



Paris, February 5, 2021.

Madam Director-General,

I am writing you once again to bring to your urgent attention the relentless illegal practices of the Israeli occupying power in the Old Town of Hebron/Al-Khalil, specifically the Ibrahimi Mosque/Tomb of the Patriarchs. The Old Town of Hebron/Al-Khalil was inscribed in 2017 on the UNESCO World Heritage List in danger.

Last week, the Israeli occupying authorities have prevented the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee from completing the restoration and maintenance work at the Ibrahimi Mosque/Tomb of the Patriarchs, claiming that the Committee did not obtain the needed permit for the restoration work. This is a blatantly false claim since any work undertaken inside the Mosque is within the powers of the Ministry of Waqf and Religious Affairs, in coordination with the Committee. These pertinent authorities have indeed issued the required permits.

This obstruction and unlawful intervention in the work of Waqf authorities is part of a pattern of behavior by the occupying power, which endeavors to obstruct the Waqf work in the Ibrahimi Mosque/Tomb of the Patriarchs as well as create unbearable living conditions for Palestinians inside Hebron's Old City through a myriad of well-documented draconian and unlawful measures.

The obstructionist actions of the occupying power are thus clearly in violation of its international obligations as an occupying power and as a State Party to the Hague Convention of 1954 for the protection of Cultural Property in the event of Armed Conflict and the 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage. This includes Israel's obligation not to take any deliberate measures that might damage, directly or indirectly, the Ibrahimi Mosque/Tomb of the Patriarchs, which is a protected cultural site situated in the territory of another state party.

Despite the difficulties, the State of Palestine will not waver in carrying out its duties to use all the legal avenues available to protect world heritage sites in Palestine, including the Ibrahimi Mosque/Tomb of the Patriarchs and the Old Town of Hebron.

Palestine once again urges your Excellency to take immediate action within your mandate and adopt proactive measures to protect the cultural and structural integrity of the Ibrahimi Mosque/Tomb of the Patriarchs and the Old Town of Hebron from destructive Israeli practices.

Madam Director-General, I kindly ask you to reflect the above-mentioned Israeli violations in the appropriate working document of the Executive Board at its next 211<sup>th</sup> session as well as in the appropriate working document of the World Heritage Committee at its next 44<sup>th</sup> session and to annex this letter to both working documents.

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

Ambassador Mounir Anastas  
Alternate Permanent Delegate

Ms. Audrey Azoulay  
Director General of UNESCO  
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Cc: President of the General Conference  
Chairperson of the Executif Board  
Assistant Director-General for Culture  
Chairperson of the World Heritage Committee