



Palestine Association On Monuments And Sites *الجمعية الفلسطينية للمعالم و المواقع التاريخية*

National Committee of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)

Statement of Condemnation and Warning issued by the Palestine Association on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) regarding the raid on the Old Hebron Museum

The Palestine Association on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS Palestine) expresses its strong condemnation of the continuous assaults and deliberate targeting by the Israeli occupation forces on Palestinian museums through repeated raids and partial or total destruction, in addition to looting them and plundering their architectural possessions and heritage acquisitions. This comes within the context of Judaization schemes and attempts to erase cultural identity as part of a systematic policy of erasure and extermination of Palestinian cultural heritage.

Since the 7th of October 2023, Palestinian museums in the West Bank, Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip have witnessed a fierce aggression by Israeli occupation authorities in the form of multiple assaults and Judaization schemes. The last of these continuous assaults was the occupation authorities' raid on the Old Hebron Museum in the Old Town of Hebron, which is considered an architectural icon and a major monument in the World Heritage Property of the "Old Town of Hebron".



The Interpretive Museum – Old Town of Hebron

Address:
Studio 31, Deemas Bdg, 5th F,
Ramallah- Jerusalem st- Al Bireh
Postal Address:
ICOMOS- Palestine
P.O.Box (1333)- Ramallah, Palestine

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The museum is located within a prominent historical building at the entrance of the Old Town, distinguished by its unique architectural style and embodying a complete collection of heritage values. Its historical significance dates back to the British Mandate in Palestine (1917-1948), an architecturally significant period in Palestine that saw the entry of modern construction materials and methods, making the building an architectural model reflecting the features of that era. It is also prominent in aesthetic value, which is manifested in its architectural style and diverse elements of ornamentation visible on its walls and main entrance, in addition to its internal elements such as colorful decorated tiles, unique wooden features, and window specifications like wooden frames and stained glass. In addition, the building has a social and economic significance represented in the historical events relating to it, and its different uses throughout various ages. All these values assure the outstanding significance of this building and the importance of preserving it, and from here, the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee restored the building and utilized it as the Interpretive Museum that reflects the civilization of the Old Town of Hebron and its culture in the broader Palestinian context.

The museum today operates under the supervision of the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee since 2021¹, playing an active role as a cultural institute that seeks to transmit the city's history and culture to local and international visitors through interpretive materials, archaeological artifacts, exhibitions and culture education programs. Its exhibits include history, architecture and traditional crafts, displayed via images, video recordings and interpretive exhibition media, in addition to hosting a group of archaeological artifacts and materials that represent the different historical phases of the city's history.



Part of the archaeological artifacts in the interpretive museum

¹ <https://www.facebook.com/p/%D9%85%D8%AA%D8%AD%D9%81-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AE%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%85%D8%A9-Old-Hebron-Museum-100075684947930/>

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Local and international visitations to the museum

On March 4th 2026, at around 3:00am, an Israeli force raided the interpretive museum through the rooftops of neighboring residential buildings – where it stormed the buildings and broke through the door leading to the rooftop. During the raid, soldiers brought in mattresses and occupied the building for a period of time, converting it into a temporary military outpost, without any legal justification. 24 hours later, the force withdrew from the museum after confiscating the keys to the facility, which constitutes a dangerous violation of the site's sanctity and safety, threatening possible material damages and theft, sabotage, destruction or loss of its artifacts. The closure of the museum has also deprived the local community and visitors from reaching this important cultural and educational monument.



Images showing of the raid on the interpretive museum by the Israeli occupation forces from the roof

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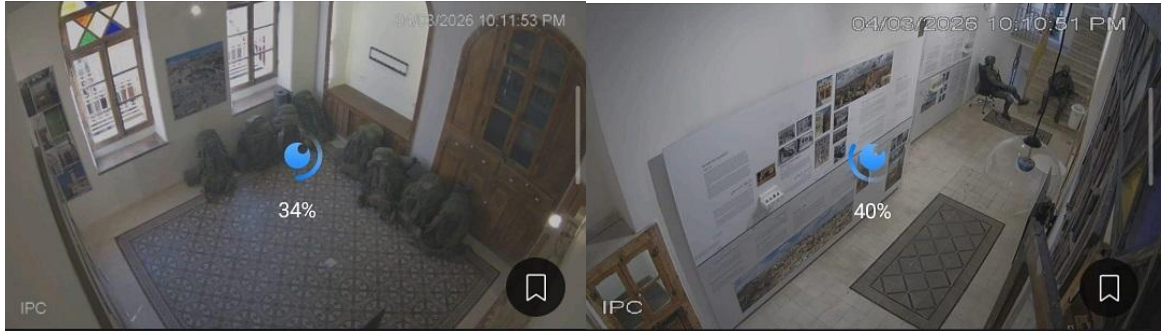
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Images showing parts of the raid on the interpretive museum by the Israeli occupation forces from inside

The raid and closure of the museum resulted in many negative consequences that threaten the historical building and its archaeological acquisitions, the local community and visitors, and the administration of the site in general. The museum's proximity to a number of Israeli occupation settlements forms an additional threat, as the building could be seized to facilitate the expansion of these settlements (Attachment (1)). The raid exposes the building to material damages and gravely endangers archaeological artifacts, threatening their destruction, shatter, theft or loss. Moreover, its closure deprives the local community and visitors from reaching it, undermining its role as a center for cultural and educational consciousness. This condition also disrupts the daily management of this World Heritage Property, as the museum is located at the entrance to the Old Town and along its main tourist route.

Thus, this assault constitutes a flagrant violation of the binding international agreements, at the forefront of which are the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and the Hague Convention of 1954 regarding the protection of cultural acquisitions in the case of disarmament, and the UNESCO agreements of 1970 and 1972 regarding the protection of cultural and natural heritage. It also constitutes a violation of the obligations of protecting shared human heritage, as the Old Town of Hebron is enlisted in the World Heritage in Danger List since 2017.

The Palestine Association on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS Palestine) calls on the international community, UNESCO, World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS International, and the global diplomatic system to assume their legal and moral responsibilities towards Palestinian heritage sites, at the forefront of which are museums, considering them institutes that preserve collective memory and civilizational identity. It calls for an urgent intervention for the cessation of violations by the Israeli occupation against the interpretive museum, provision of international protection for the building and the archaeological artifacts it

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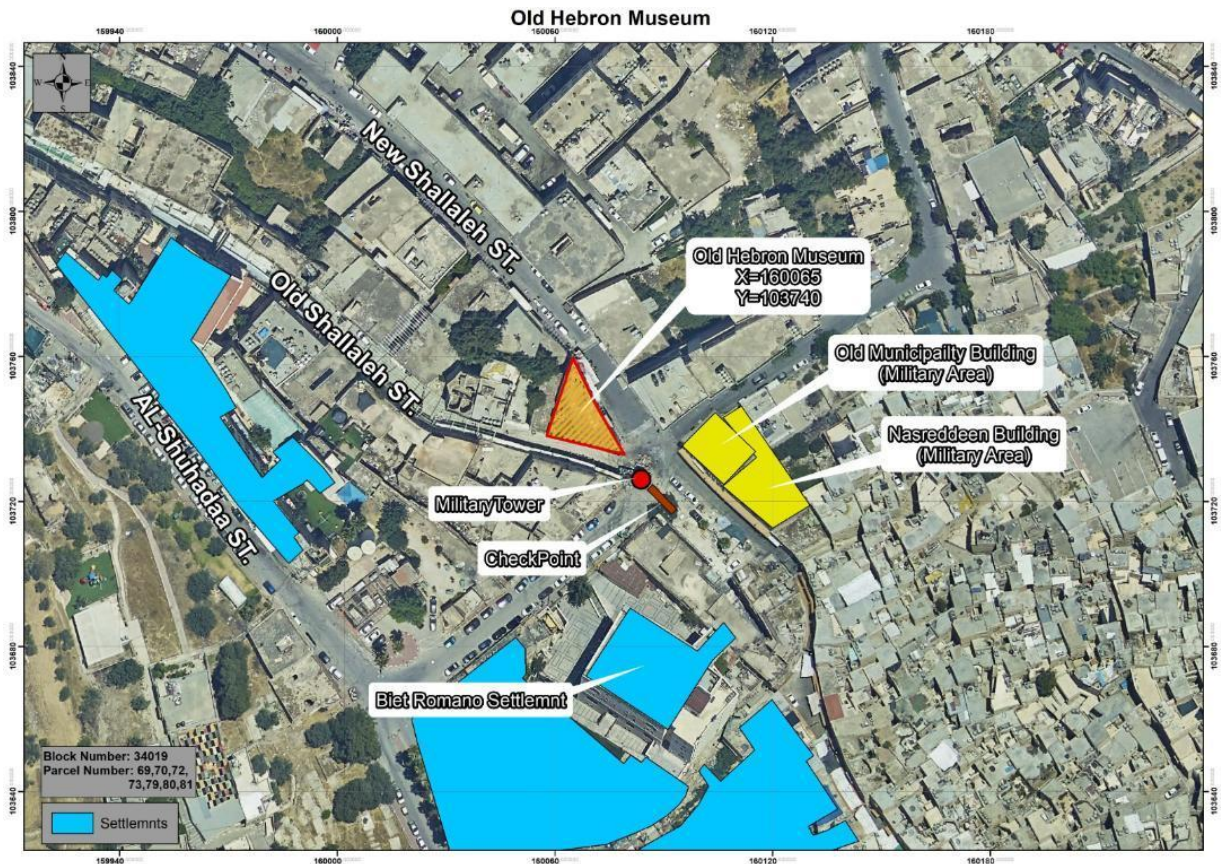
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contains, and standing in opposition against the occupation's schemes of Judaizing and seizing it. The Association assures that the continuation of these violations constitutes a direct threat to Palestinian cultural identity – an indivisible part of humanitarian identity – and undermines the system protecting and managing it. Thus, it holds the occupation authorities fully responsible for any possible damages on the museum and its artifacts, and calls on international and legal institutes to take deterrent procedures that guarantee the protection of this monument, preserving it intact for future generations.



Attachment (1): Map clarifying the presence of colonial occupation outposts and checkpoints in the vicinity of the interpretive museum

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