



Paris, May 18th 2020

Madam Director General, *sten amic*

Despite the COVID-19 crisis that the international community is facing, Israel, the occupying Power, did not stop its violations in the Occupied Territory of Palestine. On the contrary, it has increased the scope and extent of these violations, including in the fields of competence of UNESCO.

In this regard, I regret to bring to your attention the most recent decision of Israel, the occupying Power, which is the construction of an elevator in the Al-Haram Al-Ibrahimi in the Old City of Hebron/Al-Khalil as well as other major structural transformations in and around the property. These transgressions are occurring in spite of the fact that *The Old City of Hebron/Al-Khalil* is inscribed on the World Heritage List in Danger since 2017 on the request of the State of Palestine.

On the 22nd of November 2019, my delegation communicated to the director of the World Heritage Centre a protest letter and concerns raised by the Director of the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee about the plan of structural transformations including an elevator in and around the Al-Haram Al-Ibrahimi /Tomb of the Patriarchs.

Such a plan is already and *per se* a serious violation of the provisions of the 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, particularly Article 5 as well as Article 6.3 of the 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage and its Operational Guidelines.

In addition to the violations of the above-mentioned UNESCO Conventions, the decision published a few days ago to implement a project of structural transformation, including the installation of an elevator in the mosque, will have an irreversible impact on the integrity and authenticity of the property, including a significant visual impact on the site. Such a project will also affect the unique and distinctive character of the Site that the inscription on the WHL in Danger aims to protect.

In light of the above-mentioned factors in relation to the planned construction, we kindly ask you to demand that Israeli authorities cease and desist these plans and comply with relevant UNESCO conventions.

Further, we kindly ask you to inform us of the actions you intend to undertake vis-à-vis the occupying power, Israel, to uphold your mandate in preserving the principles and legal texts of UNESCO, as well as the importance our Organization attaches to the protection of cultural properties and properties inscribed on the WHL in Danger.



We trust that your reaction to this violation would be commensurate with its gravity. A statement from you on this issue would be very effective

Finally, Madam Director-General, we kindly ask that you annex this letter to the appropriate working document of the executive board at its 209th session.

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

cr de nos respects

Elias Sanbar

Ambassadeur, délégué permanent

E. Sanbar

Madam Audrey Azoulay
Director General of UNESCO
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CC: President of the General Conference
Chairperson of the Executive Board

*P.S. Parfois pour cette mise en page
on résulte d'un dommage
collatéral du virus qui
m'oblige de nos bureaux...*