <u>Remains concerned</u> about the security situation in the east of the country in early 2025, affecting the implementation of the Convention, in particular Article 4, by the State Party, especially in Virunga and Kahuzi-Biega National Parks, located in the east and close to the conflicts, as well as in Okapi Wildlife Reserve, located slightly further northeast of the country, and <u>encourages</u> the State Party to continue and intensify its efforts to ensure the continuity of conservation actions in its properties;
- 5. <u>Notes with appreciation</u> the commendable efforts of the State Party through the central management authority, in particular the Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation (ICCN), to maintain conservation achievements in areas that are still accessible and to continue to implement the corrective measures despite the difficult context, and <u>strongly encourages</u> the State Party to continue to strengthen the capacity of ICCN to ensure the safety of its staff while on duty and the effective management of its properties in times of conflict;
- 6. <u>Also encourages</u> the State Party to urgently take steps to organize, in cooperation with UNESCO and its partners, a national workshop on heritage protection in conflict zones in the DRC, as highlighted in Decisions **45 COM 7A.8** and **46 COM 7A.50**;
- 7. <u>Takes note</u> of the progress made in respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) in accordance with the recommendations of the report of the Commission of Inquiry into alleged violations by ICCN staff at Kahuzi-Biega National Park (PNKB), as well as those of the 2019 Bukavu Dialogue in favour of the Batwa, and <u>further encourages</u> the State Party to continue, at the level of all World Heritage

properties in the DRC, ongoing actions to train all staff on human rights issues and to involve IPLCs in property management processes, in accordance with international standards and the 2015 Policy on World Heritage and Sustainable Development;

- 8. <u>Recalls</u>, however, the 2022 Decision (Communication 588/15) of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), and <u>urges</u> the State Party to implement all the actions set out in that decision, in the interest of preserving the Outstanding Universal Value of the property and respecting the rights of the Batwa communities of Kahuzi-Biega;
- 9. <u>Expresses its deepest concern</u> about the continuing threats to World Heritage properties in the DRC from oil and mining exploitation, in particular the failure to cancel the 2022 tender for oil exploitation in blocks overlapping Virunga National Park, and the continued presence of active mining sites within Okapi Wildlife Reserve, <u>reiterates its position</u> that gas, oil and mining exploration or exploitation is incompatible with World Heritage status, a policy supported by commitments made by leaders of these industries not to undertake such activities in World Heritage properties and <u>urges once again</u> the State Party to cancel all oil block concessions and mining concessions that encroach on World Heritage properties;
- 10. <u>Also notes</u> the progress made in the state of conservation of Garamba National Park, as well as the new nomination of the property to the World Heritage List submitted by the State Party in January 2025, and <u>emphasises</u> that a field assessment mission led by IUCN will be carried out there in the near future;
- 11. <u>Also notes</u> the current challenges related to conservation funding, particularly with the withdrawal of key financial partners such as USAID, which contributes significantly to certain properties in the DRC, including Salonga National Park, and <u>calls on</u> the international community to further support the State Party in its ongoing efforts to protect all World Heritage properties on its territory, which are facing various security, environmental, social but also financial challenges;
- 12. <u>Finally requests</u> the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2026**, a separate detailed report on this General Decision addressing cross-cutting issues relating to the state of conservation of the World Heritage properties in the DRC and the implementation of the 2011 Kinshasa Declaration, with particular emphasis on the implementation of the above-mentioned points, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 48th session.

10. Kahuzi-Biega National Park (Democratic Republic of the Congo)

11. Okapi Wildlife Reserve (Democratic Republic of the Congo)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1996

<u>Criteria</u> (x)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger 1997-present

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

- Impact of the conflict: looting of the infrastructures, poaching of elephants
 - Presence of gold mining sites inside the property

<u>Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger</u> Indicators adopted in 2009 and revised in 2014, see page <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/5983</u>

Corrective measures identified

Adopted in 2009 and revised in 2014, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/5983

<u>Timeframe for the implementation of the corrective measures</u> In progress

Previous Committee Decisions see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/718/documents/

<u>International Assistance</u> Requests approved: 4 (from 1993-2012) Total amount approved: USD 103,400 For details, see page <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/718/assistance/</u>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount granted: USD 1,450,000, from the United Nations Foundation (UNF), Government of Belgium, the Rapid Response Facility (RRF) and the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (UNPF), USD 550,000 from the Government of Norway (2020-2025)

Previous monitoring missions

1996 and 2006: UNESCO World Heritage Centre monitoring missions; 2009 and 2014: joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring missions

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Intensive poaching of large mammals, in particular elephants
- Mining activities inside the property
- Uncontrolled migration into the villages located within the property
- Illegal timber exploitation in the Ituri Forest, which might affect the property in the near future
- Planned rehabilitation of the National Road RN4 crossing the property, for which no proper Environmental Impact Assessment was conducted

Illustrative material see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/718/

Current conservation issues

On 31 January 2025, the State Party submitted a State of conservation report for the property, available at <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/718/documents/</u>, which provides the following information:

- Despite progress in conservation efforts, the property continues to face numerous security, ecological and social challenges, exacerbated by the ongoing presence of armed groups and illegal mining;
- The evacuation of armed groups such as Asombaliwa and Mangaribi and the closure of several mining sites have been completed, with the exception of certain sites still controlled by armed factions or located in legally disputed areas;

- The Congolese authorities, supported by partners such as the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), have strengthened the presence of eco-guards with 124 new recruits, bringing the total number to 332. As a result, in 2024, 216 patrols (204 foot patrols and 12 air patrols) covered nearly 14,800 km, significantly improving surveillance coverage from 64.44% (in 2023) to 73.18%;
- With regard to anti-poaching efforts, 118 suspects were arrested, 66 brought to justice and 25 convicted. Awareness-raising among communities and judicial actors, as well as the revitalization of local governance structures, have strengthened commitment to conservation, with the establishment of a community intelligence network to report illegal activities;
- At the same time, alternative income-generating activities have been rolled out in the surrounding chiefdoms to reduce pressure on natural resources. Nearly 1,270 households have received seeds, agricultural tools or livestock, and more than 115,106 seedlings have been distributed for agroforestry;
- In terms of infrastructure, construction is underway or planned for schools, a market, army barracks, a detention centre, an airstrip and technical centres in Epulu and Wamba;
- Participatory demarcation efforts have begun on two of the five unclear boundaries of the reserve and will continue in 2025;
- Various management tools are being developed, including the Development and Management Plan (*Plan d'aménagement et de gestion* - PAG), the Community Strategy (*stratégie communautaire* - COCO) and the Guidelines for Access to Natural Resource (*Directives d'Accès aux Ressources Naturelles* - DARN). In addition, the Research Strategy is planned for 2025;
- Congolese authorities are exploring ways to revive tourism within the property by capturing and returning okapis to enclosures, hoping to secure sustainable funding for future management;
- A new challenge confronting the property is the opposition from certain customary authorities who advocate for agriculture in the reserve.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN

It is regrettable that the State of conservation report submitted by the State Party in 2025 provides very little information in response to the Committee's latest decisions, in particular Decisions **46 COM 7A.49** and **45 COM 7A.7**. Recalling that the State Party did not submit a State of conservation report for the property in 2024, the lack of updated information makes it difficult for the World Heritage Centre and IUCN to monitor the evolution of the state of conservation of the property and provide an in-depth analysis to the World Heritage Committee.

Overall, efforts to improve surveillance and combat illegal activities in the property, with surveillance coverage reaching 73.18% in 2024, as well as the evacuation of some armed groups and the closure of a few mining sites, with the exception of sites still controlled by armed factions or located in legally disputed areas, are noted with appreciation. However, given the security situation, which deteriorated again in early 2025 in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) with the M23 offensive, strongly condemned by the United Nations Security Council, these efforts could be seriously compromised. The State Party is strongly encouraged to continue its efforts in collaboration with the Armed Forces of the DRC (*Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo* - FARDC) and its national and regional partners and to explore all solutions that could contribute to the peaceful continuation of conservation activities, including through the appropriate diplomatic channels.

Although the start of the participatory demarcation process for the western boundary of the property is positive, in the absence of clarification between the maps of the Mining Cadaster (*Cadastre minier* - CAMI) and those of the Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation (*Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature* - ICCN), mining and illegal activities inside and around the property will intensify and could significantly and irreversibly compromise the integrity of the property and its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). In addition, mining has been accompanied by a gradual increase in pollution and deforestation in recent years, with the loss of more than 5,000 hectares of forest since 2022 in the southern part of the reserve, along the Ituri River. The establishment of a joint ICCN/CAMI commission, although requested, is still pending and should be accelerated to resolve the issue of overlapping mining permits in the western part of the property. Therefore, a moratorium on all industrial and artisanal mining activities in the legally disputed areas, until the boundaries have been definitively clarified, would help limit the spread of this threat.

The ongoing development of the PAG for the property, the COCO and the DARN is noted. The State Party is invited to expedite these processes and submit the PAG to the World Heritage Centre once adopted.

The State Party's intention to capture okapis from the wild is reported again, but without further details. The Committee had previously requested that these plans be postponed until the security situation is stable and an integrated in-situ/ex-situ conservation strategy is developed within the framework of the PAG.

Given the situation on the ground, and in view of the crucial information missing from the report submitted by the State Party, it is recommended that the Committee reiterate the main points raised in its last two decisions (**46 COM 7A.49** and **45 COM 7A.7**). Furthermore, it is recommended that the Committee request once again that the State Party invite, as soon as security conditions allow, a joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to the property to assess its state of conservation, the status of increased threats and impacts from mining and associated illegal activities, the implementation of the corrective measures, and progress made in relation to the indicators of the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR).

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

Draft Decision: 47 COM 7A.11

The World Heritage Committee,

- 1. <u>Having examined</u> Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add,
- 2. <u>Recalling</u> Decisions **45 COM 7A.7** and **46 COM 7A.49**, adopted at its extended 45th (Riyadh, 2023) and 46th (New Delhi, 2024) sessions, respectively,
- 3. <u>Regrets</u> that the State of conservation report submitted by the State Party provides very little information in response to Decisions **45 COM 7A.7** and **46 COM 7A.49**, and <u>stresses</u> that this lack of information makes it difficult for the World Heritage Committee to monitor the state of conservation of the property, given the significant threats to its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV);
- 4. <u>Notes with appreciation</u> the efforts undertaken by the State Party to strengthen surveillance, with coverage reaching 73.18% in 2024, the evacuation of certain armed groups and the closure of several mining sites within the property, <u>expresses its deep concern</u> regarding the recent deterioration of the security situation in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and <u>strongly encourages</u> the State Party to continue and strengthen its conservation efforts in collaboration with the Armed Forces of the DRC and its national and regional partners, and to resort to alternative solutions, including appropriate diplomatic channels, to enable conservation activities to continue in a secure environment;
- 5. <u>Notes with concern</u> the persistence of artisanal and semi-industrial mining within and in the legally disputed areas of the property, <u>regrets</u> that the establishment of a joint commission between the Mining Cadaster (Cadastre Minier - CAMI) and the Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation (Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature -ICCN), previously requested to resolve the issue of overlapping mining permits in the western part of the property, remains pending, and <u>urges</u> the State Party to implement an immediate moratorium on all industrial and artisanal mining activities in the legally disputed areas until the boundaries of the property have been definitively clarified and the maps used by these two institutions have been definitively harmonized;

- 6. <u>Notes with concern</u> the increasing indirect impacts of mining within and around the property in recent years, including pollution and deforestation, as illustrated by a loss of forest cover of more than 5,000 hectares since 2022 in the southern part of the property, along the Ituri River, and <u>strongly reiterates its request</u> to revoke all mining permits attributed within the property, to close all mining sites inside the property and access roads to them, and to initiate restoration activities in the degraded areas;
- 7. <u>Notes</u> that essential management tools for the property, such as the Development and Management Plan (Plan d'aménagement et de gestion - PAG), the Community Strategy and the Guidelines for Access to Natural Resource are under development, and <u>encourages</u> the State Party to expedite these processes and submit these documents to the World Heritage Centre once they have been validated;
- 8. <u>Takes note</u> that the participatory demarcation process of the western boundary of the property will continue in 2025 and <u>reiterates its request</u> to the State Party to expedite and complete this process as soon as possible;
- 9. <u>Thanks</u> the technical and financial partners who support the conservation of the property, and <u>once again appeals</u> to the international community to further support the efforts of the State Party to ensure sustainable financing of the property;
- 10. <u>Once again requests</u> the State party to provide further details on:
 - a) the number of residents within the villages located inside the property in order to assess the impacts of population increases on land-use in the property,
 - b) the Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART) data to enable an assessment of the impact of illegal activities on the OUV of the property,
 - c) the formalization of the Central Integral Conservation Zone,
 - d) the plans to capture okapi from the wild to repopulate the okapi breeding station, recalling that the State Party should develop an integrated in-situ and ex-situ conservation strategy within the framework of the PAG, drawing on expert advice on best practices,
 - e) the progress accomplished with regard to the indicators defined in the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR);
- 11. <u>Also requests</u> the State party to continue its efforts to implement all corrective measures as updated by the 2014 Reactive Monitoring mission;
- 12. <u>Reiterates its request</u> to the State Party to invite, as soon as security conditions allow, a joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to the property to assess its state of conservation, the status of increased threats and impacts from mining and associated illegal activities, the implementation of the corrective measures and the progress made in relation to the DSOCR indicators;
- 13. <u>Finally requests</u> the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2026**, 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;
- 14. <u>Decides</u> to continue to apply the Reinforced Monitoring mechanism for the property;

15. <u>Also decides</u> to maintain Okapi Wildlife Reserve (Democratic Republic of the Congo) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

12. Virunga National Park (Democratic Republic of the Congo)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1979

Criteria (vii)(viii)(x)

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

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

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

<u>Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger</u> Adopted in 2011, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/4338 ;

Updated in 2018 in the report of the joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission in April 2018

Corrective measures identified

Adopted in 2006, see page <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/1055</u> Updated in 2011, see page <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/4338</u> Updated in 2014, see page <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/5979</u> Updated in 2018, see page <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/7224</u>

<u>Timeframe for the implementation of the corrective measures</u> Adopted in 2018, see page <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/7224</u>

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

International Assistance

Requests approved: 10 (from 1980-2005) Total amount approved: USD 253,560 For details, see page <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/63/assistance/</u>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount granted: USD 1,802,300 from the United Nations Foundation and the Governments of Italy, Belgium and Spain as well as the Rapid Response Facility (RRF), USD 40,000 from the Rapid Response Facility (RRF), and USD 405,400 from the Government of Norway for the period 2024-2026.

Previous monitoring missions

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

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

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

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

Current conservation issues

On 2 December 2024, the State Party of the Democratic Republic of the Congo submitted a State of conservation report for the property, available at <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/63/documents/</u>, which provides the following information:

- The Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation (Institut congolais pour la conservation de la nature - ICCN) has strengthened its authority in strategic areas through cooperation with the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo - FARDC) and the Congolese National Police, the establishment of fortified bases, the improvement of working conditions for eco-guards, their capacities and an increase in their staffing levels;
- A bilingual (Swahili/French) complaint management mechanism has been established via a tollfree number and an email address;
- Collaboration with local judicial authorities has been maintained to preserve the ecological integrity of the property;
- Surveillance activities resulted in 1,670 arrests for various pressures, including illegal fishing and agriculture (significant), and illegal charcoal production and poaching (less significant);
- A reduction in poaching was recorded in 2024, thanks to increased land, lake and air patrols, and the involvement of local communities;
- Air and ground surveillance efforts identified an increase in elephant, hippo and other large mammal populations between 2014 and 2023;
- In October 2024, four female gorillas were reintroduced at Mount Tshiaberimu to revitalize this declining population;
- Collaboration with Uganda continued in order to monitor ecological corridors and key species such as elephants. However, tensions in the region are limiting actions under the "Greater Virunga Transboundary Collaboration";
- Dependence on charcoal has been reduced through the destruction of production kilns, the introduction of electric cookers and the reforestation of 1,500 hectares;
- Community consultations have stabilized a 550-hectare disputed area, facilitating the return of elephants to newly protected areas;
- 386 patrols were carried out on Lake Edward, covering 5,665 km despite the armed conflict;
- The Virunga Alliance continues to support the local economy through agricultural, economic and energy projects;
- The Development and Management Plan (*Plan d'Aménagement et de Gestion* PAG) for the property was approved by ICCN in 2024;
- Funding for the property continues thanks to contributions from various partners and internal initiatives;
- Major challenges remain: presence of armed groups, illegal exploitation of resources, human encroachment (14.2% of the property), illegal sales of plots, population explosion and the non-cancellation of the 2022 tender for oil exploitation on blocks overlapping the property;
- A revised timetable for implementing the corrective measures has been proposed for 2025.

On 26 January 2025, M23 fighters and military groups entered the city of Goma, causing major displacement of civilians and human casualties.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN

The security situation in eastern DRC has seriously deteriorated, with the M23 armed group taking control of Goma in January 2025. This new threat, combined with the presence of other armed groups in and around the property, severely restricts access to the central and southern sectors, further compromising the implementation of conservation actions. This persistent insecurity has also caused

significant population displacement, leading to an increase in human encroachment, from 12% in 2021 to 14.2% in 2024 of the total area of the property.

In this context, the State Party's resilience is commendable, particularly for its efforts to maintain conservation achievements in areas that are still accessible and to continue to implement the corrective measures updated in 2018. These efforts include enhanced collaboration with the FARDC and the Congolese National Police, the establishment of fortified bases, capacity building and improved working conditions for eco-guards. The State Party is encouraged to intensify its efforts to ensure the continuity of conservation actions and the full implementation of the corrective measures.

Emphasizing that, beyond these corrective measures, the Committee, at its previous sessions, expressed additional requests for the conservation of the property (notably in its decisions **46 COM 7A.50** and **45 COM 7A.8**), it is recommended that the State Party be requested to respond to these additional requests, in order to effectively assess the state of conservation of the property and progress on key issues, including the planned opening of a road, military infrastructure within the property and the two oil blocks overlapping the property (for which the 2022 tender has not yet been cancelled).

Surveillance efforts through increased land, lake (particularly on Lake Edward) and air patrols, and the involvement of local communities have resulted in approximately 1,700 arrests, mainly for illegal fishing and farming, along with charcoal production and poaching. This relatively high number reflects the growing pressure on the natural resources of the property, mainly by armed groups, thus endangering its integrity and Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). Furthermore, the announced increase in elephant, hippo and other large mammal populations between 2014 and 2023 is positive. However, although the recorded numbers remain significantly lower than those at the time of inscription, it is recommended that the State Party be encouraged to continue its surveillance efforts (in close collaboration with community trackers) and the monitoring of OUV flagship species, while adopting a standardized methodology in accessible areas. The collaboration with local judicial authorities and the establishment of a bilingual complaint management mechanism are welcomed. Their continued application during surveillance operations should contribute to the preservation of the integrity of the property while respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities.

In addition, the reintroduction of four female gorillas at Mount Tshiaberimu in October 2024 is noted, but it is recalled that any species reintroduction operation must comply with international standards and be based on the scientific advice of relevant specialists from the IUCN Species Survival Commission. It is recommended that the State Party be requested to provide details on this operation and the measures taken or planned to ensure its long-term success.

The continued collaboration with Uganda on the monitoring of ecological corridors and key species is appreciated. It is recommended that regional collaboration efforts be maintained within the framework of the "Greater Virunga Transboundary Collaboration", recalling the importance of ecological corridors for the sustainable preservation of the OUV of the property.

Noting the approval of the PAG (2021-2025) for the property by ICCN in 2024, and considering in particular that it will expire in 2025, it is recommended that its updating process be initiated as soon as possible. The updated version should be submitted to the World Heritage Centre after approval.

It is also noted that a revised schedule for the implementation of the corrective measures has been proposed for 2025. While thanking the technical and financial partners who continue to support the conservation of the property, including UNESCO with funding from Norway, it is recommended that the State Party and its partners be invited to continue to mobilize sustainable funding for the conservation of the property.

Finally, aware of the extremely difficult conditions on the ground, it is recommended that the Committee reiterate its request to the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission as soon as security situation allows.

Draft Decision: 47 COM 7A.12

The World Heritage Committee,

1. <u>Having examined</u> Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add,

- 2. <u>Recalling</u> Decisions **45 COM 7A.8** and **46 COM 7A.50**, adopted at its extended 45th session (Riyadh, 2023) and 46th session (New Delhi, 2024), respectively,
- 3. <u>Expresses once again its deep concern</u> regarding the continuing instability in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and its serious consequences for access to the property, the implementation of conservation actions and the increase in human encroachment within the property;
- 4. <u>Commends</u> the resilience of the State Party, through the Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation (Institut congolais pour la conservation de la nature ICCN), faced with this difficult context, and the ongoing efforts to maintain conservation achievements in accessible areas, in particular through the continued implementation of the corrective measures updated in 2018, and <u>strongly encourages</u> the State Party to continue and intensify its efforts to ensure the continuity of conservation actions and the full implementation of the corrective measures;
- 5. <u>Notes with appreciation</u> the ongoing surveillance efforts (land, lake and air), the involvement of local communities and collaboration with local judicial authorities, as well as the establishment of a bilingual complaint management mechanism, contributing to better governance of the property while respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, and <u>requests</u> the State Party to continue its efforts in accessible areas while ensuring a rights-based approach, fully involving all stakeholders;
- 6. <u>Notes positively</u> the reported increase in elephant, hippo and other large mammal populations between 2014 and 2023, as well as the reduction in the number of arrests related to poaching in 2024 in accessible areas of the property, and <u>also requests</u> the State Party to continue to fight against poaching and monitor Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) flagship species in accessible areas (in close collaboration with community trackers), while adopting standardized methodologies;
- 7. <u>However, expresses its concern</u> regarding the increase in human encroachment, from 12% (2021) to 14.2% (2024), and the pressure on the natural resources of the property, including by armed groups, seriously threatening the integrity and OUV of the property;
- 8. <u>Takes note</u> of the reintroduction of four female gorillas at Mount Tshiaberimu in October 2024, <u>recalls</u> that any species reintroduction operation must comply with international standards and be based on the advice of relevant specialists from the IUCN Species Survival Commission, and <u>urges</u> the State Party to provide details on this operation and the measures taken or planned to ensure its long-term success;
- 9. <u>Also recalling</u> the importance of ecological corridors for the sustainable preservation of the OUV of the property, <u>appreciates</u> the continued collaboration with the State Party of Uganda for the monitoring of these corridors and key species, and <u>encourages</u> the State Party to maintain regional collaboration efforts, particularly within the framework of the "Greater Virunga Transboundary Collaboration";
- 10. <u>Welcomes</u> the reduction in arrests for illegal charcoal production and dependence on charcoal by destroying production kilns, introducing electric cookers and reforesting 1,500 hectares, <u>and also encourages</u> the State party to continue to develop sustainable energy and economic alternatives, in collaboration with its partners;
- 11. <u>Regrets</u> that the approved Development and Management Plan (Plan d'Aménagement et de Gestion - PAG) 2021-2025 has not been submitted to the World Heritage Centre as requested, and <u>further requests</u> the State Party to promptly initiate the process of

updating the plan and to submit the updated version to the World Heritage Centre after final approval;

- 12. <u>Also takes note</u> of the revised schedule for the implementation of the corrective measures proposed for 2025, <u>thanks</u> the technical and financial partners who continue to support the conservation of the property in a challenging international funding climate, including UNESCO with funding from Norway, and <u>invites</u> the State Party and its partners to continue to mobilize sustainable funding for the conservation of the property;
- 13. <u>Further requests</u> the State Party to respond to the additional requests expressed in Decisions **46 COM 7A.50** and **45 COM 7A.8**, in particular concerning:
 - a) the situation of the two oil blocks overlapping the property (for which the 2022 tender has not yet been cancelled),
 - b) civil and military infrastructure developments within or around the property, including hydropower projects and road developments;
 - c) the joint organization with UNESCO and its partners of a national workshop on heritage protection in conflict zones in the DRC;
- 14. <u>Reiterates its request</u> to the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission, as soon as the security situation allows, to assess the state of conservation of the property, the implementation of the corrective measures and progress towards achieving the indicators of the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR);
- 15. <u>Finally requests</u> the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2026**, 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;
- 16. <u>Decides</u> to maintain Virunga National Park (Democratic Republic of the Congo) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

13. Lake Turkana National Parks (Kenya)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add.2

14. Rainforests of the Atsinanana (Madagascar)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add.2

16. Selous Game Reserve (United Republic of Tanzania)

CULTURAL PROPERTIES

ASIA AND PACIFIC

17. Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley (Afghanistan)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add.2

18. Minaret and Archaeological Remains of Jam (Afghanistan)

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

22. Roșia Montană Mining Landscape (Romania)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add.2

23. Medieval Monuments in Kosovo (Serbia)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add.2

24. Kyiv: Saint-Sophia Cathedral and Related Monastic Buildings, Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra (Ukraine)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add.2

25. L'viv – the Ensemble of the Historic Centre (Ukraine)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add.2

26. The Historic Centre of Odesa (Ukraine)

LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN

27. City of Potosi (Bolivia, Plurinational State of)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1987

Criteria (ii)(iv)(vi)

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

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

- Instability and imminent risk of collapse of the Cerro Rico's summit
- Lack of conservation policy of integral character which considers all the components of the property
- Deficiencies in conservation: special attention required for the restoration and upgrading of structures with residential use and the archaeological industrial heritage
- Potential degradation of the historic site by continued and uncontrolled mining operations in the Cerro Rico Mountain
- Inefficient enforcement of protective legislation
- Threatening impacts of climatic, geological or other environmental factors

<u>Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger</u> Adopted, see page <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/6969</u>

Corrective measures identified

Adopted, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/6969

Timeframe for the implementation of the corrective measures Adopted, see page <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/6969</u>

Previous Committee Decisions see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/420/documents/

International Assistance

Requests approved: 5 (from 1988-2015) Total amount approved : 83,777 USD For details, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/420/assistance/

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount granted: USD 10,000 for a World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS technical mission in 2005 financed by the Spanish Funds-in-Trust for World Heritage

Previous monitoring missions

May 1995 and November 2009: World Heritage Centre technical missions; November 2005 and February 2011: World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS technical missions; December 2013 and January 2014: Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring missions; May 2017: World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS technical mission; October 2017 and May 2018: Technical missions facilitated by the World Heritage Centre

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Legal framework (inefficient enforcement of protective legislation)
- Management systems/ management plan
- Mining (potential degradation of the historic site by continued and uncontrolled mining operations in the Cerro Rico Mountain)
- Surface water pollution
- Instability and risk of collapse of the Cerro Rico
- Deficiencies in conservation: special attention required for the restoration and upgrading of structures with residential use and the archaeological industrial heritage

• Environmental impacts on the hydraulic complex which in turn affects historic fabric and local population

Illustrative material see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/420/

Current conservation issues

On 30 January, 2025, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report available at, <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/420/documents/</u>, describing progress made on the issues addressed by the World Heritage Committee at its previous session, as follows:

- The "Critical Route to remove Potosí from the List of World Heritage in Danger and the
 preservation of Cerro Rico de Potosí," which declares the Cerro Rico in emergency status, and
 the Participatory Management Plan of 2021 (IPMP), have faced delays in implementation due to
 social and political factors. The "Update to the Comprehensive and Participatory Management
 Plan of the City of Potosí 2024" was formally approved on 28 January 2025 and is being
 implemented. Key aspects have been incorporated including tourism, risk management and
 disaster prevention, intangible heritage programmes, and monitoring;
- The request for the Minor Boundary Modification (MBM) for the establishment of the property's buffer zone was duly submitted to the World Heritage Centre by the 1 February 2025 deadline, for examination by the Committee at its 47th session in 2025;
- Regulations corresponding to Law No. 473 of September 2024, which consolidates the limits for and protects the property, will be made within the city of Potosí's urban delimitation framework;
- In the Kari Kari area, water quality of lagoons continues to be monitored and the environmental protection management of the mountain range has begun under the "Update to the Comprehensive and Participatory Management Plan of the City of Potosí – 2024";
- The agreement between the Autonomous Municipal Government of Potosí (GAMP) and the Tomás Frías Autonomous University is in the implementation phase and has the support of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID);
- There has been progress on the stabilization and monitoring of Cerro Rico and an archaeological survey of Cerro Rico with a photogrammetric recording of the conservation status of the mining mills was completed, among which public and community custody were prioritized. Those that are on private property will be registered in 2025;
- Technical reviews have been conducted by the GAMP to assess the safeguarding of reservoirs and mining facilities, and 22 mining mills were inventoried and will be regularly inspected.

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

The Committee is recommended to welcome the approval and the implementation of the "Update to the Comprehensive and Participatory Management Plan of the City of Potosí – 2024" which supports the achievement of the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) and has incorporated tourism, risk management and disaster prevention, intangible heritage programmes, as well as control and monitoring. It should be noted by the Committee that the "*Critical Route*" proposed in the 2021 administration to remove Potosí from the List of World Heritage in Danger and to declare Cerro Rico to have emergency status, and the IPMP, have experienced delayed implementation, and the State Party should be encouraged to address this through the "Update to the Comprehensive and Participatory Management Plan of the City of Potosí – 2024", which provides technical, legal and administrative consideration for related emergency measures and establishes clear indicators for the IPMP. The Committee may express its concern about its delayed implementation and request again the State Party to ensure its full and timely implementation with adequate resources.

The submission of a MBM to establish the property's buffer zone pursuant to Committee Decision **44 COM 8B.66** received by the World Heritage Centre should be noted with appreciation (see Document WHC/25/47.COM/8B.Add).

It should be noted that the definition of the limits of the property and specific regulations that guarantee its protection and preservation are confirmed by Law No. 473 of September 2024, and corresponding regulations will be made within the city of Potosí's urban delimitation framework. The State Party should

be encouraged to ensure the consolidation and enforcement of the legal framework and regulations related to the entire property.

The Committee should note with satisfaction and encourage the State Party to continue the monitoring of the water quality of the lagoons and the environmental protection management of the mountain range in the Kari Kari area, under the "Update to the Comprehensive and Participatory Management Plan of the City of Potosí – 2024".

The actions linked to the agreement between the GAMP and the Tomás Frías Autonomous University for the preservation of the cultural heritage of the historic area of the City of Potosí, including training programmes for future professionals, updating legislation, and establishing a digital database, should be welcomed. The State Party should be encouraged to provide further information on future concrete initiatives linked to the agreement.

In Cerro Rico, the stabilization and monitoring efforts, and the archaeological survey with a photogrammetric recording of the conservation status of the mining mills, should also be welcomed. The State Party should be urged to prioritize the definitive closure of mining sections 4,400 meters above sea level.

It should be noted with satisfaction that technical reviews have been conducted by the GAMP to assess the safeguarding of reservoirs and mining facilities, and that 22 mining mills were inventoried and will be regularly inspected.

Draft Decision: 47 COM 7A.27

The World Heritage Committee,

- 1. <u>Having examined</u> Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add,
- 2. <u>Recalling</u> Decisions **44** COM 8B.66, **45** COM 7A.18 and **46** COM 7A.7 adopted at its extended 44th (Fuzhou, 2021), extended 45th (Riyadh, 2023) and 46th (New Delhi, 2024) sessions respectively,
- 3. <u>Welcomes</u> the approval and the implementation of the "Update to the Comprehensive and Participatory Management Plan of the City of Potosí 2024";
- 4. <u>Notes</u> the delayed implementation of the "Critical Route to remove Potosí from the List of World Heritage in Danger and the preservation of Cerro Rico de Potosí," which declares the Cerro Rico in emergency status, and of the Participatory Management Plan 2021 (IPMP), and <u>encourages</u> the State Party to address this through the "Update to the Comprehensive and Participatory Management Plan of the City of Potosí – 2024";
- 5. <u>Expresses its concern</u> over the delayed implementation of the previous management plan and <u>urges</u> the State Party to ensure the full and timely implementation with adequate resources of the "Update to the Comprehensive and Participatory Management Plan of the City of Potosí 2024";
- 6. <u>Notes with appreciation</u> the submission of the Minor Boundary Modification request to establish the property's buffer zone pursuant to Decision **44 COM 8B.66**;
- 7. <u>Also notes</u> that regulations corresponding to Law No. 473 of September 2024, which consolidates the limits for and protects the property, will be made within the city of Potosí's urban delimitation framework, and <u>encourages</u> the State Party to ensure the consolidation and enforcement of the legal framework and regulations related to the entire property;

- 8. <u>Further notes with satisfaction</u> the monitoring of the water quality of the lagoons and the environmental protection management of the mountain range in the Kari Kari area, under the "Update to the Comprehensive and Participatory Management Plan of the City of Potosí 2024", and <u>also encourages</u> the State Party to continue it;
- 9. <u>Further welcomes</u> the actions linked to the agreement between the Autonomous Municipal Government of Potosí (GAMP) and the Tomás Frías Autonomous University for the preservation of the cultural heritage of the historical areas of the City of Potosí, including training programmes, updating legislation, and a digital database and <u>requests</u> the State Party to provide further information on future concrete initiatives linked to the agreement;
- 10. <u>Also welcomes</u> the archaeological survey of Cerro Rico with a photogrammetric as well as the progress achieved regarding the stabilization and monitoring of the slopes of Cerro Rico, and <u>urges again</u> the State Party to prioritize the definitive closure of mining sections above 4,400 meters above sea level;
- 11. <u>Notes with satisfaction</u> the technical reviews conducted by the GAMP for safeguarding reservoirs and mining facilities, and that 22 mining mills were inventoried and will be regularly inspected;
- 12. <u>Expresses utmost concern</u> for the prolonged inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger and <u>encourages</u> the State Party to undertake all corrective measures as set forth in the IPMP with its January 2026 deadline;
- 13. <u>Finally requests</u> the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2026**, 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;
- 14. <u>Decides</u> to retain City of Potosí (Bolivia (Plurinational State of)) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

28. Fortifications on the Caribbean Side of Panama: Portobelo-San Lorenzo (Panama)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add.2

29. Chan Chan Archaeological Zone (Peru)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1986

Criteria (i)(iii)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger 1986-present

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

- Fragile state of conservation of earthen structures and decorated surfaces due to extreme climatic conditions (El Niño phenomenon) and other environmental factors
- Inadequate management system in place
- Insufficient capacity and resources for the implementation of conservation measures

• Increase in the levels of the phreatic water table

<u>Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger</u> Adopted, see page <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/4647</u>

Corrective measures identified

Adopted, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/4647

Timeframe for the implementation of the corrective measures Adopted, see page <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/4647</u>

Previous Committee Decisions see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/366/documents/

International Assistance

Requests approved: 5 (from 1987-1998) Total amount approved: USD 118,700 For details, see page <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/366/assistance/</u>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

1997: ICOMOS mission; February 2007: Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS and ICCROM mission; November 2010 and December 2014: Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring missions

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Identity, social cohesion, changes in local population and community
- Illegal activities (illegal occupation of the property)
- Management systems/ management plan
- Water (rising water table levels, rain/water table)
- Continuous deterioration of earthen architecture structures and decorated surfaces from lack of conservation and maintenance practices
- Unregulated farming activities
- Delay in implementing protective measures (legislation and regulations already passed by the National Authorities)
- Development pressures

Illustrative material see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/366/

Current conservation issues

On 31 January 2025, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, an executive summary of which is available at https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/366/documents/. Progress in a number of conservation issues addressed by the Committee at its previous sessions is presented in the report, as follows:

- The Master Plan for the Conservation and Management of Chan Chan Archaeological Complex 2021-2031 remains the document that guides all activities at the property and the State Party is committed to advance and finance its implementation;
- In 2024, the Ministry of Culture undertook, through the Pan-American Centre for the Conservation
 of Earthen Heritage, the Archaeological Research Programme for the Conservation and
 Enhancement at the Huaca Takaynamo and the walled complex of Utzh An (formerly Great
 Chimú). In the framework of an agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism
 (MINCETUR) and the national COPESCO Plan, finances were secured for the Improvement of
 Public Tourist Services at the Nik An Complex (former Tschudi palace);
- The Risk Management Plan guided several maintenance actions at the Nik An Complex and the Huaca Arco Iris;
- The extensive public awareness programme continued with a participatory cleaning day entitled 'Chan Chan we want you clean', handicraft and art workshops, educational visits, creation of

Chan Chan Defenders Clubs, and the Open Museum programme, under which free access is provided on the first Sunday of each month;

- The Ministry of Culture, through the Directorate of World Heritage Sites and the Decentralised Directorate of Culture of La Libertad (DDC-LIB), is in continuous consultation with the municipal authorities of Trujillo concerning the approval of the Urban Development Plan that incorporates the regulations for zoning and land use of the buffer zone of the World Heritage property;
- The process to revise Law 28261 that concerns the expropriation of illegal occupation is still not concluded;
- In 2024, a multi-sectorial committee was created to address a variety of issues such as waste management and illegal occupation;
- The Ministry of Culture advised the Ministry of Transportation and Communication (MTC) on the methodologies of the Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) that is required for the section of the EI Sol highway that crosses the World Heritage property. The MTC has confirmed that over the course of 2025 a consultancy will be contracted for the preparation of the study.

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

The continued commitment of the State Party to implement the measures that are necessary to achieve the Desired state of conservation of the property for its removal from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) and to implement its Master Plan 2021-2031 should be appreciated.

The research activities of the Pan-American Centre for the Conservation of Earthen Heritage contribute to the identification of the most appropriate conservation methods of the earthen architecture of Chan Chan and guide the excavation and conservation programme. The continued implementation of the Risk Management Plan including maintenance activies in the Nik An Complex and the Huaca Arco Iris should be noted.

The many outreach and communication initiatives to raise awareness regarding responsibility and respect for cultural heritage, including "Chan Chan we want you clean", art workshops, educational visits, Chan Chan Defenders Clubs, the Open Museum programme, the "Improvement of Public Tourist Services of the Nik An Complex", improved signage of the Chan Chan Archaeological Complex, and DDC-LIB media and social media campaigns, should be welcomed.

The delays in the incorporation of the Regulations for the Buffer Zone in the Metropolitan Urban Development Plan of Trujillo should be noted with concern. It is also noted that progress has been made in the identification of legal and illegal occupation within the limits of the World Heritage property. However, the persistent delays in the approval of the modification of Law 28261 that would regulate the expropriation of illegal occupation remain of extreme concern and the State Party should be urged to conclude this process with the utmost priority.

The creation of a multi-sectorial committee to address a variety of issues that affect the state of conservation of the property should be welcomed. The State Party could be asked to provide information on the composition and mandate of this committee.

High appreciation should be expressed for the efforts of the Ministry of Culture to inform the MTC about the HIA methodology for the section of the El Sol highway that crosses the World Heritage property and buffer zone and for the commitment to contract the HIA in the course of 2025, which should be done in conformity with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context. It should be recalled that the World Heritage Committee, in its Decision **44 COM 7A.37**, recommended this study to be undertaken and to eventually identify a new alternative trajectory outside of the World Heritage property and its buffer zone.

Draft Decision: 47 COM 7A.29

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add,

- 2. <u>Recalling</u> Decisions **44 COM 7A.37** and **46 COM 7A.9**, adopted at its extended 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021) and 46th (New Delhi, 2024) sessions respectively,
- 3. <u>Appreciates</u> the continued committment of the State Party to implement the Master Plan for the Conservation and Management of the Chan Chan Archaeological Complex 2021-2031, the conservation research undertaken by the Pan-American Centre for the Conservation of Earthen Architecture and the financial contributions of other government bodies;
- 4. <u>Notes</u> the implementation of the Risk Management Plan;
- 5. <u>Welcomes</u> the many outreach and communication initiatives to raise awareness regarding responsibility and respect for cultural heritage;
- 6. <u>Notes with concern</u> the delays in the incorporation of the regulations for the buffer zone in the Metropolitan Urban Development Plan although the Ministry of Culture continues its consultations with the Municipal Authorities of Trujillo;
- 7. <u>Also notes</u> that the Ministry of Culture is actively involved in the process to amend Law 28261 which regulates the expropriation of illegal occupation in the World Heritage property and <u>urges</u> the State Party to conclude this process with the utmost priority;
- 8. <u>Reiterates</u> that the successful conclusion of the above two actions are essential for the achievement of the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) and <u>regrets</u>, once again, the severe delays in their completion;
- 9. <u>Takes note</u> of the creation of a Multi-sectoral Committee that would coordinate a variety of issues that are relevant for the World Heritage property and <u>requests</u> the State Party to provide information on the composition and mandate of this committee;
- 10. <u>Highly appreciates</u> the decision of the Ministry of Transportation and Communications to contract services for the preparation in 2025 of the Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) of the improvement of the section of the El Sol Highway that crosses the World Heritage property, which should be done in conformity with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, <u>recalls</u> its recommendation in Decision **44 COM 7A.37** to identify a new alternative trajectory outside of the World Heritage property and its buffer zone and <u>also requests</u> the State Party to submit the HIA for review by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies as soon as it becomes available;
- 11. <u>Finally requests</u> the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2026**, 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;
- 12. <u>Decides</u> to retain Chan Chan Archaeological Zone (Peru) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

30. Coro and its Port (Venezuela, Bolivarian Republic of)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1993

<u>Criteria</u> (iv)(v)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger 2005 - present

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

- Considerable decay of materials and structures resulting from lack of comprehensive conservation and maintenance, and torrential rains in 2004, 2005 and 2010
- Deterioration of architectural and urban coherence compromising the integrity and authenticity of the property
- Lack of adequate and efficient management, planning and conservation mechanisms, and institutional arrangements

<u>Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger</u> Adopted, see page <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/5965</u>

Corrective measures identified

Adopted, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/5965

<u>Timeframe for the implementation of the corrective measures</u> Adopted, see page <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/5965</u> Updated in 2015, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/6263

Previous Committee Decisions see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/658/documents/

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0 Total amount approved: USD 0 For details, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/658/assistance/

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount provided: USD 20,000 (Spanish Funds-in-Trust for World Heritage) for the planning, implementation and subsequent publications of participatory workshops and meetings with artisans and civil society in Coro and La Vela

Previous monitoring missions

December 2003 and September 2006: World Heritage Centre missions to assessment of the state of conservation; July 2002, April 2005, May 2008 and February 2011: Joint World Heritage Centre / ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring missions; October 2015: ICOMOS Advisory mission; July 2018: ICOMOS Advisory mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Flooding (and water damage)
- Management systems/ management plan (issue resolved)
- Water (rain/water table)
- Serious deterioration of materials and structures
- Deterioration of the architectural and urban coherence and integrity of the property
- Lack of adequate management, planning and conservation mechanisms
- Absence of detailed and technical information on the state of conservation of the property since 2007

Illustrative material see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/658/

Current conservation issues

On 5 February 2025, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, available at <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/658/documents/</u>, describing progress made on the issues addressed by the World Heritage Committee at its previous session, as follows:

- The State Party has submitted updated maps of the boundaries of the buffer zones of both components of the property (La Vela and Coro);
- The Management Plan, updated in 2024, defines a conservation strategy regulatory, measure for the site and the new buffer zones, a sustainable development strategy, a public use plan, and risks and preparedness plans that address vulnerabilities of the property, as well as a programme of prioritized and budgeted interventions;
- Specific corrective measures have been undertaken, such as strategies and an action plan to integrate traditional knowledge into conservation strategies, highlighting earthen construction techniques, a strategy to ensure adequate resources to support the maintenance and upkeep of buildings as well as their continued use by owners, a drainage system for the property that addresses the vulnerability to flooding, long-term training to strengthen programmes, creating alliances with various organisations at local, regional and national levels, addressing issues related to the ownership and abandonment of traditional domestic and civil architecture, actions for the proposed re-use of buildings, vehicular traffic control establishing gates to close off streets in the core area, and implementing the Tourist Police Service and Heritage Protection Directorate;
- The Joint Commission is reaffirmed as a joint and collective decision-making body in both Historic Centers, integrating several institutes and governing bodies and which *inter alia* works to strengthen management structures and harmonize legal tools for protection of the property;
- A series of activities have been carried out aimed at the rescue and appreciation of Taimataima Park, that is part of the area of influence of the property.

Analysis and Conclusion of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory bodies in 2024

The information and maps of the redefined buffer zones should be noted. The Committee should again urge the State Party to submit these proposals as a request for a Minor Boundary Modification, as per Paragraphs 163 and 164 of the Operational Guidelines, using the form available in Annex 11.

The updating of the Management Plan, including disaster risk and preparedness plans, should be welcomed. An integrated version of the Management Plan should be requested along with a complete report on the implementation of and compliance with the Management Plan, especially with regard to the conservation of the property and implementation of the corrective measures.

The report on the advances to implement the corrective measures adopted in Decision **38 COM 7A.23** should be noted with appreciation. At the same time, the State Party should be requested, again, to invite the joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission referred to in Decision **46 COM 7A.10** paragraph 10, to collaborate with the State Party to assess the implementation of the corrective measures and the achievement of the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

The actions of the Joint Commission and the strengthening of management structures should be noted, but information should be requested again on the harmonization of legal tools for the protection of the property.

Draft Decision: 47 COM 7A.30

- 1. <u>Having examined</u> Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add,
- 2. <u>Recalling</u> Decision 46 COM 7A.10, adopted at its 46th session (New Delhi, 2024),

- 3. <u>Notes</u> the redefined Buffer Zone and <u>reiterates its request</u> for the final Minor Boundary Modification proposal to be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies and approval by the World Heritage Committee, as per Paragraphs 163 and 164 and Annex 11 of the Operational Guidelines, as soon as possible;
- 4. <u>Welcomes</u> the updating of the Management Plan and the important work accomplished and <u>requests</u> the State Party to send to the World Heritage Centre an integrated version of the Management Plan as well as a report on the implementation of and compliance with the Management Plan;
- 5. <u>Notes with appreciation</u> the advances in the implementation of the corrective measures adopted in Decision **38 COM 7A.2** and <u>requests</u> the State Party to report on their completion in its next state of conservation report;
- 6. <u>Also notes</u> the continued work of the Joint Commission and its strategic alliances and <u>reiterates its request</u> for details on what harmonization of legal tools has been completed for the protection of the property;
- 7. <u>Also reiterates its request</u> to the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission to assess the implementation of the corrective measures and progress towards the achievement of the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR);
- 8. <u>Finally requests</u> the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2026**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and on the implementation of all corrective measures adopted to reach the DSOCR, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 48th session;
- 9. <u>Decides</u> to retain Coro and its Port (Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

AFRICA

31. Old Towns of Djenné (Mali)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add.2

32. Timbuktu (Mali)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add.2

33. Tomb of Askia (Mali)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2004

Criteria (ii)(iii)(iv)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger 2012-present

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

- Occupation of Gao city by armed groups
- Inability to ensure daily management in the protection and conservation of the property
- Risk of collapse of the property

<u>Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger</u> In progress

<u>Corrective measures identified</u> Adopted, see page <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/6623</u>

<u>Timeframe for the implementation of the corrective measures</u> In progress

Previous Committee Decisions see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1139/documents/

International Assistance Requests approved: 5 (from 2000-2024) Total amount approved: USD 87,307 For details, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1139/assistance/

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount granted: UNESCO Emergency Fund: USD 40,000; Action Plan for the rehabilitation of cultural heritage and the safeguarding of ancient manuscripts in Mali: USD 50,000; USD 500,000 funded by the International alliance for the protection of heritage (ALIPH) for the rehabilitation of the property; African World Heritage Fund: USD 15,000 for the documentation and development of the historical burial grounds of the Tomb of Askia necropolis in Gao.

Previous monitoring missions

May 2012: Emergency UNESCO mission to Bamako; October and December 2012: World Heritage Centre monitoring missions to Bamako; February 2014: UNESCO assessment mission to Gao; April 2017: UNESCO Expert mission to assess the state of conservation of Mali's World Heritage properties.

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Lack of site management
- Armed conflict
- Conservation

Illustrative material see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1139/

Current conservation issues

On 3 February 2025, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, which is available at <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1139/documents/</u>, providing the following information:

- The Tomb of Askia rehabilitation project, launched in March 2020 and funded by the International alliance for the protection of heritage (ALIPH), forms the framework for action to conserve the property, bringing together all of the State Party's stakeholders, with technical assistance from the International Centre for Earthen Construction (CRATerre);
- Initially scheduled to run for two years (2023–2024), the project has been extended until June 2025. Interrupted for a period, work resumed in March 2024 and the smooth progress of activities is emphasized;
- This project involves consolidating the physical structures of the property, carrying out work on its various components (the ablutions area, the pyramidal tower, the roof of the men's mosque, etc.) including the electrical installation. It also involves training masons and guides, producing conservation booklets and manuals and regenerating the *hasu* plants in the courtyard;
- In order to find a solution to occupation of the buffer zone of the property, the mayor of the urban commune of Gao, the management committee and the Cultural Mission of Gao proposed referring the matter to the regional director of the State domain in order to give the occupants land for housing and free up the buffer zone;
- A Communication Plan, drawn up in 2022, has not been fully implemented due to lack of funding;
- The Cultural Mission of Gao, in collaboration with the Malian Blue Shield Committee and the local community, through the management committee, is continuing to raise awareness in the community, particularly among young people;
- On the subject of insecurity, it should be emphasized that the Gao region is increasingly secure, apart from a few sporadic attacks on military positions;
- Concerning finalization of the Desired State of Conservation for the Removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR), the State Party emphasizes its collaboration with the ALIPH Foundation in implementing the corrective measures already adopted.

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

The State Party's report focuses mainly on the Tomb rehabilitation project, financed by ALIPH, which benefits both the physical conservation of the property and improvements to its use by worshippers. Without providing much new information, the State Party's steadfast commitment is noteworthy, particularly its mobilization of the various stakeholders in the city of Gao for the implementation of this project, which enables progress to be made in implementing the corrective measures adopted by the Committee in 2016 and which seems to be having a mobilizing effect on all stakeholders.

The Committee had asked the State Party to submit an updated work plan for this project as well as detailed documentation at each stage of the project in order to create archives of the work to be carried out. Although it is regrettable that none of these elements were submitted to the World Heritage Centre – which would have permitted a more in-depth analysis to be made of the actions carried out on the property – it is favourably noted, on the other hand, that the State Party has given its assurance that the weekly and monthly reports, photographs of the works, site plans, topographical surveys and all documentation relating to the rehabilitation project are available and will be consulted and properly

archived. Noting also that the project, which has been extended until June 2025, will soon be coming to an end, the Committee should ask the State Party to submit all of the above-mentioned elements in consolidated form for consultation by the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies.

It was also favourably noted that efforts to involve all stakeholders and local communities have been maintained, with the Management Committee and the Mali Blue Shield Committee pooling their efforts. This community awareness-raising is essential and it is encouraging that the question of occupation of the property's buffer zone is the subject of a broad consultation seeking a solution that will be to everyone's satisfaction.

However, it is worth noting the persistent lack of financial resources, which the State Party's report only mentions to explain difficulties hindering implementation of the Communication Plan developed in 2022. The Committee should reiterate its request to the State Party to submit to it this Communication Plan, which would also make it possible to explore the ways in which UNESCO might further support the State Party in its implementation.

Finally, it is encouraging that the Management and Conservation Plan for the property is in the process of being updated with the support of International Assistance granted for the purpose, which benefits all Malian World Heritage properties and which will be carried out in parallel with preparation of the Desired State of Conservation for the Removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR), which still requires some consultation before it can be finalized but which will be completed during 2025 for adoption at the 48th session.

In view of the above, and considering the continuing situation of insecurity, it is recommended that the Committee retain the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Draft Decision: 47 COM 7A.33

- 1. Having examined Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add,
- 2. <u>Recalling</u> Decision **46 COM 7A.13**, adopted at its 46th session (New Delhi, 2024),
- 3. <u>Welcomes</u> the State Party's ongoing commitment to the conservation and management of the property and the mobilization of the various stakeholders in the city of Gao to implement the corrective measures adopted by the Committee in 2016, in particular as part of the Tomb rehabilitation project funded by the International alliance for the protection of heritage (ALIPH), which aims both to physically conserve the property and to improve its use by the faithful;
- 4. <u>Takes note</u> of the resumption of the activities carried out under this project, which has been extended until June 2025, and <u>reiterates its request</u> to the State Party to provide and submit to the World Heritage Centre detailed documentation of each stage of the project in order to create an archive of the works, as well as the various reports, photographs of the works, site plans, topographical surveys and all documentation relating to the works of the rehabilitation project in consolidated form for consultation and examination by the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies;
- 5. <u>Expresses its satisfaction</u> with the broad consultation aimed at finding a consensual solution to the occupation of the buffer zone, as well as with efforts to involve all stakeholders and local communities with the support of the Management Committee and the Mali Blue Shield Committee; <u>encourages</u> the State Party to continue with community consultations and awareness-raising activities; and <u>renews its request</u> to the State Party that it submit to it the Communication Plan developed in 2022, so that it can also explore the ways in which the World Heritage Centre might further support the State Party in its implementation;

- 6. <u>Reiterates its concern</u> regarding the lack of funding for the Gao Cultural Mission;
- 7. <u>Welcomes</u> the fact that the process of updating the Management and Conservation Plan for the property has been launched with the support of International Assistance granted by the World Heritage Fund for the purpose, which will benefit all Malian World Heritage properties; it also <u>welcomes</u> the progress made in drafting the State of Conservation for the Removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) and <u>requests</u> that it be finalized within the framework of the remaining consultations during 2025 with a view to its adoption at the 48th session;
- 8. <u>Finally Requests</u> the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2026**, 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;
- 9. <u>Decides</u> to retain Tomb of Askia (Mali) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

ARAB STATES

34. Abu Mena (Egypt)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add.2

38. Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls (site proposed by Jordan)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add.2

40. Archaeological Site of Cyrene (Libya)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1982

Criteria (ii)(iii)(vi)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger 2016-present

<u>Threats for which the property was inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger</u> Conflict situation prevailing in the country

<u>Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger</u> Not yet drafted

<u>Corrective measures identified</u> Not yet identified

<u>Timeframe for the implementation of the corrective measures</u> Not yet identified

Previous Committee Decisions see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/190/documents/

International Assistance Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0 For details, see page <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/190/assistance/</u>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount granted: June 2020: Netherlands Funds in Trust: USD 49,620 for Strengthening national capacities for the elaboration of corrective measures for Libyan World Heritage properties; October 2023: USD 94,206 by the UNESCO Heritage Emergency Fund for 'Emergency Assessment Missions to the flood affected region of Libya'

Previous monitoring missions

March 2003: World Heritage Centre mission; May 2006: World Heritage Centre Reactive Monitoring mission; January 2007: Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission; August 2008: Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS mission; November 2023: UNESCO Rapid Assessment mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Deliberate destruction of heritage (Inadequate protection leading to threat to rock-hewn monumental tombs, vandalism and the development of agricultural activities in the rural zone)
- Governance
- Housing (Urban encroachment and uncontrolled building construction leading to destruction of archaeological areas)
- Interpretative and visitation facilities (Need for a presentation and interpretation system for visitors and the local population)
- Livestock farming / grazing of domesticated animals
- Crop production
- Management activities (Inappropriate earlier restoration work)
- Management systems/management plan (Need to complete the Conservation and Management Plan in order to coordinate actions in the short and medium term; Need to provide a detailed map at the appropriate scale showing the boundaries of the property and buffer zone, as well as regulatory measures foreseen to ensure the protection of the property; Inadequate on-site security and control systems)
- Surface water pollution (Problem of discharge of sewage from the modern town into the Wadi Bel Ghadir)
- Fire (wildfires)
- Conflict situation prevailing in the country
- Flooding (Storm)

Illustrative material see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/190/

Current conservation issues

On 15 January 2025, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, an executive summary of which is available at https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/190/documents/. Progress in a number of conservation issues addressed by the Committee at its previous sessions is presented in this report, as follows:

- The Roman canal, which was recently exposed by Storm Daniel, was partly cleaned from stones and silt, damaged parts underwent restoration, and several openings were temporarily closed for protection, with further cleaning and restoration planned when resources allow. Works were also undertaken at the northern wall of the water canal in Bab al-Tayr, including cleaning, sorting of stones, and the initiation of restoration work, awaiting the availability of resources. Additionally, the Hellenistic fountain in the Sanctuary area was restored after debris removal;
- In cooperation with the Italian archaeological mission of the University of Campania, cleaning and
 restoration works were undertaken on a temple in the Sanctuary area, and urgent interventions
 were carried out at the theatre (amphitheatre) located in the western side of the Sanctuary.
 Temporary measures were carried out at the wall leading to the Sanctuary of Apollo. The mission
 also contributed to cleaning, restoration, and excavation in the Sanctuary area, including at the
 Square of Apollo;
- Vegetation and rubble were cleared around the Arch of Marcus Aurelius, while local organizations, under the supervision of the Department of Antiquities (DoA), carried out similar cleaning in the Byzantine and Roman baths. Nevertheless, regular vegetation removal remains a challenge due to limited resources. Other actions included cleaning and documentation of artifacts;
- A study was conducted on diverting rainwater from AI-Wadi Street to protect the archaeological site, and accordingly an open water canal was created directing rainwater into the Roman canal;
- A 50-meter cement covered pipe was installed to treat the issue of wastewater in Wadi Belghadir, but a further extension is needed to ensure the decontamination of the Spring of Apollo;
- Construction debris, from an urban project, was disposed of near the Temple of Demeter, posing a threat to the site. A meeting of local authorities, including the DoA and Shahat Municipality, led to immediate measures to address this threat.

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

Efforts have continued in addressing some of the key conservation challenges at the property, particularly in the aftermath of Storm Daniel, including through cooperation with international and local partners. Notable progress has been made in cleaning debris, urgent stabilization, and implementing initial conservation measures, in addition to the cleaning and documentation of artifacts.

The State Party has begun implementing measures to mitigate future risks of flooding and contamination of Wadi Belghadir. Efforts have been made in channelling rainwater, including through the recently exposed Roman canal, and in managing wastewater. Addressing such issues is critical to ensure the adequate conservation of the property, including by removing sources of contamination of the Spring of Apollo. It would be crucial that these actions are planned comprehensively, and that the related studies are provided to the World Heritage Centre for technical review, before implementation.

Some of the previous recommendations of the Committee have not yet been addressed, such as in relation to structural stability, soil erosion, and rock escarpment instability, in addition to Disaster Risk Management. Addressing these issues through detailed assessments and long-term conservation planning, with appropriate compatible solutions, in consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, remains crucial.

A sustainable maintenance strategy is necessary, with adequate resources for implementation, as excessive vegetation may exacerbate structural instability. Additionally, external threats such as the improper disposal of construction debris into the property, and the commendable immediate response, highlight the importance of ongoing monitoring and coordination among all stakeholders. It is recommended to encourage the State Party to consider the elaboration of a Management Plan as a priority, addressing encroachment among other threats and incorporating regulatory protection measures. In this regard, steps to define an appropriate buffer zone and the submission of a Minor Boundary Modification proposal in line with Paragraph 164 of the Operational Guidelines, are to be also encouraged.

It is also recommended to urge the State Party to initiate the processes for the elaboration of a retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (SOUV) and a Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) with a set of corrective measures, in consultation with the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS. The two processes may proceed simultaneously and in coordination with one another, in order to expedite the preparation of the retrospective SOUV and the DSOCR:

The invited joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission remains essential to further evaluate the overall state of conservation of the property, expanding on the findings of the 2023 UNESCO mission. Such a mission would provide an opportunity to advise the State Party on conservation and management planning, and the development of the DSOCR, with the related corrective measures.

The ongoing challenges at the property underscore the need for sustained interventions and resource allocation. The Committee may wish to reiterate its call for increased mobilisation of the international community to provide financial and technical support for urgent conservation actions and for longer-term planning, and to cooperate in the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural property.

It is recommended that the Committee retain the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Draft Decision: 47 COM 7A.40

- 1. <u>Having examined</u> Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add,
- 2. <u>Recalling</u> Decision 46 COM 7A.20, adopted at its 46th session (New Delhi, 2024),
- 3. <u>Welcomes</u> the continued efforts in implementing conservation and protection measures, including those in response to the impact of flooding on the property, and <u>urges</u> the State Party to continue these efforts in consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, including concerning the choice of restoration materials and techniques planned at the property before their implementation;

- 4. <u>Acknowledges</u> the study and works undertaken regarding the channelling of rainwater, as well as the management of wastewater to avoid the contamination of Wadi Belghadir and the Spring of Apollo, and <u>requests</u> the State Party to pursue such planning in a comprehensive manner, and submit these plans with all related studies to the World Heritage Centre for technical review;
- 5. <u>Reiterates its request</u> to the State Party to pursue the development of a conservation strategy reflecting the priority areas that have been identified by the UNESCO mission of November 2023, including:
 - a) Urgent assessment and stabilization studies for exposed or weakened foundations and structures,
 - b) Comprehensive study tackling the stability and stabilization of the rock escarpment in the lower north-west area of the property,
 - c) Geotechnical and soil studies to address issues of soil erosion,
 - d) Disaster risk management with an early warning system;
- <u>Strongly encourages</u> the State Party to pursue the development of a Management Plan for the property as a priority and <u>invites</u> it to seek the necessary technical and financial support;
- 7. <u>Also reiterates its request</u> to the State Party to continue the close consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies for the elaboration of a minor boundary modification proposal, and to submit it in line with Paragraph 164 of the Operational Guidelines;
- 8. <u>Also urges</u> the State Party, in consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, to develop a draft retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 48th session;
- 9. <u>Further urges</u> the State Party to initiate the process to develop a set of corrective measures and a timeframe for their implementation, as well as a Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR), in collaboration with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies;
- 10. <u>Recalls</u> the need to keep the Committee informed through the World Heritage Centre on the evolution of the situation, and on any ongoing or future plans for major restoration or new construction projects that may affect the OUV of the property, in conformity with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines;
- 11. <u>Also requests</u> that the invited joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission to the property take place as soon as conditions permit;
- 12. <u>Continues to call</u> for an increased mobilization of the international community to support urgent and medium-term safeguarding measures, including through the UNESCO Heritage Emergency Fund;
- 13. <u>Reiterates its appeal</u> to all State Parties to cooperate in the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural property from Libya, as per the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2347 of March 2017, and the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property;
- 14. <u>Finally requests</u> the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2026**, 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;

15. <u>Decides</u> to retain Archaeological Site of Cyrene (Libya) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

41. Archaeological Site of Leptis Magna (Libya)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add.2

42. Archaeological Site of Sabratha (Libya)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add.2

43. Old Town of Ghadamès (Libya)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add.2

45. Hebron/Al-Khalil Old Town (State of Palestine)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add.2

46. Palestine: Land of Olives and Vines – Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir (State of Palestine)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2014

<u>Criteria</u> (iv)(v)

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

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

- Potential construction of a separation fence (wall)
- Abandonment of terraces and afforestation
- Impact of socio-cultural and geo-political transformations

<u>Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger</u> Adopted; see page <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/6245</u>

<u>Corrective measures identified</u> Adopted; see page <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/6245</u> *Timeframe for the implementation of the corrective measures* Adopted; see page <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/6989</u>

Previous Committee Decisions see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1492/documents/

International Assistance

Requests approved: 1 (2016) Total amount approved: USD 30,000 For details, see page <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1492/assistance/</u>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount granted: USD 2,761,628 from the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) for the project "Support sustainable tourism through safeguarding, rehabilitation and promotion of the agro-cultural landscape in Palestine".

Previous monitoring missions

N/A

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Potential construction of a separation fence (wall)
- Abandonment of terraces and afforestation
- Impact of socio-cultural and geo-political transformations
- Changes in traditional ways of life and knowledge system
- Identity, social cohesion, changes in local population and community
- Invasive/alien terrestrial species
- New constructions within the property's boundaries

Illustrative material see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1492/

Current conservation issues

On 29 January 2025, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, which is available at <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1492/documents</u>, and presents the following information:

- Several factors impact the property, including the absence of adequate water and sewage networks, insufficient financial resources, and restrictions hindering farmers from restoring terraces and watchtowers within the property;
- Stakeholders and the local community are collaborating to implement the Management and Conservation Plan (MCP). The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA) has appointed a site manager. Numerous meetings and workshops were organized in 2024 to assist with the continuous evaluation, revision and monitoring of the MCP. The Steering Committee makes crucial decisions and oversees the implementation of the MCP, while the Technical Committee is tasked with executing the MCP's objectives, strategies and actions. The Site Manager oversees the implementation of projects and activities within the property;
- The necessary documents for the visitor interpretation centre and bus parking project will be submitted to the World Heritage Centre once funding is available. Heritage Impact Assessments (HIA) and/or Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) will be undertaken prior to implementing significant interventions or proposed developments;
- Progress in achieving the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) is as follows:
 - Dismissal of plans to build a "Wall" along the property, or within its setting: Construction of the "wall" remains halted, but threats persist with no binding decision yet,
 - Adequate conservation of the agricultural terraces and their associated components, including watchtowers and drystone walls throughout the property: The project to "Support sustainable tourism through safeguarding, rehabilitation and promotion of the agro-cultural landscape in Palestine", funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), and implemented by UNESCO and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), in collaboration with MoTA, contributes to achieve the corrective measures. Activities included the creation of a marketing strategy for agricultural and food products and building

capacities of local institutions. Other actions included conservation of dry-stone walls, cultivation, and rehabilitation of surroundings and internal roads, among others,

- Adequate restoration in place of the irrigation system and the development of an adequate sewage system to protect water quality in the property: No progress has been achieved, and efforts will be made to secure funding. A project of USD 25 million has been proposed for a sewage system for the western villages of Bethlehem but delayed due to budget constraints. Temporary solutions are in place,
- Protection in place for the property and its buffer zone, and Management Plan and a monitoring system adopted, and sustainable management system in place: The MCP was endorsed and a dedicated Site Manager appointed. The General Directorate for World Heritage formulates and executes the Operational Management Systems for World Heritage properties with the participation of key stakeholders, local communities and the private sector. A monitoring system has been implemented in line with the established indicators. The development of protection methods for the property and its buffer zone have been achieved, while the endorsement of the land-use plan and bylaws, which is underway, has faced challenges;
- Several threats with a negative impact on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) are reported in 2024:
 - Construction of a tunnel and bypass road continued in 2024, resulting in destruction of the property's landscape,
 - Expansion of the illegal Israeli settlement outpost, established within the property in 2020, continued in 2024, disrupting the landscape,
 - Establishment of a settlement outpost in 2024 within the property, with escalated construction activities, causing extensive damage,
 - Destruction of agricultural lands and obstruction of farmers, arson attacks to agricultural land, and demolition of agricultural features;
- A list of future potential projects is provided in the report.

In addition, UNESCO received two letters from the State Party dated 20 August 2024 and 13 February 2025 reporting on the above-mentioned settlement (2024) within the property. Another letter dated 7 April 2025 was received from the State Party reporting on the halting of a development project and threat to demolish completed works. The Secretariat followed up with the State Party of Israel asking it to provide relevant information in this regard. A reply has not been received yet.

The State Party wishes for the property to be retained on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

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

The State Party has continued to progress in implementing corrective measures to achieve the DSOCR and respond to the recommendations of the World Heritage Committee despite the constraints. The absence of an adequate sewage system remains a major environmental concern, and the establishment of temporary measures is noted. It is recommended that the Committee continue to encourage the State Party to pursue its efforts in seeking the required funds to develop a suitable sewage system, as a matter of priority.

The site management system that has been established, and the monitoring of implementation of the MCP, with its indicators, seem to be effective. It is regrettable that the endorsement of the land-use plan and bylaw provisions for designated areas of the buffer zone has faced challenges. It is recommended to continue encouraging the State Party to pursue the endorsement of these documents and their subsequent implementation.

It is also recommended to encourage the continued implementation of activities under the project to "Support sustainable tourism through safeguarding, rehabilitation and promotion of the agro-cultural landscape of Battir", as well as other actions that would contribute to the sustainable conservation and management of the property.

The State Party's commitment to submit documentation concerning the visitor interpretation centre and bus parking project once funding has been obtained, is acknowledged, as is the commitment of the State Party to carry out HIA and/or EIA for any project likely to affect the OUV of the property.

The reported violations, particularly about major constructions, settlements and damages within the property, are deeply concerning, as they may potentially lead to adverse modifications to its cultural landscape and OUV. It is recommended that the Committee request that all such development projects are halted at the property and its buffer zone.

It is recommended that the property be retained on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Draft Decision: 47 COM 7A.46

- 1. <u>Having examined</u> Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add,
- 2. <u>Recalling</u> Decision 46 COM 7A.26, adopted at its 46th session (New Delhi, 2024),
- 3. <u>Commending</u> the State Party for its efforts to improve the state of conservation of the property and to implement the corrective measures to achieve the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR), <u>continues encouraging</u> the State Party to pursue its efforts in seeking the required funds to undertake the development of a suitable sewage system, as a matter of priority;
- 4. <u>Taking note</u> of the challenges faced in endorsing the land-use plan and related bylaws to avoid uncontrolled urban growth within the property and its buffer zone, <u>also</u> <u>encourages</u> the State Party to pursue its efforts towards this end;
- 5. <u>Further encourages</u> the continued implementation of the project to "Support sustainable tourism through safeguarding, rehabilitation and promotion of the agro-cultural landscape of Battir", which aims to promote agro-cultural tourism as a driver for economic and social development, while safeguarding and promoting the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property;
- 6. <u>Takes note</u> of the State Party's commitment to transmit to the World Heritage Centre documentation for the interpretation centre and bus parking project once available and to continue to inform the World Heritage Centre of any proposed plans for major restoration or new construction projects that may affect the OUV of the property, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines;
- 7. <u>Expresses its deep concern</u> of reports of ongoing illegal constructions, settlements and other developments, as well as damages to agricultural areas, within the property and its buffer zone, and asks all parties to avoid any action that would cause damage to the property;
- 8. <u>Finally requests</u> the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2026**, 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;
- 9. <u>Decides</u> to retain Palestine: Land of Olives and Vines Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir (State of Palestine) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

47. Saint Hilarion Monastery/ Tell Umm Amer (State of Palestine)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add.2

49. Ancient City of Bosra (Syrian Arab Republic)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1980

Criteria (i)(iii)(vi)

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

<u>Threats for which the property was inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger</u> Destruction as well as ascertained and potential threats consequent to the armed conflict in Syria that started in March 2011

<u>Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger</u> In progress

<u>Corrective measures identified</u> In progress

Timeframe for the implementation of the corrective measures In progress

Previous Committee Decisions see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/22/documents/

International Assistance

Requests approved: 4 (from 1995-2018) Total amount approved: USD 81,250 For details, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/22/assistance/

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount provided to the six Syrian World Heritage properties: 200,000 euros by the Italian Government; for built, movable and intangible heritage: 2.46 million euros by the European Union, USD 170,000 by the Flemish Government, 63,000 euros by the Austrian Government, USD 200,000 by the German Government; for cultural heritage under conflict: USD 200,000 by the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage in Bahrain; USD 31,640 from the World Heritage Fund budget line dedicated to properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Previous monitoring missions

Since the start of the conflict in March 2011, the security situation has not allowed any missions to be undertaken at this World Heritage property

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

Before the conflict:

- Illegal Activities
- Housing

Since March 2011:

- Armed conflict (Damage of historic buildings due to the conflict)
- Illegal activities (illegal constructions following the start of the conflict and illegal excavations)

Illustrative material see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/22/

Current conservation issues

On 26 January 2025, the State Party submitted state of conservation reports for the six Syrian World Heritage properties, which are available at <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/22/documents/</u> and include an introduction clarifying that:

- 8 December 2024 marks the end of the devastating conflict that started in 2011. Public institutions are overseen by a provisional government and employees of the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums (DGAM) have resumed work;
- The cumulative impacts of years of conflict, compounded by the devastating earthquake of February 2023, have dramatically increased the need for support in preserving Syria's cultural heritage.

The report also provides updated information on progress in a number of conservation issues at the property, as follows:

- At the Citadel/Theatre, although only routine maintenance was initially expected, a thorough inspection revealed serious structural issues at the eastern tower (No.10). Restoration efforts included injecting limestone, repairing the external stonework of the parapet, and dismantling and rebuilding unstable sections. Traditional methods and tools were used to maintain historical authenticity;
- At Madrasa Abû al-Fida, the damaged section of the façade and arch were reconstructed using lime mortar and old basalt stones to maintain architectural continuity;
- A Conservation Plan, to be prepared for the property when the situation allows, will serve as a framework for conservation, site management, and sustainable tourism, ensuring the site's long-term preservation. This includes site presentation, security, legal designations and archaeological research.

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

The report provides limited information and few illustrations of the work at the site, focusing on two monuments: the Citadel/Theatre and Madrasa Abû al-Fida. Works have addressed structural vulnerabilities that appeared at the eastern tower of the Citadel/Theatre, and damage incurred on the drum of the dome and façade of Madrasa Abû al-Fida during the conflict. These were addressed through restoration techniques aiming at preserving the historical authenticity of the structures, which is welcome. It is recommended to reiterate that only emergency reconstruction and stabilisation works should be undertaken until agreement on procedures and processes has been agreed to, in order to ensure that actions do not further affect the authenticity of the property.

A Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) for the second phase of the rehabilitation project of the Kalybe Monument (consolidation and restoration) was submitted on 30 April 2024. The ICOMOS Technical Review of the HIA highlighted the need to adopt a holistic approach by developing a comprehensive recovery plan, where the broader context of the monument must be addressed. The development of instruments aiming at addressing the conservation, management and development of the property in a holistic way remain a key priority and would avoid ad-hoc restoration works, as well as ensure the sustainability of recovery projects. This objective could be reached through the development of a Recovery Master Plan that would encompass all aspects of the sustainable recovery of the property. The State Party is encouraged to seek technical assistance through partnerships and funding support, as well as further guidance from the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, to develop such a plan.

Given the previously reported extensive illicit excavation activities at the property, and the recently reported intensification of such activities, it is recommended that the Committee reiterate its appeal to all State Parties to fulfil their obligations under international law, especially the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2347 of March 2017.

The elaboration of the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) has advanced through exchanges between the State Party, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, and will be further pursued to be presented to the Committee at its 48th session.

In March 2025, the World Heritage Centre received an invitation for a Reactive Monitoring mission to the property. It is highly desirable that this mission be undertaken as soon as feasible, in order to assess the overall state of conservation of the property and advise on the development of the Recovery Master Plan.

Draft Decision: 47 COM 7A.49

- 1. <u>Having examined</u> Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add,
- 2. <u>Recalling</u> Decision 46 COM 7A.28, adopted at its 46th session (New Delhi, 2024),
- 3. <u>Takes note</u> of the restoration work undertaken to reinforce structural stability at the Citadel/Theatre and repair the damage incurred during the conflict at the dome's drum and façade at Madrasa Abû al-Fida, and <u>requests</u> the State Party to only undertake emergency measures until a Recovery Master Plan has been agreed upon;
- 4. <u>Also requests</u> the State Party to develop a Recovery Master Plan aiming at addressing the conservation, management and development of the property through a holistic and sustainable approach, and <u>encourages</u> the State Party to seek partnerships and funding support, as well as further guidance from the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies towards this aim;
- 5. <u>Further requests</u> the State Party to revise the Heritage Impact Assessment for the Kalybe monument, ensuring that it addresses the broader context of the monument, and is aligned with the foreseen development of a Recovery Master Plan;
- 6. <u>Reiterates its call</u> on all States Parties to support emergency safeguarding and recovery measures at the property;
- 7. <u>Reiterates its appeal</u> to all States Parties and actors to cooperate in the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural heritage coming from Syria as per the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 2199 of February 2015, and 2347 of March 2017;
- 8. <u>Also encourages</u> the State Party to pursue the elaboration of the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR), and a set of correctives measures, for potential examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 48th session;
- 9. <u>Also takes note</u> of the invitation by the State Party of a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission and <u>requests furthermore</u> that this mission take place as soon as feasible, in order to assess the state of conservation of the property;
- 10. <u>Finally requests</u> the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2026**, 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;
- 11. <u>Decides</u> to retain Ancient City of Bosra (Syrian Arab Republic) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

50. Ancient City of Damascus (Syrian Arab Republic)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add.2

53. Site of Palmyra (Syrian Arab Republic)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add.2

54. Historic Town of Zabid (Yemen)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add.2

55. Landmarks of the Ancient Kingdom of Saba, Marib (Yemen)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2023

Criteria (iii)(iv)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger 2023-present

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

- Collateral and deliberate damage related to the armed conflict
- Vandalism and looting
- Development pressures related to the population growth in the area of Ma'rib city
- Environmental factors having negative impact on the archaeological sites

<u>Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger</u> Not yet drafted

<u>Corrective measures identified</u> Not yet identified

<u>Timeframe for the implementation of the corrective measures</u> Not yet identified

Previous Committee Decisions see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1700/documents/

International Assistance Requests approved: 0 Total amount approved: USD 0 For details, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1700/assistance/

<u>UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds</u> N/A

<u>Previous monitoring missions</u> N/A

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

Factors affecting the property identified at the time of inscription:

- Collateral and deliberate damage related to the armed conflict
- Vandalism and looting
- Development pressures related to the population growth in the area of Ma'rib city
- Environmental factors having negative impact on the archaeological sites

Illustrative material see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1700/

Current conservation issues

On 1 February 2025, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, an executive summary of which is available at <u>http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1700/documents/</u>, and presents the following information:

- Unstable conditions and lack of resources continue to prevent the local authorities from carrying out field visits or implementing projects, particularly in the component of the city of Sirwah;
- Among the projects listed for budgetary allocations, proposals relate to supporting archaeological sites, especially in terms of fencing and technical protection. Despite ongoing contact with donors and international organisations, no support has been provided yet;
- The lack of budget, as well as limited availability of skilled human resources and adequate capacity building, continue to create challenges for the conservation and preservation of the property;
- The lack of awareness among the local community is also considered an important factor, along with environmental impacts.

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

The property was simultaneously inscribed on the World Heritage List and the List of World Heritage in Danger in 2023 (Decision **18 EXT.COM 5.3**), according to the emergency procedure. Threats that were identified at the time of inscription are related to collateral and deliberate damage related to the armed conflict, in addition to vandalism and looting, development pressure, and environmental factors.

It is concerning that there is still a lack of detailed and comprehensive information about the state of conservation of the property and that the property is still vulnerable to various threats. The Committee may wish to encourage the State Party to submit, when conditions allow, detailed documentation on all damage incurred at the World Heritage property. The required information should include systematic photographic surveys, drawings, graphics, quantitative data and the identification of potential risks. On this matter, the Committee is advised to address the urgent need for capacity building. The preparation of the Desired state of conservation for removal of a property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSCOR) remains an important issue to be addressed.

Despite the reported instability and security conditions prevailing in Yemen, non-field actions such as the revision of the urban master plan, scientific coordination and archiving, conservation strategy development and capacity building, are again strongly recommended to the State Party.

All recommendations made by the World Heritage Committee at the time of inscription of the site in 2023 (Decision **18 EXT.COM 5.3**) and at its 46th session in 2024 (Decision **46 COM 7A.34**), are still valid and should be recalled.

The Committee may also wish to reiterate its advice for all future interventions to be addressed within the framework of an overall assessment of damage and risks, and for a comprehensive Conservation Plan to be prepared in full consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies.

It is important to recall that any elements found at the property due to conflict-related damage, such as intentional destruction, should be retrieved and gathered in a safe location, and that the boundaries of the property be protected from illegal excavations and looting.

The State Party has invited a Reactive Monitoring mission to the property, as recommended by the Committee, which should take place once conditions allow.

The Committee is advised to appeal to States Parties to cooperate in the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural property coming from Yemen and to contribute towards the safeguarding of its cultural heritage.

Draft Decision: 47 COM 7A.55

- 1. <u>Having examined</u> Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add,
- 2. <u>Recalling</u> Decisions **18 EXT.COM 5.3 and 46 COM 7A.34,** adopted at its 18th extraordinary (UNESCO, 2023) and 46th (New Delhi, 2024) sessions respectively,
- 3. <u>Expressing concern</u> about the lack of detailed and comprehensive information about the state of conservation of the property, <u>encourages</u> the State Party to submit, when conditions allow, detailed documentation on all damage incurred at the property, comprising systematic photographic surveys, drawings, graphics, quantitative data and identification of potential risks;
- 4. <u>Reiterates its requests</u> to the State Party to implement the recommendations outlined at the time of inscription, as follows:
 - a) Halting the implementation of the 2018 Master Plan until a full assessment has been undertaken, through a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA), of its potential impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property and its setting, and, based on the results of the HIA, undertaking necessary revisions of the Plan,
 - b) Reinstating funding for management and conservation,
 - c) Developing as a matter of urgency risk preparedness plans for each component part of the property, to address vandalism and looting as well as overall protection,
 - d) Including local tribes as traditional custodians of the component parts in the management and protection of the property to ensure buy-in from local communities and prevent potential conflicts,
 - e) Extending protection measures onto the post-Sabaean vernacular architecture in the ancient cities of Ma'rib and Sirwah, as part of the safeguarding of the historic and traditional context of the property, and involving local populations in the protection and management of these heritage resources,
 - f) Completing an inventory of Sabaean monuments and sites,
 - g) Enhancing the coordination of inputs from varied research institutions and international agencies to ensure that there is no duplication of work or resources and to maximise and sustain the initiatives aimed at capacity-strengthening, knowledge production, protection, and management of the property,
 - h) Informing the World Heritage Centre of the intention to undertake or authorise all major projects (including fencing) which may affect the OUV of the property, in line with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines;
- 5. <u>Recommends</u> that the State Party undertake protection and urgent stabilisation work only in cases where collapse or further damage is imminent, according to the principle of minimal intervention, and that future interventions shall be addressed within the framework of an overall assessment of damage and risks and a comprehensive Conservation Plan prepared in full consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies;
- 6. <u>Reminds</u> the State Party that any elements found at the property and resulting from conflict-related damage such as intentional destruction, should be retrieved and gathered in a safe location, and that the boundaries of the property should be protected from illegal excavations and looting;

- 7. <u>Requests</u> that the invited joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission take place once conditions allow, in order to report on the overall state of conservation of the property, assess the protection of the property and its buffer zone and consider the effectiveness of the property's boundaries, and advise on the development of the Desired state of conservation for removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) and related corrective measures;
- 8. <u>Calls</u> for an increased mobilisation of the international community to support capacity building initiatives and technical assistance for emergency safeguarding measures;
- 9. <u>Appeals</u> to all States Parties and actors to cooperate in the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural property coming from Yemen and to contribute towards the safeguarding of its cultural heritage;
- 10. <u>Finally requests</u> the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2026**, 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;
- 11. <u>Decides</u> to retain Landmarks of the Ancient Kingdom of Saba, Marib (Yemen) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

56. Old City of Sana'a (Yemen)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add.2

57. Old Walled City of Shibam (Yemen)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add.2