

7 June 2026

---

## Urgent Alert

### **ICOMOS Lebanon Condemns Strike At the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Tyre, Recently Granted Enhanced Protection Under the Second Protocol of the 1954 Hague Convention: A Pattern of Deliberate Destruction That Can No Longer Go Unanswered**

---

#### **I. The Facts on the Ground**

ICOMOS Lebanon reports that Israeli airstrikes have today struck a location immediately on the entrance of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Ancient City of Tyre (Property No. 299, inscribed 1984). The target of the strike was a historical building and electricity generators abutting the main entrance of the World Heritage property, its administration offices, and its archaeological warehouses.

The entrance and administration buildings of the World Heritage Site have been directly damaged by the strike. The warehouses — which housed archaeological collections, artefacts, site documentation materials, and equipment — have sustained direct impact damage. The archaeological fabric of the site in the immediate vicinity of the strike is affected. The full extent of the damage to the archaeology cannot yet be determined, but it is confirmed: damage has occurred, and a detailed field assessment will be required to locate, document, and categorize it in its entirety.

A full and systematic damage assessment of the archaeology cannot be conducted until the security situation permits safe access to the site. ICOMOS Lebanon remains ready to assist in this assessment in coordination with the Directorate General of Antiquities and UNESCO Beirut at the earliest possible opportunity. What is already established, however, is unambiguous: the entrance precinct, warehouses, and administration buildings of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Tyre, the City Site Component, have been directly struck and damaged. The archaeology is affected. The assessment ahead will determine the extent — not the existence — of the damage.

This is not an isolated incident. It is the latest in a sequence of strikes on and around the Tyre World Heritage property that ICOMOS Lebanon has documented and reported:

- 23 October 2024: an Israeli airstrike struck the center of Tyre, landing 50 meters from the ancient ruins and destroying large sections of the city;

- 6 March 2026: an Israeli missile strike was confirmed to have landed within the buffer zone of the World Heritage property, near the Roman hippodrome; the Lebanese Ministry of Culture reported 'material damage' to the entrance of the site; an ICOMOS Lebanon expert confirmed the strike fell within the buffer zone;
- 28 April 2026: further strikes in the Tyre ruins district were reported; the Directorate General of Antiquities submitted formal complaints to UNESCO;
- 27 May 2026: ICOMOS Lebanon issued an Emergency Statement following IDF evacuation orders for the entire Tyre district and confirmation of strikes in the al-Athar neighborhood, adjacent to the ancient ruins;
- 7 June 2026: the present strike, directly targeting the entrance precinct, administration offices, and warehouses of the World Heritage property. Direct damage to the entrance, administration buildings, and archaeological warehouses is confirmed. Damage to the archaeology is confirmed; its full extent is subject to detailed on-site assessment, when the security situation permits.

Each of these events was reported. Each was documented. Each was the subject of formal complaints to UNESCO. The strikes continue.

---

## II. The Applicable Legal Framework

ICOMOS Lebanon reiterates the legal framework that governs this situation and which has been violated, repeatedly and apparently with impunity:

- The 1972 UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, Article 6(3): States Parties 'undertake not to take any deliberate measures which might damage directly or indirectly' World Heritage on the territory of other States Parties. Article 11(4) provides the mechanism for inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger for sites threatened by armed conflict — a threshold that Tyre has long since crossed.
- The 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, Article 4: parties must refrain from any act of hostility directed against cultural property [...].
- The Second Protocol to the 1954 Hague Convention (1999), Article 15: the intentional targeting of cultural property under Enhanced Protection — when it is not used for military purposes — constitutes a war crime. Tyre holds Enhanced Protection status. Its administration offices were not a military target. The warehouses of a UNESCO World Heritage site are not a military objective under any interpretation of international humanitarian law.
- UN Security Council Resolution 2347 (2017): the first resolution of the Security Council dedicated exclusively to the protection of cultural heritage in armed conflict, which determines that the deliberate destruction of cultural heritage constitutes a threat to international peace and security under Article 39 of the UN Charter.

**The World Heritage Site of the Ancient City of Tyre has now been directly struck. Its entrance, its administration buildings, and its archaeological warehouses have sustained confirmed damage. This is the latest in at least five documented strikes on or immediately adjacent to the property. At no point has it been established that the site, its administration offices, or its warehouses were used for any military purpose. The strikes are deliberate. They are illegal. And they must be investigated as war crimes.**

---

### III. The Crisis of Impunity

ICOMOS Lebanon does not issue this statement with the expectation that it will, alone, stop the destruction. We issue it because we have a professional, moral, and institutional obligation to bear witness — and because silence, in the face of this, would be a form of complicity.

The 1954 Hague Convention was drafted in the aftermath of the Second World War precisely to prevent what is happening in Tyre today. The Enhanced Protection mechanism was designed precisely for sites like the Ancient City of Tyre — sites of outstanding universal value, sites belonging not to one nation but to all of humanity. The List of World Heritage in Danger exists precisely for moments like this.

These instruments are not merely aspirational. They are binding law. And yet, site after site, week after week, the violations accumulate and the responses of the international community remain confined to statements of concern, calls for restraint, and expressions of alarm. Each unanswered violation emboldens the next. The destruction of Chamaa Citadel was followed by the demolition of the Holy Savior School in Yaroun. The strikes near the hippodrome in March were followed by the strikes at the entrance in June. Impunity is not a passive condition. It is a force multiplier.

ICOMOS Lebanon has, over the past months, transmitted formal Emergency Statements to ICOMOS International, UNESCO, the Lebanese Ministry of Culture, the Lebanese Permanent Delegation to UNESCO, the Directorate General of Antiquities, and the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court. We have documented the incidents. We have cited every applicable legal instrument. We have made every institutional appeal available to us.

We now call upon the international community — and particularly those bodies with the legal mandate and the institutional capacity to act — to move beyond documentation and toward enforcement.

---

### IV. Urgent Calls to Action

ICOMOS Lebanon renews and intensifies its calls upon:

#### UNESCO:

- To consider, along with the competent Lebanese authorities, the World Heritage Site of the Ancient City of Tyre on the List of World Heritage in Danger under Article

11(4) of the 1972 Convention. This mechanism was created for precisely this situation. Its continued non-activation in the face of five documented strikes on or adjacent to the property is a failure that demands explanation;

- To publicly name, without diplomatic equivocation, the violation of the World Heritage Convention that has occurred today;
- To dispatch an emergency field mission to Tyre as soon as the security situation permits, to conduct a full damage assessment in coordination with the Directorate General of Antiquities. ICOMOS Lebanon remains ready for any needed assistance.

### **The UN Security Council:**

- To invoke the binding mechanisms of Resolution 2347 (2017) and act on its own determination that the deliberate destruction of cultural heritage constitutes a threat to international peace and security;
- To mandate an independent international monitoring mission with access to affected heritage sites in Lebanon.

### **ALIPH, Blue Shield International, and the International Heritage Community:**

- To support in emergency documentation and stabilization efforts;
- To amplify this statement through every available channel and ensure that the destruction of the Ancient City of Tyre does not pass unnoticed or unremarked.

---

## **V. Conclusion**

The Ancient City of Tyre has stood for five thousand years. It survived the siege of Alexander, the conquests of the Crusaders, the Ottoman centuries, and the wars of the modern era. Its stones carry the memory of Phoenician sailors, Roman jurists, Byzantine bishops, and Lebanese families who have lived and died among its ruins across a hundred generations.

That heritage does not belong to Lebanon alone. It belongs to all of humanity. And humanity — through the instruments of international law it has created and ratified — has made a solemn commitment to protect it.

**That commitment is being broken. Today, again. And the question that the international community must now answer is not whether it has the legal tools to respond — it does. The question is whether it has the will.**

**ICOMOS Lebanon will continue to document, alert, and demand accountability — for as long as it takes.**

---

**On behalf of the ICOMOS Lebanon National Committee**

**Assaad Seif, President**

Date: 7 June 2026

Contact: [icomoslebanon@icomos.org](mailto:icomoslebanon@icomos.org)