

47 COM

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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: http://whc.unesco.org/en/soc

<u>Decision required</u>: 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.

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NATURAL PROPERTIES

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

3. Everglades National Park (United States of America)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1979

Criteria (viii)(ix)(x)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger 1993-2007, 2010-present

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

The property was re-inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger, on the request of the State Party, due to concerns that the property's aquatic ecosystem continues to deteriorate, in particular as a result of:

- Alterations of the hydrological regime (quantity, timing, and distribution of Shark Slough inflows)
- Adjacent urban and agricultural growth (flood protection and water supply requirements that affect the property's resources by lowering water levels)
- Increased nutrient pollution from upstream agricultural activities
- Significant reduction of both marine and estuarine biodiversity in Florida Bay

<u>Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger</u> Adopted, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/4348

Corrective measures identified

Adopted, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/1062 Updated, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/4348

Timeframe for the implementation of the corrective measures

Adopted, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/1062
Updated, see pages https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/4348 and https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/4348 and https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/4348 and https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/4348 and https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/4348

<u>Previous Committee Decisions</u> see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/76/documents/

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/76/assistance/

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

May 1999: World Heritage Centre mission;

April 2006: IUCN participation in a technical workshop to identify benchmarks and corrective

January 2011: joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission;

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Water infrastructure (quantity and quality of water entering the property; lowered water levels due to flood control measures)
- Housing (urban encroachment)

- Surface water pollution and pollution of marine waters (agricultural fertilizer pollution, mercury contamination of fish and wildlife)
- Storms (damage from hurricanes)
- Invasive/alien species or hyper-abundant species (exotic invasive plant and animal species)
- Adverse impact of the planned extension of the SR 836/Dolphin Expressway on the Greater Everglades wetland ecosystem
- Increasing impacts of climate change

Illustrative material see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/76/

Current conservation issues

On 5 December 2024, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, available at https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/76/documents/, which reports the following:

- Information is provided on 16 indicators of the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR);
- Of the 63 ecological integrity indicators, 14 show improvement, 37 remain unchanged, 11 are deteriorating, and one is unknown. In terms of status, 19 indicators are of significant concern, 25 indicate a need for caution, and 19 are considered to be in good condition;
- Water flows are increasing and shifting eastward, resulting in deeper water levels. Total fish abundance has risen since 2021 but remains below desired levels, while the abundance of invasive fish species exceeds targets, posing a threat to small fish and crayfish populations;
- Climate change is causing marsh collapse, shifts in vegetation species, and saltwater intrusion, particularly in the southeastern areas of the property. Measures are underway to increase water delivery and expand wildlife habitat and a three-year planning process to develop a climate change roadmap for the property is set to begin shortly;
- Water quality remains stable at some inflow structures, while others show rising total phosphorus (TP) levels, particularly from April to mid-July 2023. Although TP concentrations remained below the long-term target at all marsh monitoring stations, concerning trends at some locations require further investigation. Experts are examining the causes of elevated TP levels and potential remedies;
- Nesting numbers of wading birds in the coastal ecotone continue to increase, now exceeding 1990s and 2000s levels. The American crocodile population is also expanding, due to stable hatchling survival and increased nesting effort. However, roseate spoonbills have abandoned historic nesting sites, leading to a proposal to remove them as an ecological integrity indicator;
- Hypersalinity events continue to occur but are less extreme than in previous years. Algal blooms frequency has declined since Hurricane Irma in 2017, and Chlorophyll-a concentrations fell between 2018 to 2022, indicating potential recovery from nutrient overloads following the 2015 seagrass die-off and Hurricane Irma;
- No large-scale fires have been recorded in over a decade. Mercury concentrations remain high due to atmospheric deposition from coal-fired power plants;
- The prevalence and impact of invasive species remain a major challenge, requiring sustained and substantial resources for effective management. This ongoing threat to the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property is expected to persist. Management efforts focus on early detection, rapid response, research, and outreach;
- The SR 836/Dolphin Expressway court case is ongoing, with the National Park Service engaged in mitigation and monitoring efforts.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN

Progress in implementing corrective measures is welcomed, and the State Party's report provides a thorough assessment of the DSOCR indicators. Currently, 22% of integrity indicators show improvement, 50% remain unchanged, and 17% are deteriorating. In terms of overall condition, 40% require caution, 30% raise significant concern, and 30% are assessed as being in good condition. While these figures remain comparable to those reported in 2022, they represent a notable improvement

compared to 2019, underscoring the importance of sustained monitoring and restoration efforts to achieve the DSOCR.

The reported increase in water flows, shifting in the desired direction, is positively influencing key ecological parameters. This includes improved fish abundance and the continued growth of American crocodile and alligator populations, as well as rising numbers of nesting wading birds. The reduced severity of hypersalinity events, declining Chlorophyll-a concentrations, and the absence of large-scale fires for over a decade collectively point to an encouraging trend towards reduced nutrient pollution and improved water flow management. Nonetheless, the sustained and accelerated implementation of the corrective measures remains critical. The State Party's actions to assess the cause and identify appropriate remedial measures for the elevated TP levels are noted and should be encouraged.

Despite these gains, the continued spread of invasive alien species remains a major concern, compounded by resource limitations that constrain the implementation of control programmes for invasive fish and wildlife species. In addition, persistently high mercury concentrations present a serious risk due to the potential for bioaccumulation in top predators, warranting urgent and targeted action.

The State Party's clarification regarding the history and current status of the roseate spoonbill is noted. Recalling that the species was designated as an integrity indicator in 2015, it is regrettable that its population has steadily declined over recent decades, possibly due to altered freshwater flows and sea level rise. As the species is no longer nesting in sufficient numbers to serve as an effective indicator, further clarification is required as to whether this decline reflects broader challenges to ecological restoration. While the roseate spoonbill may no longer function as a formal indicator, the underlying causes of its nesting shift should continue to be investigated and addressed. In light of increasing threats posed by climate change, it is essential to continue strengthening restoration actions and develop a dedicated climate adaptation strategy that incorporates existing measures outlined in the General Management Plan (GMP) while addressing emerging challenges, including sea level rise.

Regarding the update provided by the State Party on 29 January 2024 on the proposed extension of the Florida State Highway known as SR 836/Dolphin Expressway, it is noted with concern that in July 2024 the State Division of Administrative Hearings Court upheld the State of Florida Administration Commission's ruling to proceed with the extension as proposed. A motion has since been filed by the Interveners and the case therefore remains open. It is of utmost concern that the proposed extension, adjacent to the property, may negatively impact wetlands set aside for the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP). Appreciating the commitment of the National Parks Service and the Department of Interior to avoid impacts on these sensitive wetlands, the State Party should be urged to identify options, alignments and designs that avoid any negative impact on the property, including its conditions of integrity through an Environmental Impact Assessment in accordance with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, prior to making any decision that would be difficult to reverse.

Recalling the time elapsed since the adoption of the corrective measures in 2006 (Decision **30 COM 7A.14**) and 2011 (Decision **35 COM 7A.14**), it is considered appropriate to reassess and update these measures in light of progress achieved and the evolving pressures on the property, including the compounding effects of climate change on the OUV of the property. The State Party should therefore be requested to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to assess the overall implementation of the corrective measures and provide support in their revision.

Finally, noting the additional and continued effort required, as recognised by the State Party, and its submission of a clear action plan for the next two years, and recalling that the property's full recovery may take several decades, it is recommended that the Committee request the State Party to submit an updated state of conservation report in two years' time. The Committee may also wish to invite the State Party to ensure that the Reactive Monitoring mission is invited sufficiently in advance to allow its findings to inform the next state of conservation report by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies and the Committee's future deliberations.

Draft Decision: 47 COM 7A.3

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add.5.

- 2. <u>Recalling</u> Decisions **30 COM 7A.14**, **35 COM 7A.14**, **45 COM 7A.17** and **46 COM 7A.41**, adopted at its 30th (Vilnius, 2006), 35th (UNESCO, 2011), extended 45th (Riyadh, 2023) and 46th (New Delhi, 2024) sessions respectively,
- 3. <u>Welcomes</u> the State Party's reported progress in implementing the corrective measures, which has led to an improvement in several integrity indicators since 2019, including increased water flows, reduced nutrient pollution, expanding populations of American crocodiles, alligators, and wading birds, decreased hypersalinity impacts, and the absence of wildfires affecting the property for over a decade;
- 4. <u>Notes with concern</u> that despite these positive developments, nearly two-thirds of the integrity indicators still fall short of the restoration targets necessary to achieve the Desired state of conservation for removal of the property from the List of World Heritage In Danger (DSOCR), and therefore <u>requests</u> the State Party to continue to strengthen current restoration efforts towards achieving the DSOCR;
- Expresses concern regarding localised increases in total phosphorus concentrations and the continued presence of mercury in the ecosystem, and <u>urges</u> the State Party to address the underlying causes and implement mitigation measures as a matter of priority;
- 6. Reiterates its concern over the persistence of invasive alien species (IAS) as a major threat to the property's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), compounded by limited resources for managing invasive fish and wildlife species, and reiterates its request to the State Party to ensure sustained, long-term allocation of resources to strengthen IAS control, monitoring, and prevention efforts;
- 7. Notes with further concern the growing impacts of climate change on the property's OUV, including sea level rise, marsh collapse, vegetation shifts, and saltwater intrusion, also welcomes the planned three-year process to develop a climate change roadmap, and also requests the State Party to keep the World Heritage Centre informed of its development, and to ensure that adaptation measures outlined in the General Management Plan (GMP) are integrated while addressing new and emerging threats;
- 8. <u>Expresses again its utmost concern</u> regarding the potential adverse impacts of the proposed extension of the SR 836/Dolphin Expressway on the Greater Everglades wetland ecosystem and <u>urges again</u> the State Party to identify alternatives that avoid any negative impacts on the OUV of the property, including its conditions of integrity, through an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), in line with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, and to submit the EIA to the World Heritage Centre for review by IUCN, prior to any decisions that would be difficult to reverse;
- 9. Regrets the continued decline of the roseate spoonbill population and its abandonment of historic nesting sites, likely due to altered freshwater flows and sea level rise, rendering it no longer viable as an ecological integrity indicator, and further requests the State Party to clarify whether this situation reflects broader ecological integrity challenges, and to continue research and mitigation efforts to address the causes of the nesting shifts;
- 10. <u>Strongly encourages</u> the State Party to reassess the corrective measures in view of the time elapsed since their adoption in 2006, subsequently updated in 2011, and to update them to reflect recent progress and current challenges, including the impacts of climate change and <u>requests furthermore</u> the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to assess the overall implementation of the

- corrective measures and to provide support in their revision, sufficiently in advance to enable the mission's findings to inform the Committee's deliberations at its 49th session;
- 11. <u>Finally requests</u> the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 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 49th session:
- 12. <u>Decides</u> to retain Everglades National Park (United States of America) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

CULTURAL PROPERTIES

ARAB STATES

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

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1981

Criteria (ii)(iii)(vi)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger 1982-present

Threats for which the property was inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger (cf. Document CLT 82/CH/CONF.015/8)

"[...] the situation of this property corresponds to the criteria mentioned in the ICOMOS note and, in particular, to criteria (e) (significant loss of historical authenticity) and (f) (important loss of cultural significance) as far as "ascertained danger" is concerned, and to criteria (a) (modification of juridical status of the property diminishing the degree of its protection), (b) (lack of conservation policy) and (d) (threatening effects of town planning) as far as "potential danger" is concerned. [...]"

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

Corrective measures identified

Not yet identified

Timeframe for the implementation of the corrective measures

Not yet established

Previous Committee Decisions see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/148/documents/

International Assistance

Requests approved: 1 (f1982)

Total amount approved: USD 100,000

For details, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/148/assistance/

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount granted: approximately USD 5,000,000 (since 1988)

Previous monitoring missions

February-March 2004: World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM mission; from September 2005 to May 2008: 6 experts missions within the framework of the elaboration of the Action Plan for the Safeguarding of the Cultural Heritage of the Old City of Jerusalem; February-March 2007: special World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM mission sent by the Director-General of UNESCO for the issue of the Mughrabi ascent; August 2007, January and February 2008: missions for the application of the Reinforced Monitoring Mechanism; March and December 2009: World Heritage Centre missions; December 2013, October 2014, February 2015 and June 2015: project missions

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- High impact research / monitoring activities
- Housing
- · Natural risk factors
- Management systems/management plan; lack of planning, governance and management processes;

- Alteration of the urban and social fabric
- · Impact of archaeological excavations
- · Deterioration of monuments
- Urban environment and visual integrity
- Traffic, access and circulation; effects arising from use of transportation infrastructure

Illustrative material see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/148/

Current conservation issues

On 23 May 2025, a joint report was provided to the World Heritage Centre by the States Parties of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the State of Palestine, which is available at: https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/148/documents/.

The report provides an update concerning the property, while recalling earlier incidents and information. In summary, the report presents the following:

- An introduction providing a list of reported violations, primarily in relation to Muslim holy places, including at Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Al-Sharif, and Christian holy places;
- Definitions of Muslim and Christian holy places, as well as the established 'Status Quo' concerning custodianship of these holy places;
- Examples of violations at Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Al-Sharif and other Muslim holy places, recalling issues such as those related to the Mughrabi Quarter and the Mughrabi Ascent. It provides information regarding tunnelling works through excavations in, around, and underneath Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Al-Sharif, and attacks on Al-Qibli Mosque. Other reported violations comprise the obstruction of restoration and maintenance work, land confiscation, construction projects, and incursions, with an update on incidents that occurred in 2024;
- Several violations at Christian holy sites, including reported assaults, vandalism, restrictions and appropriation of church properties, with an update of incidents that occurred in 2024;
- Information regarding projects that are considered against the authentic character of heritage places, including developments at Al-Burag/Western Wall Plaza and the cable car project.

Since the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee, the Secretariat received three joint letters from the Permanent Delegation of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to UNESCO and the Permanent Delegation of the State of Palestine to UNESCO regarding the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls, dated 5 November 2024, 20 February 2025. The letters expressed concern about media reports addressing excavations and an electric elevator project encompassing tunnels in the Old City of Jerusalem,. The Secretariat followed up with the State of Israel, asking it to provide relevant information.

In addition, the Secretariat has received an additional letter from the Permanent Delegation of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the Permanent Delegation of the State of Palestine dated 20 May 2025. Information has been transmitted by the Secretariat to the State of Israel on 4 July, asking it to provide clarifications on the issues raised. The State of Israel replied on 5 July indicating that the delay of transmission of the letter by the Secretariat was too long, and the time given for reviewing its information is insufficient. Additional information will be reflected in the report that will be raised to the World Heritage Committee at its 48th session.

In response to UNESCO's query on the reported excavations and electric elevator project, a letter was received from the Ambassador of Israel to International Organizations in France dated 18 December 2024, mentioning that the Old City of Jerusalem is closely protected and preserved, while also replying to other previous correspondence transmitted by the Secretariat.

The Secretariat also received a letter from the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) dated 17 July 2024 expressing concerns regarding the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls, and particularly Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Al-Sharif.

The Secretariat received a letter from the Permanent Delegation of the State of Palestine dated 30 June 2025. The letter reports "continued and alarming escalation of violations" and notes that "the Year 2025 has witnessed a sharp and deeply concerning increase in organized military and provocative activities (...)", which "continue to undermine the Legal and Historic Status Quo (...)" and "attempts to alter the spatial character of the site". The letter emphasizes that "the Legal and Historic Status Quo remains a

cornerstone for preserving the authenticity, integrity and Outstanding Universal Value of the Old City of Jerusalem and Its Holy Sites".

Draft Decision: 47 COM 7A.38

The World Heritage Committee,

- 1. <u>Having considered</u> Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add.5 and the Annex attached to this decision.
- 2. <u>Recalling</u> its previous decisions concerning the **Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls**,
- 3. <u>Decides</u> that the status of the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls relating to the World Heritage List remains unchanged as reflected in Decisions **46 COM 7A.18** and **46 COM 8C.2** of its last session.

ANNEX

The World Heritage Committee
47th session of the Committee (47 COM)

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

The World Heritage Committee,

- 1. Having examined Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add.5,
- 2. Recalling the relevant provisions on the protection of cultural heritage including the four Geneva Conventions (1949), the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (1954) and its related protocols, the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970), the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972), the New Delhi UNESCO Recommendation of 1956 concerning excavations undertaken in occupied territories, the inscription of the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls at the request of Jordan on the World Heritage List (1981) and on the List of World Heritage in Danger (1982) and related recommendations, resolutions and decisions of UNESCO.
- 3. Reaffirming that nothing in the present decision, which aims at the safeguarding of the authenticity, integrity and cultural heritage of the Old City of Jerusalem on both sides of its Walls, shall in any way affect the relevant United Nations resolutions and decisions, in particular the relevant Security Council resolutions on the legal status of Jerusalem, including United Nations Security Council resolution 2334 (2016),
- 4. <u>Also reaffirming</u> the importance of the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls for the three monotheistic religions,
- 5. <u>Reminding</u> that all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, which have altered or purport to alter the character and status of

the Holy City of Jerusalem, and in particular the "basic law" on Jerusalem, are null and void and must be rescinded forthwith,

- 6. Further recalling the 28 decisions of the Executive Board: 185 EX/Decision 14, 187 EX/Decision 11, 189 EX/Decision 8, 190 EX/Decision 13, 192 EX/Decision 11, 194 EX/Decision 5.D, 195 EX/Decision 9, 196 EX/Decision 26, 197 EX/Decision 32, 199 EX/Decision 19.1, 200 EX/Decision 25, 201 EX/Decision 30, 202 EX/Decision 38, 204 EX/Decision 25, 205 EX/Decision 28, 206 EX/Decision 32, 207 EX/Decision 38, 209 EX/Decision 24, 210 EX/Decision 36, 211 EX/Decision 33, 212 EX/Decision 43, 214 EX/Decision 22, 215 EX/Decision 36, 216 EX/Decision 33, 217 EX/Decision 33, 219 EX/Decision 22, 220 EX/Decision 33, and 221 EX/Decision 33, and the 13 decisions World Heritage Committee decisions: 34 COM 7A.20, 35 COM 7A.22, 36 COM 7A.23, 37 COM 7A.26, 38 COM 7A.4, 39 COM 7A.27, 40 COM 7A.13, 41 COM 7A.36, 42 COM 7A.21, 43 COM 7A.22, 44 COM 7A.10, 45 COM 7A.31 and 46 COM 7A.18;
- 7. Regrets the failure of the Israeli occupying authorities to cease the persistent reported excavations, tunnelling, works, projects, and other illegal practices in East Jerusalem, particularly in and around the Old City of Jerusalem, which are illegal under international law and reiterates its request to Israel, the occupying Power, to prohibit all reported violations which are not in conformity with the provisions of the relevant UNESCO conventions, resolutions and decisions;
- 8. <u>Also regrets</u> the Israeli refusal to implement the UNESCO request to the Director-General to appoint a permanent representative to be stationed in East Jerusalem to report on a regular basis about all aspects covering the fields of competence of UNESCO in East Jerusalem, and <u>reiterates its request</u> to the Director-General to appoint, as soon as possible, the above-mentioned representative;
- 9. <u>Stresses</u> again the urgent need to implement the UNESCO reactive monitoring mission to the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls, and <u>invites</u> the Director-General and the World Heritage Centre, to exert all possible efforts, in line with their mandates and in conformity with the provisions of the relevant UNESCO conventions, decisions and resolutions, to ensure the prompt implementation of the mission and, in case of non-implementation, to propose possible effective measures to ensure its implementation;
- 10. <u>Decides</u> to retain the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

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

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2017

Criteria (ii)(iv)(vi)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger 2017-present

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

The State Party outlined a series of threats in the nomination file, but none were specified by the World Heritage Committee at the time of inscription

<u>Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger</u> Draft submitted by the State Party following expert meeting in Paris in December 2018, in accordance with Decision **42 COM 7A.28.** Currently under review.

Corrective measures identified

Draft submitted by the State Party following expert meeting in Paris in December 2018, in accordance with Decision **42 COM 7A.28.** Currently under review.

Timeframe for the implementation of the corrective measures

Currently under review, pending adoption of the corrective measures.

Previous Committee Decisions see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1565/documents/

International Assistance

Requests approved: 1 (from 2018) Total amount approved: USD 30,000

For details, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1565/assistance/

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount granted: USD 375,400 from the Government of Sweden for physical rehabilitation; USD 30,000 from the World Heritage Fund budget line dedicated to properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Previous monitoring missions

N/A

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Absence of Statement of Outstanding Universal Value at the time of inscription
- Management systems/management plan: Need of a management plan (resolved)
- Damage from illegal actions including new construction and archaeological excavations
- Restricted access

Illustrative material see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1565/

Current conservation issues

On 29 January 2025, the State Party submitted a report on the state of conservation of the property, which is available at http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1565/documents/, and presents the following information:

- A revised version of the proposed Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (SOUV), as well
 as the proposed Desired state of conservation for removal from the List of World Heritage in
 Danger (DSOCR), and corrective measures with a provisional timeframe for their
 implementation, were developed in consultation with UNESCO and the Advisory Bodies, in
 accordance with Decision 42 COM 7A.28, and are included as annexes to the report.
- The State Party has elaborated a proposed Management and Conservation Plan (MCP) within the framework of International Assistance, with support from UNESCO. The main partners, including the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA), Hebron Rehabilitation Committee (HRC) and Hebron Municipality (HM), will involve the local community and other stakeholders as appropriate. The State Party affirms its dedication to address the comments provided by ICOMOS in its Technical Review of 2023 on the revised MCP. This MCP may be further reviewed after the adoption of Statement of Outstanding Universal Value;
- Initiatives undertaken during 2024 have focused on protection, conservation and presentation
 of the OUV of the property. Works included conservation and maintenance at Al-Ibrahimi
 Mosque/The Tomb of the Patriarchs, in addition to regular maintenance of historic buildings,
 conservation and adaptive reuse of Al-Jubeh house, and conservation of Al-Jabari house, which
 is located in the buffer zone. Several activities were implemented with the participation of the
 local community, aimed at raising awareness of both tangible and intangible heritage, alleviating
 pressures, and encouraging activities and initiatives to improve income;
- A table is provided, listing potential projects intended for implementation, with careful consideration of their impact on OUV;
- The State Party's report mentions that the property remains vulnerable to "illegal actions and violations" carried out by Israel, the Occupying Power, including new plans to construct Israeli settlements and expansion of existing ones; illegal archaeological excavations; numerous

violations against the local community; sealing the doors of the old municipality building; as well as closure of Al-Ibrahimi Mosque/The Tomb of the Patriarchs and interventions without consultation: changing windows, initiating the covering of the open courtyard, installing an electric cabinet, excavating and extending sewage lines in the courtyard. In addition, on 9 December 2024, the Israeli Authorities verbally notified the Director of Islamic Endowments of the intention to cover the open courtyard of Al-Ibrahimi Mosque/The Tomb of the Patriarchs, which they advise would pose "a grave threat to the architectural integrity, environmental balance, and cultural heritage of this World Heritage site, recognized for its OUV".

The State Party expressed its wish to maintain the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Moreover, the Secretariat received letters from the Permanent Delegation of the State of Palestine to UNESCO dated 20 December 2024 and 10 March 2025, with attached technical report on threats to the Open Courtyard of the Ibrahimi Mosque/The Tomb of the Patriarchs, which is part of the property. In its letter dated 10 March 2025, the State of Palestine informed the Secretariat that, on 20 February 2025, Israel, the Occupying Power, issued an official letter to the local Palestinian Authorities, seeking approval to proceed with a proposal to cover the Open Courtyard of Al-Haram Al-Ibrahimi/The Ibrahimi Mosque. This letter followed a prior verbal notification delivered on 9 December 2024 to the Director of Islamic Endowments, during which the Israeli authorities expressed their intention to implement the proposed intervention.

In the same letter, the State of Palestine also requested an "urgent advisory technical opinion from the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS regarding the request of Israel, the Occupying Power, to cover the courtyard, in accordance with Article 172 of the Operational Guidelines". Furthermore, in a letter dated 28 April 2025, the Permanent Delegation of the State of Palestine reported that Israeli forces placed locks on several doors within the Al-Ibrahimi Mosque/The Tomb of the Patriarchs, effectively preventing access, use, and essential maintenance activities. The Secretariat followed up with the State of Israel asking it to provide relevant information, in accordance with the provisions of the Operational Guidelines. The Secretariat has also emphasised that it is important to avoid actions that may negatively impact the OUV of the property. On 13 June 2025, another letter was received from the Permanent Delegation of the State of Palestine to UNESCO, which reported on the installation of locks on all electrical cabinets inside Al-Ibrahimi Mosque/The Tomb of the Patriarchs, which prevents access to them and poses a direct threat to the safety of the monument and people.

In addition, several letters were received from the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee dated 12 September 2024, 10 October 2024, 4 November 2024, 19 December 2024, 27 February 2025, 15 April 2025 and 11 June 2025, reporting on the above-mentioned actions, including the installation of electrical cabinet, closures and excavations in front of Al-Ibrahimi Mosque/The Tomb of the Patriarchs, as well as threats related to its courtyard and the installation of locks on electrical cabinets. The Secretariat followed up with the State of Israel asking it to provide relevant information in this regard.

In letters dated to 18 December 2024 and 26 March 2025, the Ambassador of Israel to International Organizations in France recalled that "the property is a Judaism sacred place", refuting concerns about the site's "alleged danger", stating that there is "no violation or intention to damage or violate" the site. In its letter dated 26 March 2025, the Ambassador of Israel to International Organizations in France states that Israel "maintains and protects (holy sites), safeguards the freedoms of conscience, faith, religion and worship, regardless of an individual's religion".

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

The State Party has submitted to the World Heritage Centre a revised SOUV. Its adoption by the Committee is required for the finalisation and consideration of the draft DSOCR and draft corrective measures that will guide the process for removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger. It is also a fundamental foundation for the MCP, which should be adjusted once the SOUV is adopted and finalised in collaboration with UNESCO and the Advisory Bodies.

The State Party has continued to make efforts towards ensuring the adequate conservation and management of the property, which is commendable. These include undertaking conservation and maintenance works at Al-Ibrahimi Mosque/The Tomb of the Patriarchs, regular maintenance of historic buildings, conservation and adaptive reuse of Al-Jubeh house, and conservation of Al-Jabari house, in addition to implementing several activities with the participation of the local community.

Reporting by the State Party has continued about illegal activities by Israel, the Occupying Power, at a scale and an extent, which represent potential threats to the OUV of the property. In particular, the reported illegal construction of settlements and expansion of existing ones, archaeological excavations,

and interventions at Al-Ibrahimi Mosque/The Tomb of the Patriarchs without consultation, have not been the subject of Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) nor notification to the World Heritage Centre in conformity with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines. In accordance with paragraphs 118b and 172 of the Operational Guidelines, details of any significant conservation and development project, including HIAs, prepared in conformity with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessment in a World Heritage Context, should be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, before any decisions that would be difficult to reverse.

On 15 May 2025, an online meeting was organized by the World Heritage Centre to discuss with the experts of the State of Palestine the concerns raised with regard to Israel's reported plan to install a permanent cover for the courtyard of Al-Ibrahimi Mosque/The Tomb of the Patriarchs. In order to enable a thorough technical review of this matter, in line with the Operational Guidelines, more detailed information about the current state of the property, notably that of Al-Ibrahimi Mosque/The Tomb of the Patriarchs, and any interventions, whether planned or ongoing, is necessary. It is therefore recommended that a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission is invited to the property, with the purpose of assessing the state of conservation of the property and providing technical advice to the State Party on the way forward concerning any interventions at Al-Ibrahimi Mosque/The Tomb of the Patriarchs, including the possible installation of a cover for the courtyard, and potential impact on the OUV.

In the meantime, any action that would cause damage to the property and its OUV should be avoided. All possible measures should be taken to protect the property, in particular, refraining from physical damage and inappropriate new development or other projects and interventions within 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.45

The World Heritage Committee,

- 1. <u>Having examined</u> Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add.5, and the Annex attached to this decision,
- 2. Recalling Decisions 42 COM 7A.28, 43 COM 7A.29, 44 COM 7A.16, 45 COM 7A.38 and 46 COM 7A.25 adopted at its 42nd (Manama, 2018), 43rd (Baku, 2019), extended 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021), extended 45th (Riyadh, 2023) and 46th (New Delhi, 2024) sessions respectively,
- 3. <u>Decides</u> that the status of **Hebron/Al-Khalil Old Town** relating to the World Heritage List remains unchanged as reflected in Decision **41 COM 8B.1** of the World Heritage Committee.

ANNEX

The World Heritage Committee 47th session of the Committee (47 COM)

- 4. Having considered Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add.5
- 5. Recalling Decision **41 COM 8B.1** adopted at its 41st session (Krakow, 2017), which did not include a Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (SOUV), and noting that in compliance with Paragraph 154 of the Operational Guidelines, when deciding to inscribe a property on the World Heritage List, guided by the Advisory Bodies, the Committee adopts a SOUV for the property,

- 6. <u>Taking note</u> of a further-revised draft SOUV, the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) and the related corrective measures provided with the state of conservation report submitted by the State Party,
- 7. <u>Also takes note</u> of the Management and Conservation Plan (MCP) for the property and <u>requests</u> that once the SOUV for the property is adopted and the DSOCR is finalised, the MCP be amended in collaboration with UNESCO and the Advisory Bodies;
- 8. <u>Commends</u> the State Party for the actions which are being taken to conserve significant attributes of the property, including conservation and maintenance at Al-Ibrahimi Mosque/The Tomb of the Patriarchs, regular maintenance of historic buildings, conservation and adaptive reuse of Al-Jubeh house, and conservation of Al-Jabari house, as well as for initiatives for socio-economic benefits and awareness-raising for the local community;
- 9. <u>Deplores</u> the ongoing Israeli activities reported inside the Old City of Al-Khalil/Hebron, including the reported completion of an electric elevator in Al-Ibrahimi Mosque/The Tomb of the Patriarchs, the construction of settlements, archaeological excavations, demolition of commercial stores in Al-Hisbeh market and destruction of the arched and domed entrances at the historic bus station, which are illegal under international law and harmfully affect the authenticity and integrity of the site, and the subsequent denial of freedom of movement and freedom of access to places of worship, and <u>requests</u> Israel, the occupying power, to end all violations which are not in conformity with the provisions of relevant UNESCO conventions, resolutions and decisions:
- 10. Expresses its deep concern about reported planned interventions at Al-Ibrahimi Mosque / The Tomb of the Patriarchs, particularly a covering of the open courtyard, that could be carried out by Israel, the Occupying Power, without the consent of the State Party. In line with Paragraphs 118bis and 172 of the Operational Guidelines, such major interventions, potentially affecting the Outstanding Universal Value, authenticity, and integrity of the property, should be submitted in advance to the World Heritage Committee, with the required documentation, including Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs). Requests to refrain from any intervention, and that a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission be dispatched, as soon as conditions allow, to assess the state of conservation and provide technical advice on the proposed works and necessary conservation measures, ensuring full preservation of the property's Outstanding Universal Value.
- 11. <u>Encourages</u> the State Patry to submit a request for International Assistance under the World Heritage Fund to support the implementation of conservation measures at the property;
- 12. <u>Recalls</u> the need to submit to the World Heritage Centre, for review by the Advisory Bodies, detailed information on current conservation and development projects which have potential adverse impact on heritage, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines:
- 13. <u>Further requests</u> that all parties refrain from any action that would cause damage to the heritage values of the property and its Outstanding Universal Value, and to take all possible measures, in line with international law, to protect the property, in particular to refrain from physical damage, prevention of conservation projects, and inappropriate new development projects within the property and its buffer zone;

- 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>Also decides</u> to retain Hebron/Al-Khalil Old Town (State of Palestine) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

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

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2024

Criteria (ii)(iii)(vi)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger 2024-present

<u>Threats for which the property was inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger</u> Armed conflict

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

Corrective measures identified

Not yet identified

Timeframe for the implementation of the corrective measures

Not yet identified

Previous Committee Decisions see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1749/documents/

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1749/assistance/

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

N/A

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

Factors identified at the time of inscription of the property:

Armed conflict

Illustrative material see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1749/

Current conservation issues

Upon the simultaneous inscription of the property on the World Heritage List and the List of World Heritage in Danger in 2024, the Committee requested by 1 December 2025, or as soon as the situation allows, a report on the state of conservation of the property for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 48th session (Decision **46 COM 8B.44**). Hence, a report on the state of conservation of the property was not requested by the World Heritage Committee for its 47th session in 2025.

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

The State Party was not requested to provide a state of conservation report for the 47th session of the Committee.

Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that in April 2025, UNESCO adopted an updated Emergency Programme for the protection and safeguarding of cultural heritage in all its forms in the Gaza strip, including remote monitoring of cultural heritage sites using satellite imagery in coordination with UNITAR/UNOSAT, debris protection and management, emergency first aid actions and urgent structural stabilization for identified damaged properties as well as when possible on site verification of damages.

To date, the property was not directly damaged. However, human installations within the boundaries of the property as well as vast internal displacement represent an additional challenge for the sustainable protection of the property. The physical environment has indeed been impacted by the presence of internally displaced persons, over the past 18-months. Meanwhile, the governance structure that used to administer the property and the conditions of the communities living in the vicinity of the property have been in a state of constant change. This situation therefore necessitates a reassessment of the property's situation as soon as conditions allow.

The continuously deteriorating situation in the Gaza Strip has severely constrained conservation efforts for the Saint Hilarion Monastery. A draft Conservation and Management Plan (CMP), developed shortly before the conflict intensified, highlighted pre-existing issues such as inadequate urban planning and weak governance—challenges now compounded by the ongoing armed conflict.

UNESCO, in cooperation with potential donors and partners, is currently developing plans to support the protection and enhancement of the property, to be implemented as soon as conditions permit. These plans include the cleaning of the archaeological site and vegetation control measures to mitigate root damage to buried structures. They also foresee the upgrading of the property's interpretation and visitor information systems to reflect its inscription on the World Heritage List, once a Statement of Outstanding Universal Value has been approved, and to strengthen public appreciation of the property, particularly among local communities. Additional measures under consideration comprise the maintenance of the wooden pathway that facilitates visitor access, the monitoring, stabilization, and protective coverage of mosaics, as well as the design and construction of an interpretation center in accordance with World Heritage standards. Furthermore, UNESCO aims to support the inventorying and securitization of archaeological artefacts in the EBAF storage, with particular attention to items excavated from the property and currently at risk of damage or loss. This includes preventive measures to counter the illicit trafficking of cultural property within the property and the wider Gaza Strip.

In conclusion, it is pertinent to recall that in its inscription Decision (46 COM 8B.44), the Committee recommended that the State Party invites a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission, as soon as the situation on the ground allows, to establish a Desired state of conservation, and a programme of corrective measures, for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger, including emergency maintenance and urgent repairs to damaged site facilities, in order to mitigate any further deterioration. The access and security conditions on the ground have not yet allowed for a mission to be invited.

On 27 June 2025, the State Party has sent a letter to the Chairperson of the 47th session of World Heritage Committee, reporting "continued grave threats facing the Saint Hilarion Monastery", and indicating that the armed conflict "has devastated surrounding area, causing damage to the site's setting and buffer zone", which has led to the suspension of all conservation and monitoring measures. The letter requests that "Israel, the Occupying Power, to refrain from any actions that could harm, damage or otherwise negatively affect the integrity, authenticity or conservation status of the site".

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

Draft Decision: 47 COM 7A.47

The World Heritage Committee,

- 1. Having examined Document WHC/25/47.COM/7A.Add.5,
- 2. Recalling Decision 46 COM 8B.44, adopted at its 46th session (New Delhi, 2024),

- 3. <u>Expresses deep concern</u> about the potential threats facing the property;
- 4. <u>Recommends</u> that the State Party invites a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission, as soon as the situation on the ground allows, to further assess the state of conservation and establish a Desired State of Conservation, and a program of corrective measures, for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger;
- 5. <u>Encourages</u> the Secretariat to continue its active monitoring efforts and to develop new partnerships for the preventive conservation and emergency protection of the property, including the prevention of illicit trafficking within the property;
- 6. <u>Calls</u> on all State Parties to provide urgent financial support for the implementation of UNESCO's Action Plan for Gaza, including the protection and conservation of property through voluntary contributions;
- 7. <u>Calls</u> upon Israeli authorities to take all necessary measures to protect and conserve the site, including preventing any harm, degradation, or alterations;
- 8. <u>Requests</u> to refrain from any actions that could harm or adversely affect the integrity and authenticity of the Saint Hilarion Monastery / Tell Umm Amer;
- 9. Recalls its request to the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre by 1 December 2025, or as soon as the situation allows, a report on the state of conservation of the property for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 48th session;
- 10. <u>Decides</u> to retain Saint Hilarion Monastery/ Tell Umm Amer (State of Palestine) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.