



17 June 2020

**Ernesto Ottone R.
Assistant Director General for Culture
UNESCO**

REF: CLT/WHC/JER/20/05

Dear Mr. Ottone,

Thank you for your letter of 22 May regarding the "Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls" as a World Heritage Property.

Pursuant to your request, we have approached the relevant Israeli authorities with regard to the issue of future public transportation projects in the vicinity of the Old City of Jerusalem (specifically the extension of the Tel Aviv – Jerusalem train track to the Western Wall and the introduction of a cable car, as mentioned in your letter).

The information we received in response indicates that both initiatives are planned to be located outside the borders of the Heritage site. It is important to note that the borders of this UNESCO World Heritage Property are the Old City's walls, with no buffer zone between them and their immediate surroundings. Furthermore, the experimental drilling related to the extension of the Tel Aviv – Jerusalem railway mentioned in your letter, was



executed far from the World Heritage property and its walls. Finally, in order to safeguard the World Heritage property, tentative plans to access the Old City of Jerusalem by railway were suspended.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, any plans or arrangements intended to improve access to the property will be conducted while taking into account the unique cultural and historical value of the Old City of Jerusalem to all peoples and religions, with the aim of preventing any damage to the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage property.

In light of the extraordinary importance which Israel attributes to the preservation of the Old City of Jerusalem, we regret that unsubstantiated claims and accusations are repeatedly raised in relation to Israel. It is therefore our hope that any future communication delivered through UNESCO's WHC concerning Jerusalem will be thoroughly reviewed before its submission to Israel.

Yours sincerely,

Eli Lev

Ambassador of Israel to International Organizations