

ICOMOS

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MONUMENTS ET DES SITES
CONSEJO INTERNACIONAL DE MONUMENTOS Y SITIOS
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ СОВЕТ ПО ВОПРОСАМ ПАМЯТНИКОВ И ДОСТОПРИМЕЧАТЕЛЬНЫХ МЕСТ

Our Ref.: PP/GJ/27

Paris, 31 March 2020

H.E. Mr Abbas MORTADA
Minister of Culture of Lebanon
Mme Curie Street
Verdun-Beirut
Lebanon

c/o
H. E. Ms Sahar Baassiri
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Arch. Sarkis el-Khoury,
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Your Excellency,

The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) is a non-governmental, not for profit international organization, committed to furthering the conservation, protection, use and enhancement of the world's cultural heritage. As an official Advisory Body to the World Heritage Committee for the implementation of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, ICOMOS evaluates nominations and advises on the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List and on other cultural heritage properties at risk.

ICOMOS International received on 22 February 2020 a Statement of Concern from the ICOMOS National Committee of Lebanon about the current condition of protection and preservation of the Promontory and the Commemorative steles of Nahr el-Kalb (Mount-Lebanon), inscribed since 2005 on the UNESCO Register of the Memory of the World, and also since 2019 on the Tentative List of UNESCO World Heritage properties. Therefore, its potential status as a World Heritage site deserves our special attention.

The construction activities on the promontory that are shown on the pictures attached to the ICOMOS Lebanon Statement (see attached) testify to the imminent and irreversible threat made to this historical site. ICOMOS is therefore seeking from you information on the measures of protection and preservation that have been adopted for this site. ICOMOS would also be interested to review any impact studies that may have supported your predecessor's decision in this matter. We also feel that it would be relevant to share these studies with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre.

In the meantime, ICOMOS strongly requests that all construction work on the site cease immediately until such time as an independent evaluation of the impact of the proposed works on the cultural significance of the site can be completed.

We recall the advisory, technical and scientific role of ICOMOS as an Advisory Body to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, and the support it can give to States Parties. Although, because of the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, ICOMOS is unable to ask its expert members to inspect the site, ICOMOS stands ready to assist your government in conserving this highly significant site for the people of Lebanon and the wider world.

Yours sincerely,



Peter Phillips
Secretary General