

## ISRAEL

### Preliminary Damage Assessment Report: Israel Heritage after the 2006 War

The Israel World Heritage Committee at its 3<sup>rd</sup> extraordinary session (20 August 2006) set up a taskforce to survey the damage ensuing from the current conflict and mainly the damage by Hezbollah rockets in Israel.

In general, the recent war in Lebanon has brought massive damage to the Galilee, the northern part of Israel, and in particular to sites from Mount Carmel and Beit Shean to Zefat and Acre. The northern part of Israel has a high concentration of heritage sites due to its continuous history of thousands of years.

Fortunately, no real damage was caused to the five sites inscribed on the World Heritage List. But several other monuments and sites were damaged by rockets:

- Meron Old Synagogue, located on a junction of Sasa/Zefat: A rocket hit close to the synagogue and set a fire which heated and cracked stones and walls.
- Crusader Fortress Hunin/Margaliyot, located in Margaliyot: A number of rockets fell into the centre of its courtyard and affected the walls and mortars of the stones.
- Nazareth: Rockets hit the city, but there was no damage to religious heritage.
- Old Zefat: The city was badly hit, although the extent of the damage cannot yet be estimated due to the unforeseen impact on the foundations and the city's infrastructure. An ancient 14th-century cemetery and the Abuav synagogue were directly hit. Old buildings in the Maayan area received a direct hit leading to severe cracks.
- Roman Mausoleum in Kefar Giladi: The fire damaged stones and walls.
- Tel Kadesh, located in the Metzudat Koah area: Fire caused by rockets affected all walls.
- Roman temple, located in National Park near Tel Kadesh: This site

was directly hit by several rockets. Walls and stones cracked.

- Haifa: Dozens of rockets hit the city directly. Some historic buildings in the old city were damaged, including the El Itaihad building, the building of the historic communist newspaper, which was completely destroyed.
- There are numerous historic museums scattered in the Galilee. Two of them were indirectly hit: Bat Galim (Haifa) and Kefar Giladi. The damage was to windows and glass cases for presentations

### Conclusion

The direct damage to archaeological sites is minimal. However, the indirect hits in the vicinity of these sites, including the effects of impact and fire, have severely damaged many of the sites mentioned above, especially stones and walls. The impact on the stability as well as on the exposure of the sites, including damage manifested in the chemical composition of the stone, has not yet been determined. Due to the dangers and risks some sites are now closed for visitors until the damage has been finally assessed and rectified.

*Abbreviated version of the damage assessment report submitted by the Israel National Commission for UNESCO, the Israel World Heritage Committee and ICOMOS Israel.*

(On the Middle East conflict and its consequences see also the Lebanon report, p. 107)

Hunin/Margaliyot, Crusader fortress



Old Zefat, cracks on an old building in the Maayan area





Roman temple in the National Park near Tel Kadash



Haifa, destroyed El Itaihad building



Kefar Giladi, remains of the Roman mausoleum affected by fire