



WORLD MONUMENTS FUND ANNOUNCES 2018 WORLD MONUMENTS WATCH

Includes 25 Cultural Heritage Sites at Risk from Economic, Political, and Natural Threats

For Immediate Release—New York, NY, October 16, 2017 — World Monuments Fund (WMF) today announced the 2018 World Monuments Watch, presenting a diverse group of cultural heritage sites that face daunting threats, including human conflict, natural disaster, climate change, and urbanization, or present unique conservation opportunities. The list features 25 sites spanning more than 30 countries and territories, dating from prehistory to the twentieth century.

Among the sites, the 2018 Watch includes areas affected by the recent string of hurricanes and earthquakes that will need emergency assessment and conservation for damaged cultural heritage ([Disaster Sites of the Caribbean, the Gulf, and Mexico](#)); a collection of little-known homes, churches and community centers in Alabama where pivotal events of the Civil Rights Movement took place ([Alabama Civil Rights Sites](#), United States); a once-vibrant marketplace burned amid fighting between the Syrian government and insurgents ([Souk of Aleppo](#), Syria); a trio of historic piers threatened by the effects of climate change ([Blackpool Piers](#), England); one of two remaining synagogues in a once-flourishing Jewish community ([Eliyahu Hanavi Synagogue](#), Alexandria, Egypt); a collection of vulnerable modern architecture conceived as hopeful symbols of a newly independent nation ([Post-Independence Architecture of Delhi](#), India); and the last-remaining rural passenger railway in Chile ([Ramal Talca-Constitución](#), Chile).

The biennial World Monuments Watch aims to protect history, preserve memory, and strengthen social bonds by bringing these sites and their challenges to an international stage and identifying opportunities for local communities to collaborate with preservation agencies, governments, and corporate sponsors.

“By building an international coalition, the World Monuments Watch protects both the sites themselves and the shared history they embody,” said Joshua David, President & CEO, WMF. “We may be best known for the excellence of our conservation practices, but the human impacts of our work ultimately mean the most. Sites like the 25 on the 2018 Watch are where we come together as citizens of the world and renew our commitments to justice, culture, peace, and understanding.”

American Express, the founding sponsor of the World Monuments Watch, continues to fund the Watch, as well as other initiatives taken on by WMF. The company's grants, totaling \$17.5 million for the Watch, have made a critical difference to conservation efforts at 166 sites in 71 countries.

"American Express is proud to continue partnering with WMF to save and sustain the world's most treasured places through the World Monuments Watch," said Timothy J. McClimon, President, American Express Foundation. "By protecting these endangered sites across the globe, we have the power to unite current and future generations around our collective history."

2018 Watch: Site Themes and Highlights

Conflict

In recent years, fueled by conflict and extremism, some of the world's oldest, heritage-rich cities have become battlegrounds, resulting in humanitarian and architectural devastation. The 2018 Watch recognizes four sites threatened, severely damaged, or destroyed by human conflict: [the Souk in Aleppo](#), Syria, a community hub burned during conflict; [the al-Hadba' Minaret](#) in Mosul, Iraq, an iconic landmark destroyed by ISIS; [the Old City of Ta'izz](#) in Yemen, an ancient city engulfed by war; and [Sukur Cultural Landscape](#) in Nigeria, a cultural landscape affected by Boko Haram. In listing these sites, WMF recommits itself to protecting heritage in conflict zones and strengthening communities around sustainable conservation.

Disaster Response

When disaster strikes, cultural heritage can be a vital force behind community resilience and a key component on the road to recovery. The 2018 Watch brings attention to [Disaster Sites of the Caribbean, the Gulf, and Mexico](#), recently affected by a string of devastating hurricanes and earthquakes, with the goal of mobilizing heritage conservation response following the urgent humanitarian measures undertaken in the immediate aftermath. The 2018 Watch also recognizes the town of [Amatrice](#), Italy, almost completely destroyed by a sequence of 2016 earthquake and, today, uninhabited and inaccessible. Through the 2018 Watch, WMF will continue to rebuild communities and put disaster-struck sites on the road to recovery.

Sites of Social Movement

The start of the Selma to Montgomery March. Refuge for a group of Freedom Riders. A bombing that brought national attention to a non-violent movement. These are just some of the events that took place

during the Civil Rights Movement at a collection of little-known homes, churches, and community spaces in Alabama, United States. Today, many are privately owned, architecturally unassuming, and located in areas of high poverty. Better appreciation, protection and resources for these historically significant sites are necessary. A local group has proposed designating these structures to a consortium representing this defining moment in American history. Placement of the [Alabama Civil Rights Sites](#) on the 2018 Watch seeks to ensure the physical survival of these structures and the protection of hundreds of stories of courage, freedom, and equality.

Climate Change

As the world grapples with the challenges posed by global climate change, the threat also raises important issues for the preservation of immovable heritage. The 2018 Watch recognizes [Blackpool Piers](#), historic seaside destinations in the United Kingdom, damaged by sea-level rise and strengthening storm surges. Privately owned, they are ineligible to receive public funding for rehabilitation. The Watch aims to expand dialogue and explore new conservation models with both local and international stakeholders.

Modern Sites

Modern sites around the world face unique challenges because of their young age and an all-too-common lack of appreciation of their cultural value. The 2018 Watch recognizes the [Post-Independence Architecture of Delhi](#), a collection of structures, including the recently demolished Hall of Nations, built by Indian architects and engineers following the country's 1947 independence. Because they are less than 60 years old, they do not qualify for heritage protection. Also included are the [Kagawa Prefectural Gymnasium](#), a modern landmark of Japan closed to the public due to rehabilitation and re-use challenges, and the [Sirius Building](#), a storied public housing building in Sydney, Australia, facing demolition if heritage protection is not granted. Through these sites, the 2018 Watch calls for amplified vigilance for modern landmarks everywhere and aims to broaden what the public sees as heritage worthy of protection.

Cultural Landscapes

Isolated, rural environments face a growing set of challenges, including economic systems that trigger depopulation, leaving aging residents struggling to maintain the built and natural heritage that define their daily lives. The 2018 Watch recognizes three cultural landscapes; the [Tebaida Leonesa](#), rural communities in Spain fighting to preserve the character of their villages and landscape in the face of growing tourism and development; the [Ramal Talca-Constitución](#), Chile's last-remaining rural passenger railway recently damaged by forest fires; and the [Matobo Hills Cultural Landscape](#) in Zimbabwe, one of the world's great

rock art collections threatened by deforestation and the risk of fires. Through these sites, the 2018 Watch calls for local and international action that will ensure the continuity of a way of life.

Visit wmf.org/2018watch to learn more.

Full List – 2018 Watch Sites

1. Disaster Sites of the Caribbean, the Gulf, and Mexico
2. Government House, St. John's, Antigua and Barbuda
3. Sirius Building, Millers Point, Sydney, Australia
4. Ramal Talca-Constitución, Talca Province, Chile
5. Grand Theater, Prince Kung's Mansion, Beijing, China
6. Eliyahu Hanavi Synagogue, Alexandria, Egypt
7. Takiyyat of al-Gulshani, Cairo, Egypt
8. Potager du Roi, Versailles, France
9. Post-Independence Architecture of Delhi, India
10. Al-Hadba' Minaret, Mosul, Iraq
11. Lifta, Jerusalem, Israel
12. Amatrice, Italy
13. Kagawa Prefectural Gymnasium, Takamatsu, Kagawa Prefecture, Japan
14. Jewish Quarter of Essaouira, Morocco
15. Sukur Cultural Landscape, Madagali Local Government Area, Nigeria
16. Historic Karachi, Pakistan
17. Cerro de Oro, Cañete Valley, Peru
18. Tebaida Leonesa, El Bierzo, León, Spain
19. Souk of Aleppo, Aleppo, Syria
20. Chao Phraya River, Bangkok, Thailand
21. Blackpool Piers, Blackpool, United Kingdom
22. Buffalo Central Terminal, Buffalo, New York, United States
23. Alabama Civil Rights Sites, Alabama, United States
24. Old City of Ta'izz, Ta'izz, Yemen
25. Matobo Hills Cultural Landscape, Matobo, Matabeleland South, Zimbabwe

Launched in 1996 and issued every two years, the **World Monuments Watch** calls international attention to threatened cultural heritage sites around the world. Watch-listing provides an opportunity for sites and their nominators to raise public awareness, foster local participation, advance innovation and collaboration, and demonstrate effective solutions.

The list is compiled by a panel of international heritage experts in the fields of archaeology, architecture, art history, and preservation.

Since the program's inception, more than 800 sites in more than 135 countries and territories—including those on the 2018 Watch—have been included. The international attention given to Watch sites provides a vital tool with which local entities may leverage funding from a variety of sources, including municipal, regional, and national governments; foundations; corporate sponsors; international aid organizations; and private donors. Since 1996, WMF has contributed \$105 million to date; while almost \$300 million has been allocated to the sites by other entities. In addition, Watch Day is a component of the program that aims to connect communities to their built heritage through public events. Learn more at wmf.org/watch.

###

American Express is a global services company, providing customers with access to products, insights and experiences that enrich lives and build business success. Learn more at americanexpress.com, and connect with us on facebook.com/americanexpress, instagram.com/americanexpress, linkedin.com/company/american-express, twitter.com/americanexpress, and youtube.com/americanexpress.

Key links to products, services and corporate responsibility information: [charge and credit cards](#), [business credit cards](#), [Plenti rewards program](#), [travel services](#), [gift cards](#), [prepaid cards](#), [merchant services](#), [Accertify](#), [corporate card](#), [business travel](#), and [corporate responsibility](#).

World Monuments Fund is the leading independent organization devoted to saving the world's treasured places. For 50 years, working in 100 countries, its highly skilled experts have applied proven and effective techniques to the preservation of important architectural and cultural heritage sites around the globe. Through partnerships with local communities, funders, and governments, WMF seeks to inspire an enduring commitment to stewardship for future generations. Headquartered in New York City, the organization has offices and affiliates worldwide. Visit www.wmf.org for more information, or connect with us on www.facebook.com/worldmonuments, www.twitter.com/worldmonuments, and instagram.com/worldmonumentsfund.

###

Press Contact:

Hillary Prim, Senior Manager of Communications, World Monuments Fund, +1-646-424-9582 or hprim@wmf.org

Images available upon request.