

World Heritage in Danger List

What is the List of World Heritage in Danger?

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)) compiles the list of World Heritage in Danger. The List contains world heritage sites that are threatened by various conditions such as natural disasters, armed conflicts, wars, pollution, unchecked urbanisation, poaching, and uninhibited tourist development.

- UNESCO maintains the list of World Heritage Sites recognising sites of distinctive cultural or physical importance which is considered of outstanding value to humanity.
- According to the [World Heritage Convention](#), the World Heritage Committee (that administers the Convention) adds World Heritage Sites to the danger list if the site satisfies one of the criteria in either of the two categories below.

Cultural Properties

Ascertained Danger

The property is faced with specific and proven imminent danger, such as:

- serious deterioration of materials;
- serious deterioration of structure and/or ornamental features;
- serious deterioration of architectural or town-planning coherence;
- serious deterioration of urban or rural space, or the natural environment;
- significant loss of historical authenticity;
- important loss of cultural significance.

Potential Danger

The property is faced with threats which could have deleterious effects on its inherent characteristics. Such threats are, for example:

- modification of juridical status of the property diminishing the degree of its protection;
- lack of conservation policy;
- threatening effects of regional planning projects;
- threatening effects of town planning;
- outbreak or threat of armed conflict;
- threatening impacts of climatic, geological or other environmental factors.

Natural Properties

Ascertained Danger

Potential Danger

The property is faced with specific and proven imminent danger, such as:

- A serious decline in the population of the endangered species or the other species of Outstanding Universal Value for which the property was legally established to protect, either by natural factors such as disease or by human-made factors such as poaching.
- Severe deterioration of the natural beauty or scientific value of the property, as by human settlement, construction of reservoirs which flood important parts of the property, industrial and agricultural development including use of pesticides and fertilizers, major public works, mining, pollution, logging, firewood collection, etc.
- Human encroachment on boundaries or in upstream areas which threaten the integrity of the property.

The property is faced with threats which could have deleterious effects on its inherent characteristics. Such threats are, for example:

- a modification of the legal protective status of the area;
- planned resettlement or development projects within the property or so situated that the impacts threaten the property;
- outbreak or threat of armed conflict;
- the management plan or management system is lacking or inadequate, or not fully implemented.
- threatening impacts of climatic, geological or other environmental factors.

For a [list of the World Heritage Sites in India](#), click on the linked article.

Significance of the List of World Heritage in Danger

Inscribing a site on the List creates awareness of the site and the dangers it faces. It alerts the international community to join forces in helping save the site for posterity. It will also enhance the preservation techniques and make them more efficient. Adding a site on the List also enables the World Heritage Committee to release finances from the World Heritage Fund for the conservation of the endangered property.

It has often been observed that the mere prospect of a site being inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger elicits rapid conservation action from the authorities concerned.

However, not all countries perceive an inscription on the List in the same way. Although some view it as a sort of sanction and a dishonour, there are others who apply for a site to be inscribed on the List so as to channel global attention towards it and get necessary help in conserving the site.

If a site loses the characteristics which determined its inscription on the World Heritage List, the World Heritage Committee may decide to delete the property from both the List of World Heritage in Danger and the World Heritage List.

Some examples of Sites on the List of World Heritage in Danger

The following are some of the sites that are on the List of World Heritage in Danger as of July 2021.

- Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley (Afghanistan)
- Historic Centre of Vienna (Austria)
- Garamba National Park (Democratic Republic of the Congo)
- Abu Mena (Egypt)
- Tropical Rainforest Heritage of Sumatra (Indonesia)
- Samarra Archaeological City (Iraq)
- Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls (Jerusalem, proposed by Jordan)
- Ancient Cities of Aleppo, Damascus, Bosra (Syria)
- Everglades National Park (USA)
- Old City of Sana'a (Yemen)

UNESCO has recommended to include the [Great Barrier Reef](#) of Australia to the List. The Reef faces severe environmental threats. Apart from pollution, coastal developmental activities and commercial activities such as limestone mining have also affected the corals.

The following sites from India have been delisted from the List:

1. Group of Monuments at Hampi: Listed from 1999 to 2006. The site was listed because of the partial construction of two cable-suspended bridges within the protected archaeological areas.
2. Manas Wildlife Sanctuary: Listed from 1992 to 2011. The reason was poaching and damage to the park's infrastructure and a reduction in the population of some species particularly the Greater One Horned Rhino following an invasion by militants of the Bodo tribe in 1992.