



Paris, 29 April 2020

Madam Director General,

Please find attached a letter from Dr Riad Malki, minister of foreign affairs and expatriates of the state of Palestine, concerning the Israeli violations in Hebron.

We kindly ask you to annex the minister's letter to the appropriate working document of the executive board at its next 209th session.

Sincerely yours.

Mounir ANASTAS
Ambassador, Alternat Permanent Delegate

H.E. Mrs Audrey Azoulay
Director General of UNESCO
Office: 6.022

CC: President of the General Conference
Chair of the Executive Board



State of Palestine
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates
Minister



Ramallah, April 28th 2020

H. E. Audrey Azoulay
Director General of UNESCO

Excellency,

I am writing to bring to your urgent attention the decision of Israel, the occupying power, to confiscate lands belonging to Islamic Waqf in the Ibrahimi Mosque in the occupied city of Hebron. As you know, the old town of Al-Khalil/ Hebron, including the Ibrahimi Mosque, were inscribed on the World Heritage List and the List of World Heritage in Danger in 2017. This status entails responsibilities incumbent upon the international community, including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), to ensure protection of said sites and exert political, diplomatic, and legal pressure on Israel, the occupying power, to save Al-Khalil from the systematic Israeli tampering with the City's status, character, and demographic composition.

This latest illegal Israeli measure is part of a longstanding Israeli policy of violating Palestinian political, human, economic, and cultural rights with impunity. Israel, the occupying power, has employed a long term system of illegal policies and practices that effectively de facto annex the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. These policies include land confiscation, altering the demographic composition of cities and geographic regions, and the entrenchment of the colonial settlement regime which is taking place in the heart of the old town of Hebron. It has committed these violations, including the destruction and appropriation of cultural sites, in violation of international laws since Israeli occupation in 1967, in grave violation of the 1954 Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its additional protocols, the 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural





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and Natural Heritage, and the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transport of Ownership of Cultural Property.

In this context, we remind that the United Nations Security Council reaffirmed the inadmissibility of territorial acquisition by use of force in resolution 232 (1970), which is a preemptory norm in international law. Additionally, the United Nations Security Council has repeatedly called on the Israeli occupation to abide by its obligations and responsibilities under international law, including international humanitarian law, and has affirmed that realities resulting from annexation shall not be recognized due to their illegality. Such resolutions are also complemented by United Nations General Assembly resolutions that have repeatedly affirmed the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and independence, including the Palestinian people's right to sovereignty over their natural resources, as well as the standing legal obligation to respect the territorial integrity of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

In light of the above and in light of UNESCO's responsibility to support Palestine's sovereignty and control over its cultural heritage and to exercise sovereign rights over its territory for the purpose of administering heritage sites, we ask that you take proactive measures to stop this dangerous development threatening Al-Khalil and to protect it from all acts of aggression, alteration, and destruction. We expect a stern condemnation from your office and look forward to your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,

Dr. Riad Malki
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates
State of Palestine

