

**The Permanent Delegation of the  
Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to UNESCO**

**The Permanent Delegation of the  
State of Palestine to UNESCO**

Paris, January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020

**Dear Madam Director-General,**

Since the inscription of "The Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls", upon the request of Jordan in 1981 on the World Heritage List and on the List of World Heritage in Danger in 1982, Jordan and Palestine were, and will always be, committed to the conservation and protection of the Holy City which has an outstanding universal value and a symbolic importance for the three monotheistic religions.

We regret to bring to your attention, one more time, another serious deterioration of the situation in the "Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls", Israel, the Occupying Power, installed for several days, construction scaffolds on the southern wall of Western Wall of Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Ash-Sharif in The Old City of Jerusalem in addition to the persistent illegal excavations. The "Ummayyad Palaces" near the wall of the Mosque, where these scaffolds were erected, continue to face intensive excavations and hundreds of square meters of wooden and metal pathways.

These works and excavations are illegals under UNESCO conventions namely the 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage and the Hague Convention of 1954, for the protection of Cultural Property in the event of Armed Conflict.

Israel, the Occupying Power, is systematically imposing new metal structures around the Old City of Jerusalem that will certainly create a visual impact on the site and will irreversibly alter the distinctive character of the Holy City and its status-quo. In our joint letter dated March 9, 2018, we brought to your attention the extensive works at three locations near the Damascus Gate and the construction of a watchtower checkpoint for the Occupying Power at the entrance of the Gate.

We would like to reaffirm, in this regard, the obligation of Israel, the Occupying Power, to respect the integrity, authenticity and cultural heritage of Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Ash-Sharif, as reflected in the historic status quo, as a Muslim holy site of worship and as an integral part of a world cultural heritage site.

In consideration of the aforementioned developments, all relevant decisions and resolutions of UNESCO which are directly pertinent to this issue, we urge you, Madam Director-General, to take the appropriate measures to halt these damaging projects in the Old City of Jerusalem, and remind Israel, the Occupying Power, to respect the exclusive authority of the Jordanian Awqaf Department on Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Ash-Sharif, and its

mandate that extends to all affairs relating to the un-impeded administration of Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Ash-Sharif, including maintenance, restoration, and regulating access.

We kindly ask you to inform us of the actions you intend to undertake vis-à-vis this project. We trust that your reaction to this serious violation would be commensurate with its importance.

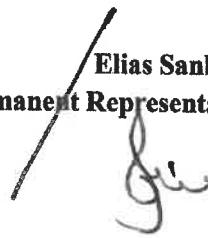
Madam Director-General, we kindly demand you to annex this letter to the appropriate working documents of the Executive Board at its 209<sup>th</sup> session and the World Heritage Committee at its 44<sup>th</sup> session.

Please accept, Madam Director-General, the assurances of our highest consideration.

**Makram Queisi**  
**Permanent Representative of Jordan**



**Elias Sanbar**  
**Permanent Representative of Palestine**



Cc: President of the General Conference  
President of the Executive Board  
President of the PX Commission  
President of the World Heritage Committee