



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

Intangible  
Cultural  
Heritage

# Representative List

Original: English

## CONVENTION FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

### INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Seventeenth session  
2022

#### Nomination file no. 01700 for inscription in 2022 on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity

#### A. State(s) Party(ies)

*For multinational nominations, States Parties should be listed in the order on which they have mutually agreed.*

Egypt

#### B. Name of the element

##### B.1. Name of the element in English or French

*Indicate the official name of the element that will appear in published material.*

*Not to exceed 200 characters*

Festivals related to the Journey of the Holy Family in Egypt

##### B.2. Name of the element in the language and script of the community concerned, if applicable

*Indicate the official name of the element in the vernacular language corresponding to the official name in English or French (point B.1).*

*Not to exceed 200 characters*

الاحتفالات المرتبطة برحلة العائلة المقدسة في مصر

##### B.3. Other name(s) of the element, if any

*In addition to the official name(s) of the element (point B.1), mention alternate name(s), if any, by which the element is known.*

Festival of the Advent of the Holy Family to Egypt  
Anniversary of the Holy Family Advent (to Egypt)  
Festival of Commemorating the Holy Family  
The Virgin Feast (Days)  
The Nativity of the Virgin (Feast)

### C. Name of the communities, groups or, if applicable, individuals concerned

Identify clearly one or several communities, groups or, if applicable, individuals concerned with the nominated element.  
Not to exceed 150 words

Almost all segments of the Egyptian society – Coptic Christians (henceforth the Copts) and Muslims; men, women, and children – flock every year to celebrate at the venues where the Holy Family (the Virgin Mary, the Christ, and Saint Joseph, the carpenter) passed through in Egypt. Participants encompass all social classes and even government leaders. However, participation is more widespread among the Copts. The element concerns one social fabric where the Copts prepare for the celebrations while Muslims participate with them at all stages. Besides this flocking of visitors, there are the participants living around the venues associated with the Holy Family journey route. Among the groups interested in these celebrations are also some Ethiopians (Habesha people) who seek the blessings of the place, especially the Muharraq Monastery in Assute governorate. Many people from other countries also participate in some of these celebrations, e.g. ambassadors and consuls of some countries.

### D. Geographical location and range of the element

Provide information on the distribution of the element within the territory(ies) of the submitting State(s), indicating, if possible, the location(s) in which it is centred. Nominations should concentrate on the situation of the element within the territories of the submitting States, while acknowledging the existence of same or similar elements outside their territories. Submitting States should not refer to the viability of such intangible cultural heritage outside their territories or characterize the safeguarding efforts of other States.

Not to exceed 150 words

The element is associated with venues in Egypt where sources indicate that the Holy Family passed through in its journey from Bethlehem to Egypt and back. The most relevant sites include the Eastern Delta and Delta regions [Tell-Basta or Bubastis, Belbeis (Al-Sharqeyya governorate, 80 Km away from Cairo); Samannoud (Al-Gharbeyya governorate, 93 Km away from Cairo); Sakha (Kafr El-Sheikh governorate, 142 Km away from Cairo); Greater Cairo [Matareyya, Musturud, Zweila Alley, Coptic Egypt (Babylon Fortress), Maadi]; the Middle Egypt region [Jabal Al-Tayr, Ashmounin, Deir Abu Hans village, Koam Maria (Menya governorate, 241 Km away from Cairo); Al-Muharraq Monastery, Mount Qusqam, Meir, and Jabal Durunka Monastery (Assute governorate, 380 Km away from Cairo)]. Many of the celebrations take place at Jabal al-Tayr region in Menya and Al-Muharraq Monastery and Durunka in Assute.

### E. Contact person for correspondence

#### E.1. Designated contact person

Provide the name, address and other contact information 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.): Prof. Dr  
Family name: Youssef  
Given name: Heba  
Institution/position: Director, Egyptian Academy of Fine Arts, Rome -Ministry of Culture and Head of The High committee for Specialist studies of Festivals Related to the Journey of the Holy Family in Egypt, and to place the Festivals on the UNESCO Intangible Heritage List.  
Telephone number: +2-01227344589  
Email address: hebayou1@gmail.com

#### E.2. Other contact persons (for multinational files only)

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

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## 1. Identification and definition of the element

For **Criterion R.1**, States **shall demonstrate that ‘the element constitutes intangible cultural heritage as defined in Article 2 of the Convention’.**

Tick one or more boxes to identify the domain(s) of intangible cultural heritage manifested by the element, which might include one or more of the domains identified in Article 2.2 of the Convention. If you tick ‘other(s)’, specify the domain(s) in brackets.

- oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of intangible cultural heritage
- performing arts
- social practices, rituals and festive events
- knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe
- traditional craftsmanship
- other(s)

This section should address all the significant features of the element as it exists at present, and should include:

- a. an explanation of its social functions and cultural meanings today, within and for its community;
- b. the characteristics of the bearers and practitioners of the element;
- c. any specific roles, including gender-related ones or categories of persons with special responsibilities towards the element; and
- d. the current modes of transmission of the knowledge and skills related to the element.

The Committee should receive sufficient information to determine:

- a. that the element is among the ‘practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills — as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith —’;
- b. ‘that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize [it] as part of their cultural heritage’;
- c. that it is being ‘transmitted from generation to generation, [and] is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history’;
- d. that it provides the communities and groups involved with ‘a sense of identity and continuity’; and
- e. that it is not incompatible with ‘existing international human rights instruments as well as with the requirements of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, and of sustainable development’.

Overly technical descriptions should be avoided and submitting States should keep in mind that this section must explain the element to readers who have no prior knowledge or direct experience of it. Nomination files need not address in detail the history of the element, or its origin or antiquity.

- (i) Provide a brief description of the element that can introduce it to readers who have never seen or experienced it.

Not fewer than 150 or more than 250 words

This element is related to the Holy Family journey to Egypt based on Coptic Church transmitted traditions which indicate the Family flee from Bethlehem to Egypt (c. 6-4 BC) to escape King Herod’s oppression. Every year, the event is commemorated by two great festivals in which Egyptians – Muslims, Copts, males, and females – participate with their number reaching up to three million in some regions.

The first festival, ‘The Festival of the Advent of the Holy Family to Egypt,’ is a one-day event held generally in the beginning of June except in Menya where it is observed in February. The second, ‘The Nativity of the Virgin (Feast)’ is held at several places – e.g. Durunka, Cairo – at different times during the months of May-June-August. It lasts for the 15 days of the Virgin fast.

The festivals are interspersed by hymn singing accentuated by tambourine rhythms. Some arts that feature prominently are icon drawings, playing with sticks, and body-painting. Participants present a reenactment of the Holy Family journey with the Virgin and the infant riding a small donkey led by Saint Joseph. There is a huge procession of artistic performances which participants (mostly women) receive by chanting folk songs, in addition to the distribution of traditional foods. Moreover, participants engage in submitting votive offerings, throwing coins into wells, lighting

candles seeking blessings and wish-fulfillment, and celebrating baptized children with dancing and music. Further, there is an "Icon Procession" in which participants march, led by clergymen, carrying candles, censers, crosses, and banners.

(ii) *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 fewer than 150 or more than 250 words*

- The residents – Muslims and Christians – of neighbourhoods where celebrations are taking place: They receive the participants and host them at tents and marquees which they set up at public squares around the churches and monasteries. These contributions by Muslims alongside with their Christian brethren foster a general sense of social cohesion between the two groups.

- Clergymen: They lead Mass, recite hymns, baptize children, receive votive offerings, prepare ceremonial venues inside churches, supervise the process of icon-making, and provide sermons to educate visitors about the event and its historical dimension through stories drawing on timeless wisdom from the life of the Christ.

- Non-Governmental Organizations: (National Egyptian Heritage Revival Association (NEHRA), Coptic Heritage Association, etc...) They prepare informative booklets including biographies of the Holy Family. They also help organize trips to celebration venues.

- Scout and Chanting Teams at the Villages Close to the Celebration Venues: They present some artistic performances, carols, and religious chanting.

- Women: They participate in the sale and marketing of handicrafts made by the local community. Their aim is to provide a source of financial means for destitute families of low-income. The products sold are mostly statues, crosses, silverware, chains, jewellery, antiques, and other souvenirs related to the Holy Family. Women also prepare foods and sweets which they distribute to participants and sing improvised songs related to the Virgin Mary.

- Boat Owners: They transport visitors and participants to celebration venues across the Nile.

- Street Vendors: They provide some commodities which visitors need during the celebrations.

(iii) *How are the knowledge and skills related to the element transmitted today?*

*Not fewer than 150 or more than 250 words*

The knowledge and skills related to the element are transmitted today through the following:

- Church and monastery efforts which educate the public about the element and promote it at the national level.
- Oral narratives transmitted by the elders to younger generations (the most important of which). These accounts cover festivals, their origins, social functions, and the connotations they bear of love and harmony among the different segments of society.
- The promotion of the element through the different state media (video, audio and print).
- The efforts exerted by civil society institutions which include introducing the element and the ways of participation and employing the youth in some ushering tasks.
- The collective participation of men and women of all ages. The skills and knowledge related to the element are passed down by active learning and participation in rituals, e.g. throwing money in wells, presenting votive offerings, chanting songs, etc.
- Families' pivotal role in passing on the element and securing its continuation for present and future generations through keenness on taking children along to watch the celebrations and getting them involved.
- The dissemination of information about the element through different means, e.g. booklets, social media, documentaries, and YouTube videos, all of which convey live pictures of these celebrations annually.

- School trips organized by many primary, preparatory and secondary schools to facilitate the participation of students in these celebrations.

(iv) *What social functions and cultural meanings does the element have for its community nowadays?*

*Not fewer than 150 or more than 250 words*

This element is replete with social functions and cultural meanings, one of which is the unified social and cultural fabric between Copts and Muslims which is manifest during both the preparations for celebrations and the rites themselves. Some Muslims even observe the fasting of the Virgin with their Christian fellow citizens and participate in the lighting of candles. The provision of voluntary services to visitors by local citizens and the exchange of gifts – e.g. crosses of different shapes, necklaces, toys – are other social functions of the element. In recent celebrations, there was emphasis on inviting people with special needs (especially the deaf and the dumb). All of which strengthen social bonds and reflect collective consciousness of intangible cultural heritage.

Some rites in the element bear cultural significance, e.g. the attachment of participants to artefacts remaining from the Holy Family journey. An example is the deep pottery bowls (majors) found at the churches of Jabal Al-Tayr and Samannoud, which the Holy Family used for kneading flour to make bread. Until now, visitors are keen on putting votive offerings in these bowls believing that their provisions will be increased and their ailments cured. Another example is the emphasis placed on trees believed to be associated with the Holy Family, e.g. the Marian Tree in Matareyya, Cairo. This tree is thought to have shaded the Holy Family. There is also the Abed Tree which is believed to have bowed to the Christ. Moreover, the wells found along the journey route bear cultural significance as they are considered places for seeking blessings.

(v) *Is there any part of the element that is not compatible with existing international human rights instruments or with the requirement of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, or with sustainable development?*

*Not fewer than 150 or more than 250 words*

Nothing is incompatible with the International Human Right Law or mutual respect between communities, groups, and individuals. Celebrations pertaining to the Holy Family's journey to Egypt, whether the commemoration of the Christ's advent to Egypt or the Virgin Feast (Day), are examples of events that reflect mutual respect between societies, groups and individuals. They are not limited to a particular sect. Rather, they express an international human dimension and a call for tolerance and acceptance. All segments of society and people involved in different crafts and professions engage alike in these celebrations reviving cultural, social, and spiritual values cherished by all those involved. Moreover, the materials used in the celebrations are usually related to the environment, e.g. the candles used in votive offerings, the crosses, the banners made from local fabric, the well water, etc. Food is also cooked based on traditional recipes. Some harmful practices, e.g. tattooing, were banned by the church.

The constant expansion of these celebrations necessitated developmental projects by the state in coordination with some civil institutions. Some of these projects include developing some celebration venues to accommodate the great number of participants and establishing the needed infrastructure such as highways, hotels, and shops for sales and services. Appropriate entertainment projects were tailored to accentuate the cultural heritage of every district since the areas where the celebrations pertaining to the Holy Family take place are varied: rural, nomadic, urban and coastal.

## **2. Contribution to ensuring visibility and awareness and to encouraging dialogue**

*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'. This criterion will only be considered to be satisfied if the nomination demonstrates how the possible inscription would contribute to ensuring the visibility and awareness of the significance of intangible cultural heritage in general, and not only of the inscribed element itself, and to encouraging dialogue that respects cultural diversity.*

(i) How could the inscription of the element on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity contribute to the visibility of the intangible cultural heritage in general (and not only of the inscribed element itself) and raise awareness of its importance?

(i.a) Please explain how this would be achieved at the local level.

Not fewer than 100 or more than 150 words

The possible inscription of the element would contribute to creating a societal dialogue on the Egyptian heritage associated with the Holy Family, in particular, and more generally intangible cultural heritage as a whole.

The celebration gatherings create a state of harmony among the participants regardless of religion or sect and provide an opportunity for the elderly to transmit their oral traditions explaining the reasons for these celebrations, etc. The idea of raising awareness of this heritage element has emerged from within local communities and has always stimulated dialogue between society members about its history and importance.

The potential inscription would emphasize awareness of all aspects of intangible cultural heritage on the local level, foster group communication, and bring local communities great pride in their cultural identity. It would also broaden the interest of Egyptian communities in safeguarding the element and all aspects of intangible cultural heritage in general.

(i.b) Please explain how this would be achieved at the national level.

Not fewer than 100 or more than 150 words

The possible inscription of the element would nationally spread awareness of intangible cultural heritage. This would be accomplished through the cultural, social, and logistical promotion of the developmental projects related to the Holy Family journey route and associated festivals. These projects are undertaken by governmental and civil institutions, and they raise a general sense of respect for the element in question and other elements of intangible cultural heritage.

Such promotion of the relevant projects would increase media interest in supporting the nominated element as part of an intangible cultural heritage element which involves different Egyptian communities regardless of their intellectual and cultural orientations. Similarly, governmental institutions would also be interested in promoting the element to implement the articles of the 2003 Convention. This, in turn, would encourage society to introduce other intangible heritage elements and to promote them so that they receive their due recognition.

(i.c) Please explain how this would be achieved at the international level.

Not fewer than 100 or more than 150 words

It is expected that the possible inscription of the element would contribute to raising the awareness of the international community about the journey of the Holy Family in Egypt and the celebrations associated with it. This potential inscription would enhance the role of oral narratives about the journey which would, in turn, establish a cultural corridor with other communities around the world highlighting their cultural diversity.

The inscription of the element would provide the human community with inspirational scenes pertaining to a sacred journey about which the world knows dozens of stories. Additionally, this element reflects human values like love, tolerance, and support for the suffering, tired, and displaced (things the Holy Family experienced). This underscores the role of intangible cultural heritage in spreading the highest human values and respecting the cultural diversity of humanity.

(ii) How would dialogue among communities, groups and individuals be encouraged by the inscription of the element?

Not fewer than 100 or more than 150 words

It is expected that the possible inscription of the element on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage would encourage dialogue between society members. This would be accomplished through expanding communication between different generations of practitioners and bearers of the element with a view to exchanging information about the Holy Family's journey and its associated human values and spiritual concepts.

The inscription would also contribute to a greater dissemination of the customs, traditions, rituals and arts shared by the participants as celebration venues gather groups of diverse cultural

backgrounds on both the national and international levels. Thus, these festivals represent an occasion to promote dialogue, especially through the artistic performances that many participate in. The inscription of the element may contribute to the spread of celebrations in regions other than those in which they currently take place.

*(iii) How would human creativity and respect for cultural diversity be promoted by the inscription of the element?*

*Not fewer than 100 or more than 150 words*

It is expected that the possible inscription of the element would contribute to the promotion of human creativity since the Holy Family legacy is known in many regions of the world. The diversity in customs, popular practices, and associated varied performances would be more appreciated by the participants. The inscription would also contribute to the development of creative human works. Examples are the arts of icon and popular drawing that portray the events of the Holy Family journey. Moreover, the inscription of the element would also contribute to enriching the local culture of practitioners, especially with regard to culinary habits, trades related to the ceremonies, and the chanting of heritage songs. This is in addition to affirming the manifestations of peaceful coexistence among the diverse annual participants.

### **3. Safeguarding measures**

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

#### **3.a. Past and current efforts to safeguard the element**

*(i) How is the viability of the element being ensured by the communities, groups or, if applicable, individuals concerned? What past and current initiatives have they taken in this regard?*

*Not fewer than 150 or more than 250 words*

- The eagerness of local residents to provide voluntary services, whether with regard to accommodation of visitors, or providing the services necessary to help visitors participate comfortably in the celebrations.
- The keenness of NGOs and civil society institutions to promote celebrations through media campaigns educating the community about the Holy Family, the venues they visited in Egypt, and the associated spiritual and heritage practices.
- The keenness of some businessmen in Egypt to provide financial support through annual donations for the organization of the celebrations and the production of relevant major art works (e.g. Opera Egypt: The Way that has been presented at many international theaters).
- The continuous support of the Egyptian Church for holding the ceremonies and their associated religious and social rites.
- The production of publicity material and documentary films about the element; the seminars and meetings held to discuss all matters related to the Holy Family journey; the oral accounts of the elderly educating children and introducing them to the element; Church facilitations for people with special needs to participate in commemorating the journey of Holy Family, and its provision of explanations in sign language.

*Tick one or more boxes to identify the safeguarding measures that have been and are currently being taken by the **communities, groups or individuals** concerned:*

- transmission, particularly through formal and non-formal education
- identification, documentation, research
- preservation, protection
- promotion, enhancement
- revitalization

*(ii) What past and current efforts have the States Parties concerned made to safeguard the element? Specify any external or internal constraints in this regard?*

*Not fewer than 150 or more than 250 words*

The state has exerted a lot of effort to safeguard, protect, preserve, support, and revitalize the element. Perhaps the most important of these efforts are:

- Issuing the law regulating the construction and restoration of churches (Law No. 80 of 2016) which has contributed to the renewal, restoration, and expansion of some churches over the past years. This is in addition to removing all obstacles that prevented the element from being widely practiced or prevented the presence of millions to watch these ceremonies with full freedom and openness.
- The provision by some governmental institutions (e. g. the local units of governorates, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Interior, etc.) of the necessary services, facilities, accommodation, and security.
- The allocation five acres in the Koam Maria region in 2002 as a heritage site for the element to facilitate the annual celebrations commemorating the Holy Family.
- The development of the venues associated with the Holy Family journey route as well as the pursuit of having this route inscribed on the World Heritage Series.
- The cooperation protocol signed by the state with the Vatican (October 2017) according to which the icon of the Holy Family was included in the Catalog of Global Christian Pilgrimage. In this context, representatives of some international churches visited the venues of the Holy Family journey in Egypt in the different governorates, and they were introduced to the popular celebrations associated with the route of the journey.

*Tick one or more boxes to identify the safeguarding measures that have been and are currently being taken by the **State(s) Party(ies)** with regard to the element:*

- transmission, particularly through formal and non-formal education
- identification, documentation, research
- preservation, protection
- promotion, enhancement
- revitalization

### **3.b. Safeguarding measures proposed**

*This section should identify and describe safeguarding measures that will be implemented, especially those intended to protect and promote the element. The safeguarding measures should be described in terms of concrete engagements of the States Parties and communities and not only in terms of possibilities and potentialities.*

- (i) *What measures are proposed to help ensure that the viability of the element is not jeopardized in the future, especially as an unintended result of inscription and the resulting visibility and public attention?*

*Not fewer than 500 or more than 750 words*

- Developing the infrastructure of celebration venues, especially the network of roads leading to those sites and squares where the celebrations take place; the periodic treatment of well water at the venues associated with the celebrations in order to make them suitable for drinking, thus ensuring the comfort of participants leading to the doubling of their numbers; the restoration of the houses surrounding the celebration sites and increasing the number of providers of services that visitors need, especially restaurants and traditional souvenir stores, etc.
- Renovating, restoring, and expanding churches associated with celebration venues as this will contribute to enlarging the scope of these celebrations and increasing the number of visitors, thus leading to safeguarding and promoting the element.
- Safeguarding the heritage artefacts associated with the festivals, e.g. designing and deploying a glass case to preserve the archeological large bowl used by the Virgin Mary for kneading flour to make bread; making an iron grid to cover the Holy Well; and surrounding the well and the large bowl with an iron fence that allows visitors to see them from a safe distance.
- Holding seminars and cultural workshops throughout the year and before the start of the celebrations to be attended by the groups concerned with the element – men and women, the Egyptian Church, and civil institutions – in order to introduce the element and its associated practices. This is done with a view to assisting those in charge of organizing these celebrations in managing space, especially on the Virgin Mary Feast (Days) in the governorates of Menya and Assute.



- An illustrated guide is prepared to introduce the element including all relevant data and contact information of relevant institutions.
- Inclusion of the element in school curricula, especially those aspects related to the creativity of schoolchildren such as singing, music, and kinetic expression, and involving element bearers in the process. This contributes to the transmission of the element across generations.
- Collaborative work between local communities and the state for the production of documentary and educational films that shed light on the various components of intangible cultural heritage, especially those related to popular celebrations like this element.
- The production of major fictional cinematic works that tell the story of the Holy Family and the accompanying popular celebrations.
- Preparing a pictorial encyclopedia about these celebrations documenting all aspects related to them besides planning and publishing a set of field studies and research on the element to further promote it.
- Raising the social and economic standard of the communities in which the celebrations of the Holy Family take place to cultivate community sense of respect for these cultural events.
- The coordination and unification of the efforts done by official institutions, NGOs, residents of the areas surrounding the celebration venues, and organizers, each of which offers various programs about the element. There are many NGOs as well as official institutions interested in the journey of the Holy Family. All associated institutions need to unite in their efforts and exchange information and activities to organize developmental programs for the element, thus contributing to enhancing its clarity at the local, national and international levels. (These institutions include NGOs; syndicates; groups interested in the journey of the Holy Family; Ministries of Culture, Tourism, Antiquities, Local development; religious institutions, the Church and Al-Azhar; universities and schools, etc.)

*(ii) How will the States Parties concerned support the implementation of the proposed safeguarding measures?*

*Not fewer than 150 or more than 250 words*

- Connecting the element to the national project under way to develop the locations of the Holy Family journey route. This would provide the necessary support for the activities pertaining to the Holy Family journey celebrations.
- Prioritizing the churches linked to the Holy Family's journey route for restoration projects, in accordance with the Church Building and Restoration Law adopted in 2016.
- Employment of the dialogue promotion institutions established by the state in the rapprochement between the different segments of participants, e.g. the Baitulaila (Egyptian Family Home) Foundation in which Christian and Islamic clerics organize seminars and cultural workshops on the element and prepare for it.
- Incorporating the festivals related to the Holy Family's trip into school trip agendas.
- Assigning cinema specialists to make a series of documentary films with subtitles and promoting them on the national and international levels.
- Adding the element to the religious tourism agenda, Since many prominent figures, nationally and internationally, spotlighted places of celebration.
- Creating a major online portal that includes all the formal and informal efforts related to the element, the practised rituals as well as all relevant activities, publications, photographs, video clips, statistics, visitor hosting sites, etc.

*(iii) How have communities, groups or individuals been involved in planning the proposed safeguarding measures, including in terms of gender roles, and how will they be involved in their implementation?*

*Not fewer than 150 or more than 250 words*

Various groups were involved in planning the proposed safeguarding measures related to the element, especially during the preparation of the file for the National Inventory of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Residents at celebration venues and visitors of both genders expressed ideas related to the safeguarding measures at the stage of data collection. Examples of these ideas

include the development of ceremony venues to facilitate holding the rituals associated with the element, increasing service points, renovation and restoration of churches, the inclusion of the element in school curricula. During the celebrations, NGOs, businesspersons and volunteers expressed their full willingness to cooperate with government institutions in implementing the proposed safeguarding measures.

There was direct communication between the committee in charge of preparing the file and the various groups at celebration venues with the intention of getting their proposals for the safeguarding measures directly. (This took place from 2018 until the date of submitting the file and involved representatives of NGOs, civil society institutions, and element bearers as well as officials from the Ministries of Culture, Antiquities, Tourism and Foreign Affairs.) Element bearers, practitioners, the church, and civil society institutions introduced some of their safeguarding-related activities like presenting artistic performances, by male and female participants, for entertaining visitors. Other safeguarding activities include promoting celebration times and facilitating access to them through symposia, workshops, videos and social media posts. Such involvement of the local community will enhance their participation in the implementation.

### 3.c. Competent body(ies) involved in safeguarding

*Provide the name, address and other contact information of the competent body(ies) and, if applicable, the name and title of the contact person(s), with responsibility for the local management and safeguarding of the element.*

Name of the body: Ministry of Culture

Name and title of the contact person: Prof. Dr. Heba Youssef, Director, Egyptian Academy of Fine Arts, Rome

Telephone number: +2-01227344589

Email address: hebayou1@gmail.com

## 4. Community participation and consent in the nomination process

*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.a. Participation of communities, groups and individuals concerned in the nomination process

*Describe how the community, group or, if applicable, individuals concerned have actively participated in all stages of the preparation of the nomination, including in terms of the role of gender.*

*States Parties are encouraged to prepare nominations with the participation of a wide variety of other parties concerned, including, where appropriate, local and regional governments, communities, NGOs, research institutes, centres of expertise and others. States Parties are reminded that the communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals whose intangible cultural heritage is concerned are essential participants throughout the conception and preparation of nominations, proposals and requests, as well as the planning and implementation of safeguarding measures, and are invited to devise creative measures to ensure that their widest possible participation is built in at every stage, as required by Article 15 of the Convention.*

*Not fewer than 300 or more than 500 words*

The first procedures for nominating the element for possible inscription on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity began as a reaction to the societal interest in the journey of the Holy Family route and its associated festivals. Accordingly, a supreme committee was formed in 2018 (involving governmental bodies and practicing communities) to prepare the element inventory and nominate the celebrations associated with the Holy Family for inscription on the Representative List of Human Heritage. The committee held several training workshops, organized by the External Cultural Relation Department at the Ministry of Culture, for various groups affiliated to the event. These groups included representatives of NGOs, Coptic research centers, researchers in the field of intangible cultural heritage, students, and individuals concerned with the Holy Family journey project.

The main objective of these workshops was to form a fieldwork team, introduce the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, review all that relates to the celebrations of the Holy Family, identify and define the element, and start to collect the data and related

photographic and video material on the element. The Egyptian facilitator accredited by UNESCO presented these workshops with a group of specialists.

An integrated work team was formed including various groups of those responsible for preparing the celebrations, the National Egyptian Heritage Revival Association, the Coptic Heritage Lover's Association, students of the Academy of Arts (The Higher institute of Folk Arts, The Higher institute of Cinema), researchers at the Egyptian Folk Tradition Atlas and the Institute of Coptic Studies who participated in field data collection and the preparation of a documentary film. The work team was also aided by some of the founders of the Intellectual Forum to Revive the Path of the Holy Family and the Franciscan Coptic Studies Center. They provided heritage data and helped with documenting reference sources. Egypt National Commission for UNESCO also participated in the inscription of the element on the National Inventory.

Intensive workshops continued in this way during 2018, then expanded. Afterwards, the first data collection processes began with meetings between the field research team and the groups concerned with the celebrations to discuss the idea of nominating the element for the National Inventory and the Representative List. The latter showed their enthusiasm for providing assistance and information, and they indeed proposed field suggestions for safeguarding the element from mid-2018 until just before the element was nominated for inscription.

The committee held several meetings with all concerned parties – organizations, groups and individuals – during the months of October to December 2019 to review the draft nomination file. Then, other meetings were held during January and February 2020 to view the file in its final form and review the required documents until the file was completed.

#### **4.b. Free, prior and informed consent to the nomination**

*The free, prior and informed consent to the nomination of the element of the community, group or, if applicable, individuals concerned may be demonstrated through written or recorded concurrence, or through other means, according to the legal regimens of the State Party and the infinite variety of communities and groups concerned. The Committee will welcome a broad range of demonstrations or attestations of community consent in preference to standard or uniform declarations. Evidence of free, prior and informed consent shall be provided in one of the working languages of the Committee (English or French), as well as in the language of the community concerned if its members use languages other than English or French.*

*Attach to the nomination form information showing such consent and indicate below what documents you are providing, how they were obtained and what form they take. Indicate also the gender of the people providing their consent.*

*Not fewer than 150 or more than 250 words*

The preliminary surveys during the preparations of the file demonstrated the consent of the groups, individuals, and institutions on nominating the element 'Festivals related to the Journey of the Holy family in Egypt' for inscription on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Other consents were received during, and after, the field data collection procedures as described above.

Free, prior and informed consents were obtained through the declarations and the text letters which are attached hereto in Arabic from those concerned with the element – individuals and institutions. Then, these declarations and text letters were translated into English. The consents were given by several segments of society as follows:

- 252 consents from participants (men)
- 183 consents from participants (women)
- 7 consents from civil society institutions
- 442 consents in total

#### **4.c. Respect for customary practices governing access to the element**

*Access to certain specific aspects of intangible cultural heritage or to information about it is sometimes restricted by customary practices enacted and conducted by the communities in order, for example, to maintain the secrecy of specific knowledge. If such practices exist, demonstrate that the inscription of the element and implementation of the safeguarding measures would fully respect such customary practices governing access to specific aspects of such heritage (cf. Article 13 of the Convention). Describe any specific measures that might need to be taken to ensure such respect.*

*If no such practices exist, please provide a clear statement that there are no customary practices governing access to the element in at least 50 words.*

Data collection processes of the element have not recorded any customary practices that restrict access to the element. Therefore, all community segments (men or women of different ages) participate in these celebrations at all their stages without any obstacles. In addition, there are no rituals that require confidentiality to practice or require censoring from participants. This is clear in the field recordings which stressed the ease of participating in the celebrations with all their rituals. Moreover, residents at the neighbourhoods of celebration venues receive and host participants, thus facilitating their participation in the celebrations without any obstacles.

Field visits of the work teams confirmed that securing and preserving the element and organizing its visits are carried out by the groups themselves. Organizers of the celebrations train scouting teams and volunteers – Christians and Muslims – to arrange and facilitate participation in the celebrations within and without worship houses. Among the arrangements done are preparing public squares, pavilions, public announcements, and guidelines that would encourage all segments of society to participate in the celebrations.

#### 4.d. Community organization(s) or representative(s) concerned

Provide detailed contact information for each community organization or representative, or other non-governmental organization, concerned with the element such as associations, organizations, clubs, guilds, steering committees, etc.:

- a. Name of the entity;
- b. Name and title of the contact person;
- c. Address;
- d. Telephone number;
- e. Email address;
- f. Other relevant information.

- a. Friends of Manial Palace Museum
- b. Magda Kamel, Head of Cultural Committee
- c. 9 Hod El Laban St. Garden City, Cairo 11451
- d. 01223150249
- e. magsamkam@yahoo.com

#### 5. Inclusion of the element in an 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.b and 12 of the Convention.

The inclusion of the nominated element in an inventory should not in any way imply or require that the inventory(ies) should have been completed prior to the nomination. Rather, the submitting State(s) Party(ies) may be in the process of completing or updating one or more inventories, but have already duly included the nominated element in an inventory-in-progress.

Provide the following information:

- (i) Name of the inventory(ies) in which the element is included:

National Inventory of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

- (ii) 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:

Egypt National Commission for UNESCO

- (iii) Reference number(s) and name(s) of the element in the relevant inventory(ies):

Festivals related to the Journey of the Holy Family in Egypt

Element Number on the National Inventory:

<http://www.egnatcom.org.eg/ich/admin/forms/view/54>

*(iv) Date of inclusion of the element in the inventory(ies) (this date should precede the submission of this nomination):*

December 2019

*(v) Explain how the element was identified and defined, including how information was collected and processed 'with the participation of communities, groups and relevant non-governmental organizations' (Article 11.b) for the purpose of inventorying, including reference to the role of the gender of the participants. Additional information may be provided to demonstrate the participation of research institutes and centres of expertise (max. 200 words).*

Identifying, and defining, the element was done through a set of workshops that were conducted with the fieldwork team, and it was the result of extensive meetings held between the committee in charge of preparing the file, the fieldwork team, and many governmental and non-governmental institutions. After the initial field research procedures, the committee could identify the intangible heritage aspect pertinent to the Convention, namely those festivals that take place at some points at the Holy Family journey route. Two major festivals were identified: 'Festival of the Advent of the Holy Family to Egypt,' and 'The Nativity of the Virgin (Feast).' Accordingly, the element was defined as 'Festivals Related to the Journey of the Holy Family in Egypt.'

The work team then began to discuss the diverse forms of celebration at the venues of the Holy Family's journey based on the efficient participation of many members of the community in data collection. These members were eager to give their free, prior, and informed consent to nominate this element for inscription on the Representative List of Human Heritage.

Data collection processes at the stages of preparing the National Inventory and the Representative List cultivated a sense of awareness for this element.

*(vi) Indicate how often the inventory(ies) is(are) updated (periodicity) (max. 100 words).*

The National Inventory will be updated every one to three years.

*(vii) Explain how the inventory(ies) is(are) regularly updated. The updating process is understood not only as adding new elements but also as revising existing information on the evolving nature of the elements already included therein (Article 12.1 of the Convention) (max. 200 words).*

In updating its data and elements, the National Inventory follows the principles set in the 2003 Convention necessitating a periodic review of the list in general and the elements in particular. The authority in charge of the National Inventory supervises data collection for any element of the intangible cultural heritage. Researchers visit the concerned parties and practitioners directly to get updates on the inscribed elements. With regard to new elements, the committee in charge of the National Inventory receives their nominations for inscription from the local community and practitioners. Based on this, their data are collected from the concerned parties, and they are inscribed on the Inventory after ensuring their compliance with the 2003 Convention criteria pertaining to the intangible cultural heritage and its fields. The reviewing and updating processes take place every one to three years. Some of the updates, in the case of adding new elements, are based on requests received from the local community, and the updates comprise adding some pictorial material and videos, consents of community members, and additional data.

*(viii) Documentary evidence shall be provided in an annex demonstrating that the nominated element is included in one or more inventories of the intangible cultural heritage present in the territory(ies) of the submitting State(s) Party(ies), as defined in Articles 11.b and 12 of the Convention. Such evidence shall at least include the name of the element, its description, the name(s) of the communities, groups or, if applicable, individuals concerned, their geographic location and the range of the element.*

- a. *If the inventory is available online, provide hyperlinks (URLs) to pages dedicated to the nominated element (max. four hyperlinks in total, to be indicated in the box below). Attach to the nomination print-outs (no more than ten standard A4 sheets) of relevant sections of the content of these links. **The information should be provided in English or French, as well as in the original language if different.***

- b. If the inventory is not available online, attach exact copies of texts (no more than ten standard A4 sheets) concerning the element included in the inventory. **These texts should be provided in English or French as well as in the original language if different.**

Indicate the materials provided and – if applicable – the relevant hyperlinks:

Copy of the Element Inventory Form (latest update February 2020) in English and Arabic

## 6. Documentation

### 6.a. Appended documentation (mandatory)

The documentation listed below is mandatory and will be used in the process of evaluating and examining the nomination. The photographs and the video will also be helpful for activities geared at ensuring the visibility of the element if it is inscribed. Tick the following boxes to confirm that the related items are included with the nomination and that they follow the instructions. Additional materials other than those specified below cannot be accepted and will not be returned.

- documentary evidence of the consent of communities, along with a translation into English or French if the language of the community concerned is other than English or French;
- documentary evidence demonstrating that the nominated element is included in an inventory of the intangible cultural heritage present in the territory(ies) of the submitting State(s) Party(ies), as defined in Articles 11 and 12 of the Convention; such evidence shall include a relevant extract of the inventory(ies) in English or in French, as well as in the original language, if different;
- ten recent photographs in high definition;
- grant(s) of rights corresponding to the photos (Form ICH-07-photo);
- edited video (from five to ten minutes), subtitled in one of the languages of the Committee (English or French) if the language utilized is other than English or French;
- grant(s) of rights corresponding to the video recording (Form ICH-07-video).

### 6.b. Principal published references (optional)

Submitting States may wish to list, using a standard bibliographic format, the principal published references providing supplementary information on the element, such as books, articles, audiovisual materials or websites. Such published works should not be sent along with the nomination.

*Not to exceed one standard page.*

- Agban, Ishac Ajban. Rihlat Al-‘A’ela Al-Muqaddasa fi Misr (The Holy Family Journey in Egypt). Cairo: Anbaa Rusya (Russia’s News), 2017.
- Al-Muharraqi, Daniel. Deir Al-Sayyeda Al Azraa Al Muharraqi. (The Virgin Muharraqi Monastery). Place of Publication, Publisher, 2001.
- Deir Al-Shaheed Marigirgis lil Rahibat bi Misr Al-Qadeema (The Monastery of St. George for Nuns in Old Egypt). Rihlat Al-‘A’ela Al-Muqaddasa ila Misr wa Mintaqat Misr Al-Qadeema (The Journey of the Holy Family to Egypt and Old Egypt Area). Place of Publication, Publisher, 2000
- Habib, Raouf. Al-Matareyya wa Shajarat Al-Azraa. (Al Matareyya and the Virgin’s Tree.) Cairo: Al- Mahabba Bookshop, Year.
- Saeed, Sally William. Rihlat Al-‘A’ela ila Jabal Al-Sakhra wallati Ihtawat ‘ala Al-Asl Al-Qibti wal Tarjamatayn Al-Arabeyya wa Al-Habasheyya li Makhtut Jabal Al-Tayr )The Family’s Journey to Jabal Al-Sakhra which Included the Original Coptic and the Arabic and Ethiopian Translations of the Jabal al-Tayr Manuscript). Cairo: Adab Bookshop, 2009.
- The Coptic Museum in Cairo. Museum Sector at the Ministry of Antiquities (A group of artefacts that document the route of the journey of the Holy Family to Egypt, and some functional relief models of the Holy Family journey).

## 7. Signature(s) on behalf of the State(s) Party(ies)

*The nomination should be signed by the official empowered to do so on behalf of the State Party, together with his or her name, title and the date of submission.*

*In the case of multinational nominations, the document should contain the name, title and signature of an official of each State Party submitting the nomination.*

Name: ALAA YOUSSEF

Title: Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of Egypt to UNESCO

Date: 19 October 2021 (revised version)

Signature: <signed>