



United Nations  
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## Ramallah Office

**PRESS RELEASE**

2019/9

**Ramallah, 2 July 2019**

### **The site of the Birthplace of Jesus in Bethlehem removed from the List of World Heritage in Danger**



The World Heritage Committee, meeting in Baku since 30 June, decided to remove the World Heritage Site *Birthplace of Jesus: the Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route, Bethlehem* from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

The Committee said its decision was due to the high quality of work carried out on the Nativity Church, the restoration of its roof, exterior facades, mosaics and doors. It also welcomed the shelving of a project to dig a tunnel under the Manger Square and the adoption of a management plan for the conservation of the site.

After its adhesion to UNESCO in October 2011, Palestine ratified six UNESCO conventions and related protocols in the field of culture heritage protection. Palestine has made concrete achievements with regards to World Heritage since then, and listed its first World Heritage Site: Birthplace of Jesus: Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route, Bethlehem in June 2012. The site was added simultaneously to the List of World Heritage in Danger due to the poor state of conservation of the Nativity Church.

UNESCO Ramallah Office congratulates the Palestinian Authority and all stakeholders involved, and is very proud to having contributed to this great achievement. As was one of the corrective measures required for the removal of the site from the World Heritage in Danger list, UNESCO Ramallah Office provided technical and financial support to the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities in the preparation of the Conservation and



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Management Plan of the Site in line with the international standards. Furthermore, UNESCO Ramallah Office, through its cultural heritage rehabilitation programme, renovated two cultural heritage sites along the Pilgrimage Route, which contribute to the revitalization of the route and provide services for the community.

The Birthplace of Jesus: the Church of the Nativity and Pilgrimage Route, Bethlehem, Palestine, is situated 10 km south of Jerusalem on the site identified by Christian tradition as the birthplace of Jesus since the 2nd century. A church was first completed there in 339 CE and the edifice that replaced it after a fire in the 6th century retains elaborate floor mosaics from the original building. The site also includes Latin, Greek Orthodox, Franciscan and Armenian convents and churches, as well as bell towers, terraced gardens and a pilgrimage route.

The List of World Heritage in Danger is designed to inform the international community of conditions which threaten the very characteristics for which a property was inscribed on the World Heritage List, -be they due to armed conflicts, natural disasters, unplanned urbanization, poaching, pollution or other - and encourage corrective action.

For more information on UNESCO's activities in Palestine, please visit [www.unesco.org/ramallah](http://www.unesco.org/ramallah) and visit us on : [UNESCO Ramallah Office](https://www.facebook.com/UNESCO.Ramallah).

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