

Iran given another chance for Masouleh

Arts & Culture Desk

The "Masouleh Cultural Landscape" dossier failed to secure a vote in favor of its inclusion in UNESCO's World Heritage List, prompting Iran to address its shortcomings and potentially resubmit the dossier in upcoming sessions of the World Heritage Committee.

In the 45th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, the dossier was discussed but failed to secure approval due to opposition from the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS). This means that Iran has the opportunity to rectify the issues in the dossier and resubmit it in future committee meetings, IRNA reported. The proposed dossier was sent to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre based on consultations and approvals from the National Council for Registration of Monuments. It had been in the UNESCO World Heritage Site's tentative list since 2007, meeting acceptable conditions in terms of conservation and management. During the session, the dossier was met with criticisms by ICOMOS, with concerns raised about the lack of sufficient documents and records. As a result, ICOMOS recommended the dossier's rejection by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee and suggested a "Deferral" (for addressing dossier issues and reviewing in future sessions) and "Referral" (for addressing minor issues and re-evaluation without waiting for a specific session). However, the dossier transitioned from "Not Inscribed" to "Referral," allowing Iran to resubmit the dossier for potential world heritage listing. Nonetheless, representatives from Oman, the UAE, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Nigeria advocated for the dossier and called for a reconsideration of ICOMOS' recommendation. The Japanese representative, while recognizing the tourism appeal of Masouleh, also pointed out issues within the dossier and mentioned extensive debates between Iran and ICOMOS on the subject. The Russian representative at UNESCO recalled that most of ICOMOS' concerns arose during the COVID-19 pandemic, which affected communication and potentially led to doubts about the content.

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Cinema chief slams sanctions on cultural figures



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Head of Iran's Cinema Organization Mohammad Khazaei has strongly criticized Western countries for imposing sanctions on

Iranian cultural figures, including Iran's Culture Minister Mohammad Mehdi Esmaeili. In an open letter addressed to Western leaders, Khazaei denounced

these sanctions as an attack on Iranian culture and a futile attempt to undermine the country's rich heritage and deep-rooted Islamic beliefs, farhang.gov.ir re-

ported. The letter, made public by Iran's Cinema Organization, highlights Khazaei's concerns regarding the sanctions and their motivations. He argued that colonial powers not only exert control through military means but also employ intellectual and cultural strategies to continue their influence. The sanctions, in this case, target influential figures and media outlets that support Iran's cultural and religious values. Khazaei specifically mentions efforts by the UK and the US to impose sanctions on figures like Esmaeili, framing it as a new form of cultural imperialism. He noted that these powers aim to reproduce their soft power in society by silencing voices that advocate Iran's unique civilization, which spans thousands of years and is deeply rooted in Islamic beliefs, the teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt, and the culture of Ashura among others. The Iranian official asserted that the enemies of

Iran's cultural and Islamic identity have launched an overt war on the country's cultural and media landscape, with the ultimate goal of suppressing religious and intellectual thought. Khazaei noted that liberal and humanistic ideologies will not tolerate the growth and prosperity of religious thinking. In his letter, Khazaei argued that the ministry has effectively countered various forms of hybrid warfare, including virtual attacks and media campaigns, by promoting Iran's cultural achievements and the resilience of its civilization. Khazaei concluded by emphasizing that the unjust sanctions on Iran's Minister of Culture only strengthen the determination of those working to bolster the country's cultural and artistic scene. He asserted that Iran's cultural and artistic community will not be silenced by such measures, and the achievements of the modern Iranian civilization will continue to thrive and influence global discourse.

'Go Russia' expo, opportunity to display Iran's handicrafts

The upcoming international exhibition of exports to Russia (IRRUX) presents an excellent opportunity to showcase the handicrafts of Iran's northwestern province of Zanjan, said Saeed Safavi, the head of Zanjan's Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Department. He argued that craftspeople can influence this international platform to display the country's capabilities and properly introduce investment opportunities in the fields of tourism and handicrafts, IRNA reported. He emphasized that approximately half of the 2,000 identified historical and cultural ar-

tifacts in Zanjan have received national and international recognition. He expressed hope that the exhibition would witness the participation of all economic actors, particularly those in the tourism sector, leading to increased understanding and decision-making regarding investment in Zanjan city and province. The exhibition, also known as 'Go Russia', is scheduled to take place from October 10 to 13 at the Zanjan International Exhibitions Center (Caspian), providing a platform for showcasing Iran's cultural and economic offerings to the Russian market.

