



World Heritage

40 COM

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UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC
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CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF
THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE
WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Fortieth session

Istanbul, Turkey

10-20 July 2016

**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 report on the state of conservation of the property 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/40COM/documents>

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

Decision required: The Committee is requested to review the state of conservation reports. The Committee may wish to adopt the draft Decision which will be presented during the session.

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13. ARAB STATES

Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls (site proposed by Jordan) (C 148 rev)

See Document [WHC/16/40.COM/7A.Add.2](#)

Birthplace of Jesus: Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route, Bethlehem (Palestine) (C 1433)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2012

Criteria (iv)(vi)

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

- Degradation of the architectural of the Church of the Nativity
- Development pressure

- Tourism pressure

Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger

Adopted, see page <http://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/6245>
Corrective measures identified

Adopted, see page <http://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/6245>
Timeframe for the implementation of the corrective measures In progress

Previous Committee Decisions see page <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1433/documents/>
International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1433/assistance/>
UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount provided: USD 723,000 from Italy (Emergency Action Plan 1997-1998; Conservation and Management Plan 2006-2010)

Previous monitoring missions N/A

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Degradation of the architectural complex of the Church of the Nativity
- Development pressure
- Tourism pressure
- Housing
- Impacts of tourism / visitor / recreation
- Management activities
- Management systems/ management plan
- Water (rain/water table)

Illustrative material see page <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1433/>
Current conservation issues

On 28 January 2016, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, which is available at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1433/documents>, and provides information on both projects that have been completed and those currently being implemented. These include:

- The roof restoration, installation of new windows, new doors, a new lifeline and new crosses was completed in March 2015. The report provides documentation consisting of technical reports from surveys and interventions for these, rationale and justification of the interventions, methodological approach, and a list of all documents and reports previously shared with the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS in this regard;
- On-going work includes interventions for the Narthex roof to address structural deformation with the construction of a steel structure above the existing vault system. The new structure is part of seismic retrofitting and stabilization efforts and will be finished by the end of June 2016;
- Additional interventions for the restoration of internal plasters and wall mosaics are also being implemented and expected to conclude by mid-2016;
- Project proposals are in progress for the restoration of wooden architraves, stone and mosaic floors, lighting, microclimate and smoke detection systems. Schedule for implementation hinges on securing adequate funding;
- Pilgrimage Route: several concept ideas to revitalize the area and address urban pressure and traffic have been developed, including the Manger Square tunnel, the Manger Square Village, the rehabilitation of Star Street, and the preparation of a comprehensive traffic and transportation plan for Bethlehem, but no precise projects have been submitted for review at this stage;
- No significant progress has been made on the development of the Management Plan, as qualified human resources and funding have not been secured. The State Party submitted an International Assistance request to fund the elaboration of the Management Plan; the panel requested the revision of the request;
- Plans are in motion to develop Regulatory Bylaws for the buffer zone, which are expected to address development pressure and negative expansions. No funds have been secured for this endeavour;
- Other projects implemented centred the rehabilitation of the Bethlehem Old market, of the Syriac hosh (readapted as a hotel), of the Qattan Square (public garden), and of the Manger Square.

The State Party invited a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Advisory mission to be carried out before the end of June 2016, and visit the restoration works before the removal of the scaffoldings.

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

Considerable progress has been made in addressing the conservation conditions of the Church of the Nativity that existed at the time of inscription. The technical implementation seems appropriate for the various interventions carried out to date, and the justification, rationale, and methodological approach provide useful information. Since the numerous results from analysis and surveys have been carried out and shared with the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS at separate moments in time, it has been a challenge to extract from these documents the comprehensive conservation approach and philosophy. Moreover, the long-term strategy for the architectural ensemble as a whole is still lacking. Therefore, it is crucial to develop an Integrated Conservation Plan for the architectural ensemble at this stage, before any new interventions are carried out that could impact the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property. The Conservation Plan should, as previously requested, systematize and integrate, in one synthetic document, information on the integrated assessment of conditions, clear prioritized conservation interventions, including ongoing and future measures, with timeframes for implementation. This document should include the wall mosaics, the frescoes, the pavement mosaics, and any other relevant elements or parts of the church. The plan should also include measures for presentation and interpretation, if necessary, as well as environmental control measures, including lightning, microclimates, among other, risk preparedness and maintenance and monitoring measures, including fire prevention, that will be required to ensure the long term conservation of the architectural ensemble. In this regard, the joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Advisory mission, foreseen end of June 2016, will allow evaluating the restoration and consolidation works that have been undertaken, and defining jointly with the State Party the exact contents of the Conservation Plan

and related future measures.

The same approach should be carried out for the urban components of the property, currently either in implementation or at the concept development stages, such as for the Pilgrimage route and other elements related to the World Heritage property.

The development of the Management Plan of the property is crucial to address on-going concerns related to development and tourism pressures, as well as other issues such as housing and traffic. Although the Regulatory Bylaws are important elements to address some of these concerns, these need to be integrated and enforced with overarching management policies for the whole of the property and its setting, which should be defined during a participatory and multi-stakeholder management planning process. Finally, the need to submit large-scale projects, such as the Manger Square tunnel and the Manger Square Village, for review should be reiterated. It is best to discuss these at the earliest possible conceptual level to avoid costly revisions after designs have already been made.

Draft Decision: 40 COM 7A.14

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/16/40.COM17A.Add,

2. Recalling Decision **39 COM 7A.28**, adopted at its 39th session (Bonn, 2015),

3. Notes that conservation works for the roof of the Church of the Nativity have been completed and acknowledges the progress made in addressing conservation conditions at the architectural ensemble and the rehabilitation works undertaken at other areas in the property;

Also notes that a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Advisory mission will be carried out at the property and will allow evaluating

4. restoration works that have been carried out at the Church of the Nativity, and discussing with the State Party the contents of an Integrated Conservation Plan for past and future interventions;

5. Requests the State Party to develop the Integrated Conservation Plan, as per the adopted corrective measures, which should include in one synthetic document, among other items, the following:

a) Systematized condition assessment that includes all existing condition recording surveys, analysis and historic documentation,

b) Identification of attributes which embody specific values according to the evolution of the ensemble and its character defining features,

c) Overarching conservation philosophy and specific principles for conservation interventions in accordance to the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property and other relevant local values,

d) Costed and prioritised conservation action plan for all component parts of the architectural ensemble with a timeframe for implementation,

e) Additional measures for presentation, interpretation, environmental control, fire prevention, risk preparedness, maintenance and monitoring;

6. Also requests to the State Party to prioritize and secure the necessary resources for the development of the Management Plan for the property and to provide an electronic and three printed copies of the Plan for review by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies;

7. Reiterates its request to the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, for review by the Advisory Bodies, concept proposals for the Manger Square Tunnel and the Manger Square village before plans are finalised or commitments made to their implementation;

8. Further notes the request made by the State Party to remove the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger but considers that the planned Advisory mission will allow discussing this request with the State Party to ensure full implementation of the corrective measures before the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger;

9. Further requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2017**, 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 41st session in 2017;

10. Decides to retain Birthplace of Jesus: Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route, Bethlehem (Palestine) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

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