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Intangible Cultural Heritage

Representative List

ICH-02 – Form

REPRESENTATIVE LIST OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF HUMANITY

**Deadline: 31 March 2023
for possible inscription in 2024**

*Instructions for completing the form are available at:
<https://ich.unesco.org/en/forms>*

A. State Party or States Parties

State of Palestine

B. Name of the element

B.1. Name of the element in the languages and scripts of the community(ies) concerned

تقليد صناعة الصابون النابلسي في فلسطين

B.2. Name of the element in English

The tradition of Nabulsi soap making in Palestine

C. Name of the communities, groups or individuals concerned

Communities and practitioners, wherever they are in Palestine or in the Diaspora, consider the tradition of Nabulsi soap making as part of their cultural heritage, still making this soap in their homes or in small workshops spread throughout Palestine, and particularly in Nablus and cities like Hebron, Tulkarem, Bethlehem, Ramallah and Gaza.

1. General information about the element

For Criterion U.1, States shall demonstrate that 'the element constitutes intangible cultural heritage as defined in Article 2 of the Convention'.

1.1. *Provide a brief description of the element that can introduce it to readers who have never seen or experienced it.*

Not to exceed 200 words

The Nabulsi soap tradition has been a living practice in Palestine for more than one thousand years. Nabulsi Soap refers to Nablus, the city from where one believes the tradition spread.

The Nabulsi soap is both a hand craft and a traditional gift for celebrations. Communities use their home made Nabulsi Soap as a personal gift for weddings and birthday parties. Visitors to a soaps maker's home, will often be given soaps to take home. The element encourages dialogue and connects both family members and the community concerned.

The tools of soap making are traditional and simple, which makes it possible for people to make soap at home or in small workshops. The soap is made from three natural ingredients: olive oil, water, and lye. The practitioners make the soap after the olive harvest, put their family's stamp on it, package it and store it for one year. The soap is made with natural, local ingredients without any synthetic ingredients added.

Most families in Palestine, and both men and women, shares the tradition. Children help their parents or grandparents to cut and pack the soap. For the families the soap represents a possibility for extra income.

1.2 *Who are the bearers and practitioners of the element? Are there any specific roles, including gender-related ones or categories of persons with special responsibilities for the practice and transmission of the element? If so, who are they and what are their responsibilities?*

Not to exceed 100 words

The bearers and practitioners concerned include the farmers who plant and take care of the olives until harvest. Next the practitioners at the olive presses are involved. Then families cook the soap in their homes, or it is made in small workshops.

The craft is passed on through a practical approach from generation to generation at the farms, at the presses, and in the families. This is where the most important part of the transmission from generation to generation takes place.

Both men and women are involved in all stages of the production of the Nabulsi soap.

1.3. *How are the knowledge and skills related to the element transmitted today?*

Not to exceed 100 words

The most important transmission of the element are done through a practical approach at the olive farms and the presses, in the families and in the small workshops. The knowledge and skills are passed on from generation to generation in a traditional way.

Courses has been held by women's empowerment associations teaching Nabulsi soap making. Films showing the making of Nabulsi soap, are spread on social networks. In addition to this, books, studies and research have been carried out by field researchers and intangible heritage collectors. Safeguarding projects are adopted by the concerned ministries and relevant government departments.

1.4. *What social functions and cultural meanings does the element have nowadays for the communities concerned?*

Not to exceed 100 words

Making Nabulsi soap at home represents a cultural value in itself because it is associated with good management of a house that contains all the necessities including food, water, and cleaning materials. The use of olive oil reflects people's strong relation to the land, and the traditional Nabulsi soap making provides a good income for the families.

Making Nabulsi soap at home encourages families to share. In the community people use their home made Nabulsi Soap as a personal gift for celebrations. The element encourages dialogue and identity and connects both family members and the community concerned.

1.5. *Can the State Party or States Parties confirm that nothing in the element is incompatible with existing international human rights instruments?*

Not to exceed 50 words

There is nothing in this element that is incompatible with existing international human rights, and it does not represent a threat to anyone.

1.6. *Can the State Party or States Parties confirm that nothing in the element could be perceived as not compatible with the requirement of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals?*

Not to exceed 50 words

We confirm that nothing in the element could be perceived as not compatible with the requirement of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals.

1.7. *Can the State Party or States Parties confirm that nothing in the element could be perceived as not compatible with the requirement of sustainable development?*

Not to exceed 50 words

We affirm that there is nothing in the element are inconsistent with the requirements of sustainable development.

The use of manual work, traditional tools and natural agricultural ingrediencies is a wonderful example of sustainable production, and does not pose a threat to the environment or to humans.

1.8. *Are there customary practices governing access to the element? If yes, describe any specific measures that are in place to ensure their respect.*

Not to exceed 100 words

There are no customary practices governing access to the element, as all knowledge related to the Nabulsi soap tradition is well known, and there is nothing to prevent its use. The Nabulsi soap tradition is an ancient, living tradition in Palestine, and it is open to anyone.

1.9. *Audiovisual materials about the element*

- 10 recent photographs in high definition are submitted
- Form ICH-07-photo is attached to grant rights for the 10 photos submitted
- A video is submitted
- Form ICH-07-video is attached to grant rights for the video submitted

2. Contribution to visibility, awareness, dialogue and sustainable development

For Criterion R.2, the States shall demonstrate that 'Inscription of the element will contribute to ensuring visibility and awareness of the significance of the intangible cultural heritage and to encouraging dialogue, thus reflecting cultural diversity worldwide and testifying to human creativity'. In addition, States are encouraged, with reference to Chapter VI of the Operational Directives, to recognize the interdependence between the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development.

Given its extensive nature, criterion R.2 will be assessed based on the information provided in the nomination file as a whole including the answers provided in this section.

Do communities concerned consider that the element contributes to the following?

- Food security
- Health care
- Quality education
- Gender equality
- Inclusive economic development
- Environmental sustainability including climate change
- Peace and social cohesion
- Others (please specify):

Provide explanations in support of the statement(s) made above, as appropriate.

Not to exceed 200 words

Nabulsi soap provides hygiene for the body, utensils, and clothes. This hygiene is one of the requirements of health care in the daily lives of individuals, which is reflected in the health of society.

Also, this element is not specific to one gender, so there is no difference between men and women in making and using it.

The crafts of Nabulsi soap can help contributing the family's economy. The soap making achieves comprehensive economic development because it begins with cultivating the land and ends with the market. As it encourages the cultivation of olives, the establishment of presses, and the establishment of soap workshops, it then goes to the market and contributes to job opportunities, which reduces unemployment.

Maintaining olives cultivation and preserving the trees, contributes to improving the quality of the environment, air, and soil, prevents desertification. The traditional crafts of Nabulsi soap is in line with the goals for sustainable development.

While the production connects the generations in the families, the home made Nabulsi Soap is used as a personal gift for celebrations in the community. The element encourages dialogue and identity and connects both family members and the community concerned.

States are encouraged to submit audiovisual materials that convey the communities' voice in support of the statements made above.

- Materials (written, audio-visual or any other way) are submitted

3. Safeguarding measures

For Criterion R.3, States shall demonstrate that 'safeguarding measures are elaborated that may protect and promote the element'.

What safeguarding measures are put in place to protect and promote the element? Include in your answer the communities' role in the planning and implementation of measures described.

Not to exceed 500 words

The Ministry of Culture has, in close cooperation with NGOs, communities, practitioners and bearers, since 2015 been working to prepare the Intangible Cultural Heritage law, which is in its final stages. Several meetings have been carried out, coordinated by the Ministry of Culture, UNESCO, civil society organizations, heritage owners and legal experts. This law aims to safeguard elements of heritage and preserve the rights of craftspeople who work in traditional soap craft production.

"The tradition of Nabulsi soap making" was included on the National Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Palestine already in February 2018. Preparing the nomination file is one of several important participatory steps between the local communities and the Ministry.

The Ministry of Culture has taken further measures to safeguard the tradition of Nabulsi soap making, in dialogue with communities concerned, such as Ajaweed Association:

- The making of Nabulsi soap in November 2022 after the olive harvest season. Cooking soap was taught to young women who aspire to start a small project in order to obtain a good income that will help them to pay university fees. The product was distributed to less fortunate families in the area.
- Ministry of Culture supports the production of articles and films for the soap making, highlighting the specifications and quality standards of the Ministry of Industry and Trade.
- Communicating with the Quality Department to create brochures to determine the quality specifications of traditional making soap, as well as cooperating with the Ministry of Labour to develop a training program for soap making.
- Some Palestinian young girls make a small business of traditional Nabulsi Soap-Making in their houses and produce it in new methods like Mis. Fatina Al-Anani, and Ms. Ri'am Sulaima who is an owner of the "Banafsaj" project for making traditional Nabulsi soap in different shapes.
- Conducting marketing courses for low-income Palestinian women, to market their products. This was done in cooperation with the Aboud Women's Association and Birzeit Association, who works to teach soapmaking to young generations.
- Establishing bazaars and exhibitions to encourage the local communities to continue making this soap at home, marketing their soap, and to sell it for domestic use.
- The Ministry of Education also encouraged its schools to take students to the "Nabulsi soap workshops" as educational trips, which is an important part of safeguarding this element.
- Documenting soap making and practitioners by filming and interviewing them for inventory purposes, with their informed consent.
- On the 7th of October, Heritage Day, there is an annual cooperation between the Ministry of Culture, the local society, and the traditional soap women's makers. Since 2010, they arrange activities like: Training of young people for making traditional soap. There is a special corner to present the homemade traditional soaps where the practitioners explain the procedure and provides information. The sale from this event helps improves the practitioner's income.
- Palestine TV records and publishes programs and films about the Nabulsi soap, so that people in Palestine are more aware their heritage and are encouraged to use it.

4. Community participation in the nomination process and consent

For Criterion R.4, States shall demonstrate that 'the element has been nominated following the widest possible participation of the community, group or, if applicable, individuals concerned and with their free, prior and informed consent'.

4.1. *Describe how the communities, groups or individuals concerned have actively participated in all stages of the preparation of the nomination.*

Not to exceed 300 words

The idea of nominating the traditional Nabulsi soap to UNESCO's Representative List was suggested by Al-Aboudia Women's Association, which found that this traditional craft is an important expression of their cultural heritage.

The selection of this element and its inclusion in the National Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2018 was after the approval of the heritage bearers and the consultation of ICH experts, including Mr. Nabil Alqam and Mr. Shareef Kanaana.

As for choosing this element to be nominated to the UNESCO's Representative list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, the Ministry of Culture, with the consultation of experts and the heritage bearers, decided on 7/17/2022 to nominate this element. Soon after, the Ministry of Culture started a heritage bearer, as well as updating the inventory for the element.

Furthermore, the ministry formed a nomination committee of heritage bearers, such as Feryal and Khaled Theyab, the associations like 'Al-Aboudia Women's Association and 'Ajaweed Society, Nabulsi soap workshops like 'Al-Shaka' and Arafat Masbanah (workshop), and heritage experts like Mr. Nabil Alqam and Mr. Shareef Kanaana. In addition, Ms. Suad Ewias who is a volunteer in Al-Aboudia Women's Association, was appointed as the point of contact between the Ministry and the nomination committee, in order to insure an ongoing dialogue between the parties during the preparation of the nomination file.

In January 2023, the element was documented with the participation of heritage bearers through the point of contact, Ms. Suad and the nomination file prepared with the approval of the Heritage bearers.

Consent (written, audio-visual or any other way) to the nomination of the element from the communities, groups or individuals concerned is attached in support to the description above

4.2. Community organizations or representatives concerned

Contact person for the communities

- 1- Title (Ms/Mr, etc.): Mr
Family name: AL-shaka
Given name: Nidal
Institution/position: the director of Al-Shaka' Soap kitchen
Address: Nablus
Telephone number: 0097092387724
Email address: nbshaka@hotmail.com

- 2- Title (Ms/Mr, etc.): Ms
Family name: khoori
Given name: Noora
Institution/position: the director of Al-aboudia women's association
Address: Aboud / Ramallah
Telephone number: 00970599375876
Email address: EL-aboudiehassociation@gmail.com

- 3- Title (Ms/Mr, etc.): Mr
Family name: Raed
Given name: saadeh
Institution/position: the director of Rozana Association
Address: Birzeit / Ramallah
Telephone number: 009702819850
Email address: info@rozna.ps

- 4- Title (Ms/Mr, etc.): Mr
Family name: Alqam
Given name: Nabil
Institution/position: the director of Ajaweed charity society
Address: Al-Bireh / Ramallah
Telephone number: 00970598252018
Email address: ajaweedpalestine@gmail.com

5- Title (Ms/Mr, etc.): Mr
Family name: Al-mohtaseb
Given name: Majdi
Institution/position: the director of National council For Development
Address: Hebron
Telephone number: 00970599366609
Email address: Info@nc4d.org

6- Title (Ms/Mr, etc.): : Ms
Family name: Abu_jaber
Given name: Reem
Institution/position: the director of NAWA for Culture and Arts Association
Address: Dair Al Balah / Gaza
Telephone number: 00970566333999
Email address: info@nawaculture.org

Contact information for main community organizations or representatives, non-governmental organizations or other bodies concerned with the element are attached, and their details can be published on the website of the Convention as part of the nomination

5. Inventory

For Criterion R.5, States shall demonstrate that the element is identified and included in an inventory of the intangible cultural heritage present in the territory (ies) of the submitting State(s) Party (ies) in conformity with Articles 11 and 12 of the Convention.

5.1. *Name of the inventory(ies) in which the element is included*

The National Representative list of Intangible Cultural Heritage: NRLICH

5.2. *Name of the office(s), agency(ies), organization(s) or body(ies) responsible for maintaining and updating that (those) inventory(ies), both in the original language and in translation when the original language is not English or French*

The Palestinian Ministry of Culture through the Department of Heritage / Department of the National Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage

5.3. Reference number(s) and name(s) of the element in the relevant inventory(ies)

This element's number is 30 in NRLICH

5.4. Date of the element's inclusion in the inventory(ies)

February 10, 2018

Is the information concerning the updating and periodicity of the inventory (ies), as well as the participation of communities, groups and NGOs concerned to the inventorying process, included in the periodic report on the implementation of the Convention?

Yes, the information is included in the periodic report. Specify in the box below the year in which that report was submitted

No, the information is not included in the periodic report. Provide information in the box below

Not to exceed 200 words

In the last report in 2022, this was included, and the method of updating the list and the participation of the local community in this was clarified.

An extract of inventory(ies) in English or in French and in the original language, if different, is submitted

6. Correspondence and signature

6.1. Designated contact person

Provide the contact details of a single person responsible for all correspondence concerning the nomination. For multinational nominations, provide complete contact information for one person designated by the States Parties as the main contact person for all correspondence relating to the nomination.

Title (Ms/Mr, etc.): Ms

Family name: Zahera

Given name: Hamad

Institution/position: Palestinian Ministry of Culture
Head of the Oral Heritage inventories Department

Address: Ramallah

Telephone number: 00972562819068

Email address: Zahera.moc@gmail.com

Other relevant information:

6.2. Other contact persons (for multinational nomination only)

Provide below complete contact information for one person in each submitting State, other than the primary contact person identified above.

Title (Ms/Mr, etc.):
Family name:
Given name:
Institution/position:
Address:
Telephone number:
Email address:
Other relevant information:

6.3. Signature on behalf of the State Party or States Parties

Name: Dr. Atef Abu Seif
Title: Minister Of Culture
Date: 13 March 2023
Signature:

Name(s), title(s) and signature(s) of other official(s) (for multinational nominations only).

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