



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Executive Board

Two hundred and fourth session

204 EX/25

PARIS, 28 March 2018
Original: English

Item 25 of the provisional agenda

OCCUPIED PALESTINE

SUMMARY

This document is submitted pursuant to 202 EX/Decision 38, by which the Executive Board decided to include the item entitled "Occupied Palestine" in the agenda of the 204th session. The present document provides a progress report on developments since the 202nd session of the Executive Board.

There are no financial or administrative implications.

Action expected of the Executive Board: proposed decision in paragraph 15.



Job: 201800257

Sub-item I: “Jerusalem”

- 1 The Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls, a site inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list and on the list of World Heritage in Danger, is the sacred city of the three monotheistic religions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The historical, cultural and spiritual significance of Jerusalem, as a microcosm of humanity’s diversity is, in itself, an appeal for dialogue.
- 2 Pursuant to relevant decisions of the Executive Board and the World Heritage Committee, UNESCO sought to facilitate exchanges between Israeli, Palestinian, Jordanian and Waqf experts regarding the protection of the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls, including to facilitate the UNESCO Reactive Monitoring Mission to the Old City and a UNESCO experts meeting on the Mughrabi Ascent.
- 3 At the time of the preparation of this document, the monitoring mission and experts meeting could not be undertaken.
- 4 Following the agreement signed between UNESCO and the Norwegian Government in December 2011 on the project entitled “The Safeguarding, Refurbishment and Revitalization of the Islamic Museum of Haram al Sharif and its Collection”, UNESCO has deployed its assistance to build the Centre’s staff capacities in the preservation of Islamic manuscripts. Since the outset of the project, 10 staff of the Centre have been granted permanent staff positions and 14 learning modules were implemented, with over 1,538 hours of training on conservation and restoration techniques, in addition to study tours to restoration centres in Paris and Florence in 2013. The project also provided the Centre with conservation equipment and materials. UNESCO conducted seven monitoring and consultation missions during the project implementation period. The stakeholders are currently discussing a possible new phase of the project.
- 5 The project entitled “The Safeguarding, Refurbishment and Revitalization of the Islamic Museum of Haram al Sharif and its Collection”, funded by Saudi Arabia, is currently on hold pending additional funding to complete the proposed museographical and scenographical planning, which was approved in March 2015 by the Awqaf authorities. A follow-up mission took place in June 2015. The re-opening of the Museum will depend on the availability of additional funds, and is foreseen beyond 2018.

Sub-item II: “Reconstruction and development of Gaza”

- 6 Despite protracted conflict, Gaza maintains satisfactory basic education attainment level and a strong literacy rate, which grew from 94% in 2006 to 97% in 2016.
- 7 On 22 November 2017, with UNESCO as technical advisor, the Education Sector Working Group, co-led by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) and Finland, could meet in Gaza for the first time since its establishment and review the most pressing needs and urgent priorities for Education in Gaza. MoEHE launched a plan to build 100 new schools and adopted a work-plan aimed at integrating key developmental trends in the fields of regulations, planning and system management and at bridging main gaps in school infrastructures and in learning environment (opening of kindergarten classes in public schools, integration of vocational education into general education, extra-curricular activities, and provision of resource rooms).
- 8 The ability of UNRWA to continue delivering its primary education and schooling services serving over 240,400 students through its 252 schools is seriously threatened by drastic funding reduction, with still unfolded impacts on the overall Education system in Gaza. Shrinking funding is also limiting UNESCO’s capacity to support quality and inclusive education in Gaza.
- 9 During the reporting period, however, UNESCO continued to support vulnerable university students (with 60% girls and women) in Gaza through the two “Prince Nayef bin Abdel Aziz” community libraries operating in the Gaza Strip (in Gaza City and in Khan Younis), funded by the

Saudi Committee for the Relief of Palestinian People (provision of research facilities, textbooks and other resource materials).

10. UNESCO promoted inclusive and child-friendly education in Gaza, by delivering training of trainers (ToT) modules on inclusive education, carried out in December 2017 for supervisors and school counsellors in 14 selected public schools benefitting 451 teachers working in grades 1-4 schools.

11. Within the framework of the International Fund for Promotion of Culture (IFPC), UNESCO supported a series of live contemporary dance theatre performances in Gaza, through the Theatre Day Productions in Gaza. Theatre dance and drama training modules have been provided to 20 actors and to more than 50 trainees, followed by seven stage performances attended by a large youth audience. A newly and specially produced theatre-dance piece, focusing on the resilience of the Gazan population during the ongoing protracted crisis, has also been produced with 20 live performances on stage and the participation of thousands student audience. The activity was also a mean to fight against gender-related stereotypes and prejudices through theatre creativity.

12. As part of the sixth annual global celebration of the “Media and Information Literacy (MIL) Week” started in October 2017, a special training on Human Rights campaigns through UNESCO-developed media information literacy curricula and manuals has been conducted in Gaza on 22 and 23 January 2018, with the participation of young media professionals, two-thirds of which were women.

13. Please also refer to the document “Implementation of 39 C/Resolution 55 and 204 EX/Decision 26 concerning educational and cultural institutions in the occupied Arab territories”.

Sub-item III: “The two Palestinian sites of *Al-Ḥaram al-Ibrāhīmī/Tomb of the Patriarchs* in Al-Khalīl/Hebron and *Bilāl ibn Rabāḥ Mosque/Rachel’s Tomb* in Bethlehem”

14. Following the inscription of Hebron/Al-Khalīl Old Town on the World Heritage List, as well as on the List of World Heritage in Danger, at the 41st session of the World Heritage Committee (July 2017), the Secretariat received an International Assistance request by Palestine on 30 October 2017. Its evaluation by the International Assistance Panel is underway and will be reported upon at the next World Heritage Committee meeting in Manama, Bahrain (24 June-4 July 2018).

Proposed decision

15. The Executive Board may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling previous decisions concerning “Occupied Palestine”,
2. Having examined document 204 EX/25,
3. Decides to include this item in the agenda of its 205th session, and invites the Director-General to submit to it a follow-up report thereon.

ANNEX

During the reporting period, the following correspondence has been received by the Secretariat in relation to this Item:

Date	From	Subject
12 December 2017	Non-aligned Movement (NAM)	Jerusalem
6 January 2018	President of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Group at UNESCO.	Transmission of the Final Communiqué of the Extraordinary Islamic Summit Conference, on 13 December 2017
14 February 2018	Alternate Permanent Delegate of Palestine to UNESCO.	The Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls
6 March 2018	Permanent Delegate of Palestine to UNESCO and Permanent Delegate of Jordan to UNESCO.	The Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls
9 March 2018	Permanent Delegate of Palestine to UNESCO and Permanent Delegate of Jordan to UNESCO	The Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls
12 March 2018	Alternate Permanent Delegate of Palestine to UNESCO	Hebron/Al-Khalil Old Town



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ADDENDUM

ANNEX

During the reporting period, the following additional correspondence has been received by the Secretariat in relation to this Item:

Date	From	Subject
4 April 2018	Permanent Delegate of Israel to UNESCO	The Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls

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Job: 201800912



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204 EX/25 Corr.

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OCCUPIED PALESTINE

CORRIGENDUM

Paragraph 15 should read as follows:

1. Having considered document 204 EX/25 and the Annex to this decision,
2. Recalling its previous decisions concerning “Occupied Palestine”,
3. Decides to include this item in the agenda of its 205th session, and invites the Director-General to submit to it a follow-up report thereon.

ANNEX

Executive Board
Two hundred and fourth session

204 EX/PX/DR.25.2
PARIS, 6 April 2018
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Item 25: OCCUPIED PALESTINE

DRAFT DECISION

Submitted by, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Qatar and Sudan



Job: 201800964

The Executive Board,

1. Having examined document 204 EX/25,
2. Recalling the provisions of the four Geneva Conventions (1949) and their additional Protocols (1977), the 1907 Hague Regulations on Land Warfare, the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (1954) and its additional Protocols, the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970) and the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972), the inscription of the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls at the request of Jordan on the World Heritage List (1981) and on the List of World Heritage in Danger (1982), and the recommendations, resolutions and decisions of UNESCO on the protection of cultural heritage, as well as resolutions and decisions of UNESCO relating to Jerusalem, also recalling previous UNESCO decisions relating to the reconstruction and development of Gaza as well as UNESCO decisions on the two Palestinian sites in Al-Khalil/Hebron and in Bethlehem,
3. Affirming that nothing in the current decision, which aims, *inter alia*, at the safeguarding of the cultural heritage of Palestine and the distinctive character of East Jerusalem, shall in any way affect the relevant Security Council and United Nations resolutions and decisions on the legal status of Palestine and Jerusalem, including United Nations Security Council resolution 2334 (2016),

25.I Jerusalem

4. Reaffirming the importance of the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls for the three monotheistic religions,
5. Bearing in mind that all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, which have altered or purport to alter the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, and in particular the “basic law” on Jerusalem, are null and void and must be rescinded forthwith,
6. Also recalling the twelve decisions of the Executive Board: 185 EX/Decision 14, 187 EX/Decision 11, 189 EX/Decision 8, 190 EX/Decision 13, 192 EX/Decision 11, 194 EX/Decision 5.I.D, 195 EX/Decision 9, 196 EX/Decision 26, 197 EX/Decision 32, 199 EX/Dec.19.1, 200 EX/Decision 25 , 201 EX/Decision 30 and 202 EX/ 25 and the eight World Heritage Committee decisions: 34 COM/7A.20, 35 COM/7A.22, 36 COM/7A.23, 37 COM/7A.26, 38 COM/7A.4, 39 COM/7A.27, 40 COM/7A.13, and 41 COM/7A.36;
7. Regrets the failure of the Israeli occupying authorities to cease the persistent excavations, tunneling, works and projects in East Jerusalem, particularly in and around the Old City of Jerusalem, which are illegal under international law and reiterates its request to Israel, the occupying Power, to prohibit all violations which are not in conformity with the provisions of the relevant UNESCO conventions, resolutions and decisions;
8. Also regrets the Israeli refusal to implement the UNESCO request to the Director-General to appoint a permanent representative to be stationed in East Jerusalem to report on a regular basis about all aspects covering the fields of competence of UNESCO in East Jerusalem, and reiterates its request to the Director-General to appoint, as soon as possible, the above-mentioned representative;
9. Stresses again the urgent need to implement the UNESCO reactive monitoring mission to the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls, and invites the Director-General and the World Heritage Centre to exert all possible efforts, in line with their mandates and in conformity with the provisions of the relevant UNESCO conventions, decisions and resolutions, to ensure the prompt implementation of the mission and, in case of non-implementation, to propose possible effective measures to ensure its implementation;

25.II Reconstruction and development of Gaza

10. Deeply deplores the ongoing military developments around the Gaza Strip and their heavy toll of civilian casualties as well as their continuous negative impact in the fields of competence of UNESCO,;
11. Also deplores the continuous Israeli closure of the Gaza Strip, which harmfully affects the free and sustained movement of personnel, students and humanitarian relief items and requests Israel to immediately ease this closure;

12. Thanks the Director-General for initiatives that have already been implemented in Gaza in the fields of education, culture and youth and for the safety of media professionals, calls upon her to continue her active involvement in the reconstruction of Gaza's damaged educational and cultural components and reiterates, in this regard, its request to her to upgrade the UNESCO Antenna in Gaza and to organize, as soon as possible, an information meeting on the current situation in Gaza in the fields of competence of UNESCO and on the outcome of the projects conducted by UNESCO;

25.III The two Palestinian sites of *Al-Haram Al-Ibrahimi/Tomb of the Patriarchs* in Al-Khalil/Hebron and the *Bilal Ibn Rabah Mosque/Rachel's Tomb* in Bethlehem

13. Reaffirms that the two concerned sites located in Al-Khalil/Hebron and in Bethlehem are an integral part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and shares the conviction affirmed by the international community that the two sites are of religious significance for Judaism, Christianity and Islam;
14. Deplores the ongoing Israeli excavations, works, construction of private roads for settlers and of a Wall inside the Old City of Al-Khalil/Hebron which are illegal under international law and harmfully affect the authenticity and integrity of the site, and the subsequent denial of freedom of movement and freedom of access to places of worship and asks Israel, the occupying Power, to end all violations which are not in conformity with the provisions of relevant UNESCO conventions, resolutions and decisions;
15. Regrets the visual impact of the Wall on the site of Bilal Ibn Rabah Mosque/Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem as well as the strict ban on access of Palestinian Christian and Muslim worshippers to the site, and demands that the Israeli authorities restore the original character of the landscape around the site and lift the ban on access to it;

25.IV

16. Decides to include these matters under an item entitled "Occupied Palestine" in the agenda at its 205th session, and invites the Director-General to submit to it a progress report thereon.