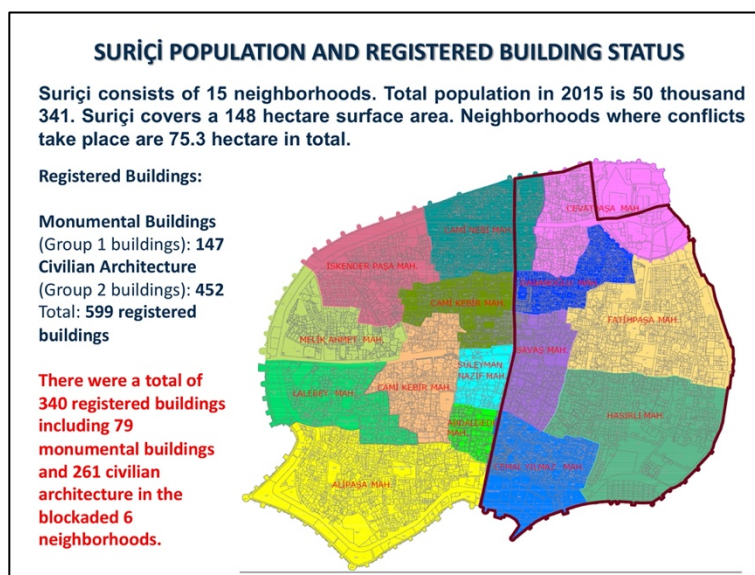


WHAT HAPPENED IN TERMS OF MANAGEMENT OF DIYARBAKIR FORTRESS AND HEVSEL GARDENS CULTURAL LANDSCAPE AFTER BEING INCLUDED IN UNESCO'S WORLD HERITAGE LIST:

Being surrounded by Diyarbakir Fortress and subject to our report, Suriçi is the place where the city of Diyarbakir first established. It has been registered as urban protected area and reserved in 1988 by the Ministry of Culture. There were 595 registered monumental and civil architectural buildings in this historical city called Suriçi. Original blocks, plots and street lines of the town were conserved in general. For this reason, Medieval City Plan was also conserved. In July 2015, Diyarbakir Fortress and Hevsel Gardens Cultural Landscape were registered as World Heritage. Site Management Plan was approved in 2014 and submitted to World Heritage Center.

Our report is about the current status of the destruction caused by the conflicts starting in September 2015 and following demolition and reconstruction activities in Suriçi, which is the buffer zone of the Heritage area.



- 1. Conflicts:** Armed conflicts have started in September 2015 in 6 neighborhoods of Suriçi (*Cevat Paşa, Dabanoğlu, Fatih Paşa, Hasırlı, Cemal Yılmaz and Savaş neighborhoods*) between the state military forces and PKK militants. The governor's office announced that the conflicts ended on 10 March 2016. In this period of time, curfew was declared six times. The site was blockaded after the conflicts started and blockade still continues in 5 neighbourhoods. Civilians are not allowed to enter these neighbourhoods. During the 7-month conflicts of which the last 4 months were violent, the destruction was severe as explosives and heavy weaponry, caterpillar tanks and cannons were used.
- 2. Destruction and Removal of Debris:** Debris removal process was initiated in February 2016 without proceeding with assessment of the conflict region, which is an urban protected area and a buffer zone of World Heritage Site, and without obtaining necessary permits from Cultural and Natural Heritage Conservation Board. In the Decision No. 3873 of Cultural and Natural Heritage Preservation Board dated 23.03.2016;

It is said that *“It is decided that the debris of the building wrecks on the blocked roads shall be removed under supervision of Museum Directorate experts. In case debris of partially or completely demolished registered buildings were detected, qualified building elements of these buildings shall be stored in a suitable area under supervision of Museum Directorate experts to be assessed later.”* However, the debris (including the building blocks of registered buildings) was removed outside Sur region.

- 3. Evaluation of destruction:** Observational evaluation of registered buildings were started on the site by local officers of the Ministry of Culture in May 2016. As a result, it is seen from the report prepared on July 2016 that 332 registered buildings in 6 different neighbourhoods were evaluated, 147 of these buildings were determined to be damage-free, 42 of them were slightly damaged, 37 of them were moderately damaged, 55 of them were severely damaged, 9 of them were demolished and 42 of them were extinguished (demolished and their debris was removed). As a result of the evaluation made by World Heritage Sites Management on 10/05/2016 and 16/08/2016 by comparing satellite images with cadastral sheets, it is seen that a total of 1519 buildings were demolished completely. Among these buildings, 36 registered buildings including 35 civilian and 1 monumental building were completely destroyed, 25 registered buildings including 19 civilian and 6 monumental were partially destroyed and 28 buildings were damaged. In addition, 2012 CDP (Conservation Development Plan) evaluated that 53 environmental buildings were completely and 15 environmental buildings were partially destroyed and 13 of them were damaged (See: Nevin Soyukaya, report dated 01.08.2017). As a result of the comparison of satellite images dated 11/07/2017 with cadastral sheets by TMMOB (Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects) Diyarbakir Provincial Coordination Committee (PCC), it is seen that 3569 buildings were completely destroyed and 1416 buildings were not destroyed yet among a total of 4985 buildings in 6 different neighbourhoods, and a total of 46,3 hectare area was destroyed and transformed into a flat ground (See: Nevin Soyukaya, report dated 01.08.2017 and TMMOB PCC 2015-2017 Sur Report, 02.12.2017, https://www.tmmob.org.tr/sites/default/files/rapor_ic_baskieniyilestirilmis.pdf).

All these data show that destruction that started before evaluation made by the Ministry of Culture continued after the evaluations, a planned demolition was carried out for the non-damaged buildings and streets without leaving any trace thereof and integrity and authenticity of the area were destroyed. Upon application of TMMOB Chamber of Architects Diyarbakir Branch to Diyarbakir Governorate, Diyarbakir Governorate Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism stated in their letter No. 1215 dated 28.04.2016 that “Police Forces continue their search and scanning activities in the neighbourhoods, therefore current status of the registered buildings cannot be shared.” However, satellite images taken from Diyarbakir Metropolitan Municipality on 10.05.2016 indicate that demolition activities were initiated at the time specified above.



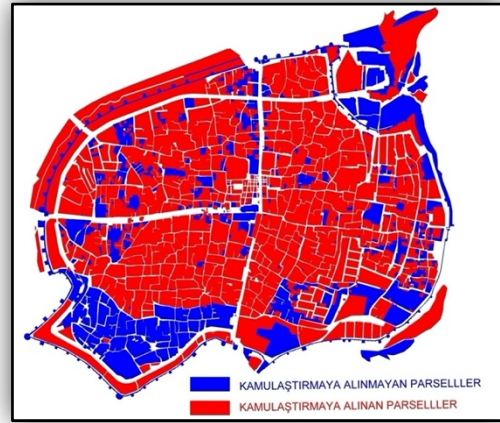
Other than the destruction in 6 neighbourhoods under blockade, where the conflicts took place, demolition process within the scope of urban transformation was started in 2 neighbourhoods (Alipaşa, Lalebey) on 23/05/2017. People were forcibly evicted and demolition was started. Total 806 buildings were destroyed in both neighbourhoods, as seen from the satellite images.



TMMOB Diyarbakir July, 2017

4. **Expropriation Decision:** After the conflicts, Cabinet has taken an expropriation decision on 21 March 2016 in accordance with the Article 27 of Expropriation Law No. 2942 for 6292 parcels out of 7714 parcels in Suriçi. This decision includes 82% of Suriçi. Majority of the remaining 18% consists of parcels owned by TOKİ (Public Housing Administration) and Treasury. As a result, Suriçi will completely passed to public property.

Expropriation decision and initiation of the implementation process as well as destruction of the buildings in the area hinder return of those who lived there. In addition, passing ownership of a whole city to the state is very problematic in terms of fundamental human rights, proprietary rights and urban rights. Many expropriation activities within the scope of “Urban Transformation Project” were made by TOKİ in Alipaşa and Lalebey neighbourhoods against all protests by the residents based on anti-democratic laws.



5. **2012 CDP (Conservation Development Plan) Amendment:** Suriçi was registered as Urban Protected Area in 1988. First conservation development plan was prepared in 1990. As it was needed, the conservation development plan was revised. In 2012 plan, 1952 cadastral sheets were taken as a basis. Streets, blocks and plots that have remained the same for hundreds of years were conserved and it was aimed to transform Suriçi to its original and authentic structure. In addition, buildings that are considered as important elements of the city’s historical fabric were registered as *Environmental Structures* and determined as structures to be conserved in the plan. The plan has been an important document during the UNESCO nomination process and was used as a base for *Site Management Plan*.

However, Conservation Development Plan has been revised upon a centralized resolution of the Ministry of Environment and Urban Planning, without consulting with the municipalities, in line with the destruction in December 2016 as well as the aimed urban transformation. This plan aimed to legitimize the practices which can be considered as a basis for functional changes, road expansions and destruction of the whole city, destroying the authenticity and cultural fabric of the city. According to the plan, school areas were transformed into police stations, however, respective educational areas were not determined. The roads connecting these police stations were expanded to accommodate military vehicles and tanks. 7-8 meter Yenikapı Street, where registered structures are densely located, was expanded to 15 meters. Reason of the plan revision was stated as security. On the other hand, although the CPD plan amendments that include the heritage area and buffer zone had to be approved by UNESCO World Heritage Center as the amendments concern the integrity of the area, this process was not initiated. Said revised plan was assessed and reported by TMMOB Diyarbakır Provincial Coordination Committee. Violations were included in the report as 17 list items. (See: http://www.spo.org.tr/genel/bizden_detay.php?kod=7827&tipi=3&sube=11)

“Article Three; Decisions stipulated in said CDPA (Conservation Development Plan Amendment) are justified by bringing forward security as the reason and Suriçi is developed by focusing on defense and Suriçi is being transformed into a defense tool with this approach. Defense oriented approach ignores all other values and violates general urban planning principles, interdisciplinary planning procedures and public interest.

Article Four; After reviewing the plan amendment explanation report, it is clearly seen that the reasoning behind said amendment is security and the fact that Suriçi is a world heritage area and any intervention to the city fabric will cause irreversible damages was completely ignored. The plan report shows inconsistency in itself because of this. The introduction section of the report discusses the values of the city however following sections suggest defense oriented functions against the citizens who bring these values into existence, the city’s original values are compromised for the sake of constructing buildings to fulfil these functions and an approach in violation of the universal qualities of a site which is included in the World Heritage List.

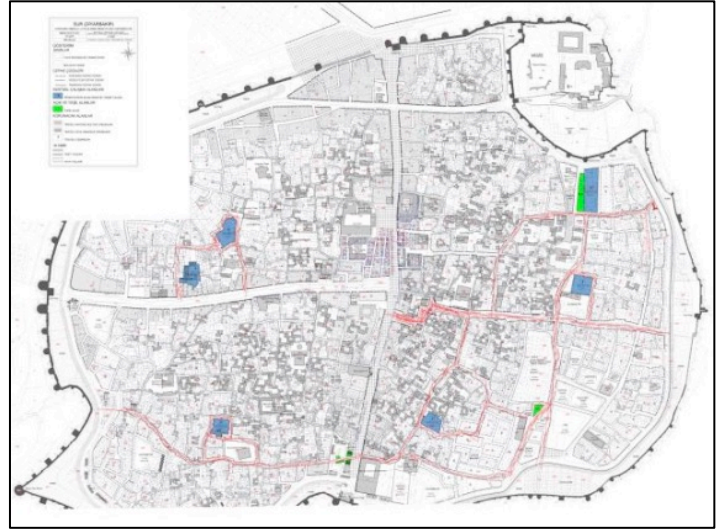
Article Seven; the provision “Urban design projects to be prepared for the areas determined by the Ministry of Environment and Urban Planning are annexes to this plan. Implementary principles which do not appear in this plan and provisions thereof shall be determined with Urban Design or Architectural Projects” which is included in Article 3.15 of the CDPA Plan Implementation Provisions and defined for Implementary Development Plans are the project by which the implementation and building processes prepared on 1/500 and 1/200 or 1/100 scales depending on the details required by the subject between the conservation development plan and architectural project. The provisions “Size, location and functions of building forms without being subject to plan amendments, outside the registered parcels in this project” and Article 3.31.2 “Implementation process of all closed and open areas of use determined by the Ministry of Environment and Urban Planning in the planning area shall be carried out in line with the Urban Design Project, which is an annex to the plan.” considers the projects which are not currently approved as annexes of the plan, give initiative to the architect / planner without requiring any urban design or architectural project approvals and cause the projects to be realized in Suriçi to be considered as approved without any inspection. This is clearly in violation of planning principles and procedures.

Article Fifteen; The fact that no holistic decision is taken on the upper scale for the CDPA for Urban Design Projects causes deformation in the plan’s integrity and intervention to the traditional urban fabric without adhering to CDP.

Article Sixteen; Justification of the road changes and expansions in the CDPA Plan explanation report is “security, service and the fact that there are not any roads that ease passing of fire trucks for fires and ambulances for healthcare services.” It is seen that the roads opened within the scope of CDPA serves as “Police Service Area”. In addition, the settlements that have an ancient urban fabric such as Suriçi can meet its public needs such as fire trucks and ambulance by producing modern and technological solutions. However, these needs are brought forward to justify the destruction that will damage the urban fabric with plan decisions.



2012 CDP

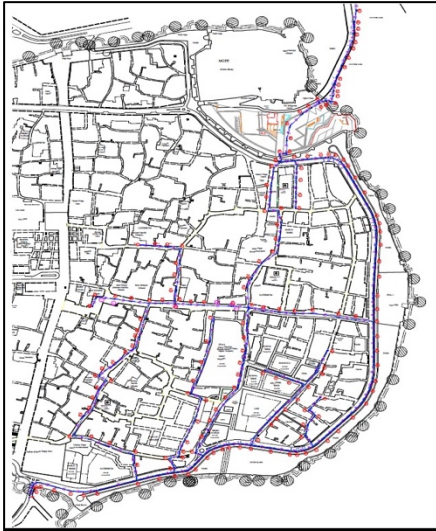


2012 CDPA

6. Forced Migration: Curfew was declared in Suriçi six times as of 09 September 2015 and the city was blockaded. In this period of time, security forces forced people to leave their homes. Finally, on 10 December 2015, curfew was suspended for a few hours to completely evacuate the area. Fundamental needs of thousands of people who were forced to migrate such as sheltering were not met and therefore the people had become refugees in their own cities. Population of Suriçi is 50.341 according to the 2015 census. Population of the 6 neighbourhoods where conflicts happened and that are subject to forced migration is 22.323. All population was forced to migrate. As a result of the demolition of Alipaşa and Lalebey neighbourhoods, 806 buildings were completely destroyed, almost all 1276 rights holders were mistreated and approximately 6000 people who lived there were forced to migrate. Blockade in Cevatpaşa neighbourhood as well as a part of Abdaldede neighbourhood were removed in May 2016, the people who lived there returned to their homes. However, the other four neighbourhoods and majority of one neighbourhood remain subject to blockade and majority of the area have become a flat ground due to the destruction. This process not only damages the architectural and cultural values but also hinders continuity of the everyday life. Urban transformation projects in Suriçi continue to change the socio-cultural life in the city.



7. Destruction of Infrastructure Projects and Archaeological Layers: After destruction of the blockaded neighbourhoods was complete, many 2 to 2.5 meter deep excavations with construction equipment were made for clean and waste water channels, natural gas lines, electricity and internet lines for newly constructed buildings. According to the newspapers such as Milliyet and Hürriyet on 16.12.2016, “25 thousand 686 meters of potable water, 28 thousand 474 meters of sewage are built, telephone, internet and natural gas lines will be installed with the infrastructure works before building new residences”. These intensive excavations as if a new settlement is being made caused a serious destruction and damaged archaeological layers in Suriçi, an urban protected area. However, local and reversible solutions must be developed in order to prevent such destruction in this historical and archaeological area. Besides, infrastructure of Suriçi was renewed by the Metropolitan Municipality in 2002 with an international project. Infrastructure excavations after destruction started from İçkale (Inner Fortress) to pass through Küpeli gate, right next to important buildings such as Nasuh Paşa Mosque, Kurşunlu Mosque, Surp Giragos, Mar Petyun and Armenian Catholic Church.



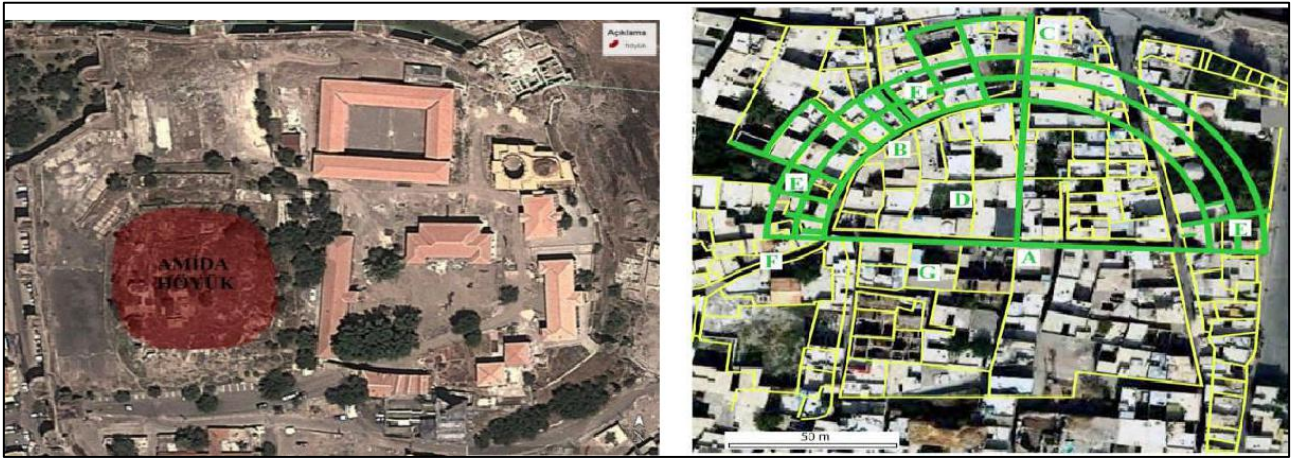
Infrastructure Project



Deep and wide excavation area right in front of Urfa Gate

Diyarbakir is one of the rare cities that lead a life for 7 thousand years without interruption, symbolizing all stages of development of urban history and experience. It is known from written resources and archaeological remains that the city was under the domination of Hurrians, Mitanni, Assyrians, Medes, Persians, Seleucids, Parthians, Romans, Sasanians and many other civilizations during the Islam period, in addition to prehistoric periods in Amida Höyük (Amida Mound). In addition, during Suriçi infrastructure renewal project by the Metropolitan Municipality in 2002, a Roman Bath remains were found during excavations made in the region and a part of the bath mosaic was removed with rescue excavation and transferred to the museum directorate. Assoc. Dr. Martine Asenat from Montpellier University states in their Archaic Amida research that there is an amphitheater in Cevat Paşa neighbourhood, which is in the conflict zone, (Anatolia Antiqua XX (2012), P. 147,155) and the area which is currently considered as an amphitheater inside the İçkale (Inner Fortress) may

be a council building. Thus, many extant epitaphs on the walls of the city from Hellenistic, Roman and Islamic periods, demonstrate the historical depth of the city.



Amphitheater where is located just outside of Ickale.

Hundreds of cultural assets of the historical city of Suriçi have been damaged due to destruction during and after the conflicts and the archaeological layers that keep the proofs of the city's history of thousands of years were destroyed in the name of infrastructure renewal. Up to 3 meters of channels passed just next to important historical structures. Deep excavations were made on the city wall remains to install natural gas lines. In addition, the new houses that are designed with basements required deep excavation works and this also damaged the lower layers. All these excavation works have been made with heavy construction equipment. These works were carried out as if the place is not a Urban Protected Area with thousands of years of history and a World Heritage buffer zone but a new settlement. Although these works must be performed under supervision of museum officers, they were carried out simultaneously with many construction equipment in multiple areas. It also raises questions that how the Museum Directorate with limited number of staff kept up with these infrastructure works or how and with which techniques they documented the process.

- 8. Conversion of Inner Fortress Archaeological Park Area into a Recreational Area:** In accordance with the project initiated in 2000, Inner Fortress, which is a part of the World Heritage Site, has been decided to function as a Culture and Tourism area. In the first phase of the project, the part of the area surrounded by Artuqid Walls was planned as a museum area, while the area surrounding the Ottoman Walls was planned to be arranged as "Archaeopark" with Amida Höyük (Amida Mound) in order to uncover the ancient structures and layers determined to be underground. It is stated in the UNESCO nomination file and in the Site Management Plan that the site will be protected and functionalized within the framework of this plan. It is also mentioned in the 2012 CDP notes as Archaeopark. However, within the scope of the transformation works carried out after the conflicts, inferior structures in the area where the second phase of the project will be implemented were removed while the registration of a registered structure in the region was cancelled and then the structure was

demolished. In the evacuated area, a modern park was built and excavations were carried out with construction machinery and many rooted trees were planted. It is certain that all these practices damage the archaeological remains under the ground.



9. Structures Built in the Demolished Neighbourhoods: Within the scope of urban transformation, reinforced concrete structures were started to be built in the area which was demolished and converted to flat land, which did not match the historical urban fabric and traditional Diyarbakir houses. The construction of thin stone pavement buildings, which contradict the conservation development plan, do not match the mass positions, courtyards, wall dimensions, street and parcel sizes. These areas are in contradiction with the traditional street fabric of Diyarbakir with its exterior appearance. In addition, dehumanization of the area, demolition of thousands of houses and the expropriations indicate that the real owners of Suriçi will no longer be allowed to live in this area.

TMMOB Chamber of Architects Diyarbakir Branch announced with their report dated 29.06.2017 that contradictions to traditional urban and architectural fabric created with the CDPA. Some of these are given below:

1. While the traditional building facades were conserved in CDP, it is seen that this was not taken into consideration in the CDPA and that the facades of the buildings were covered with cut basalt.
2. The dead-end streets in the traditional urban plan that were conserved in the CDP are not conserved in the CDPA.
3. It has been determined that courtyards, courtyard walls, floor coverings, stairs, door details, pools and wells, which have existed for thousands of years and are conserved in the CDP, are not protected in CDPA, such care is not taken and the borders of the courtyard are reduced.
4. In order to conserve the traditional street fabric and facade architecture, one bay window was proposed in each parcel in CDP, while multiple bay windows were built in new houses within the scope of CDPA.

5. While the keystone of the arches of the windows was identified as an important detail in the CDP, it is seen that in the newly built reinforced concrete and stone paved houses which are not compatible with the traditional architecture in any way lack the important details such as the keystone in the windows and arches.
6. Instead of the so-called Jerzemin (zerzemin), some of which have windows under the ground facing the courtyard, it is seen that there are basements in the new reinforced concrete houses.
7. While the parcel, block and street borders which have been in existence for thousands of years are preserved in CDP, it is seen in CDPA and new practices that the parcel boundaries are not followed in new houses and the street boundaries are mostly destroyed.
8. While it was recommended that the clayed soil roof slabs in the traditional architecture must be covered with suitable materials in order not to distort the traditional texture visually, even if new insulation methods were applied. However, new buildings have a reinforced concrete top layer with basalt pavement and the roofs enclosed with parapets which does not have a place in the traditional architecture or are not recommended by CDP.

In addition, it is determined that the projects built in the destroyed area were made without approval of Diyarbakir Cultural Assets Conservation Board. TMMOB Chamber of Architects Diyarbakir Branch asked in their letter No. 17/314 dated 14.08.2017 to the Conservation Committee that how many approved projects were there related to new settlement process given by the relevant Committee for Hasırlı neighbourhood, which is inside the conflict zone. Diyarbakir Cultural Assets Conservation Board replied in their letter No. 2412 dated 21.08.2017 that there were not any approved projects in the area. However, it can be seen that new housing projects were built in the northeastern part of Hasırlı Neighbourhood from the Google Earth image taken on 11.07.2017.



Rebuilt houses in contradiction with CDP and traditional architecture in Suriçi



Traditional/Conventional House of Diyarbakır/Suriçi

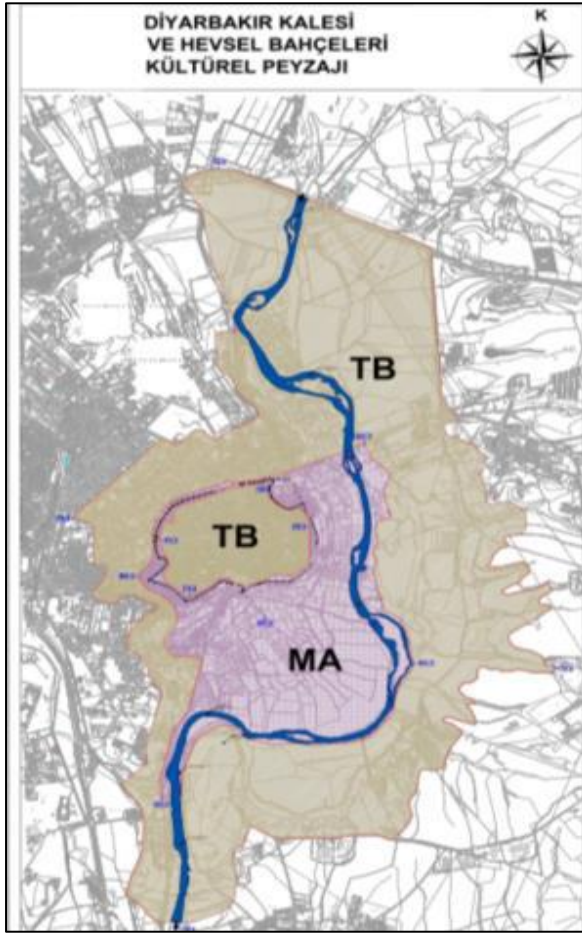
A committee under supervision of the Chamber of Architects Diyarbakir Branch, Chamber of Urban Planners Diyarbakir Branch, Chamber of Surveying and Cadaster Engineers Diyarbakir Branch representatives and former president of the World Heritage Area entered the area under blockade on 17.01.2020, as per the permission given by the Governorate for the first time after the conflicts. The committee examined the area regarding new housing and settlements. It is seen from the investigation of Armenian Catholic Church of which the courtyard was used for a road that reconstruction was made for the demolished parts of the church.

10. Gazi Street and Melikahmet Street Renewal Projects: Ministry of Environment and Urban Planning started renewal projects for Suriçi's important streets and roads. However, the ministry used same types, colors and materials which destroy and transform the authentic fabric of the city. In the Gazi and Melikahmet Streets, which are two of the major roads in the district, high buildings which are in contradiction with the urban fabric were not touched but the facades of these buildings were painted white, which is also in contradiction with the traditional fabric of the city. Changing windows of the stores and adding roof tile covered porches with wooden building elements that do not exist in the region's traditional architecture are very similar with the applications made on the Konya historical Covered Bazaar. The only local element included in these practices are the basalt used in covering the walls between stores. Melikahmet Street lost its authentic structure mostly in the 1950s with road expansion projects and it has become a road where inferior multi-story buildings are located ever since. However, some important monumental buildings such as Sinan the Architect's Melikahmet Mosque and Bath, Sin Mosque, Gülşeniler Lodge / Sarı Sadık Tomb, Tacettin Mosque are located on this street and most importantly, this street reaches to the City Walls and the Urfa Gate on the western side of the city. In other words, although the fabric

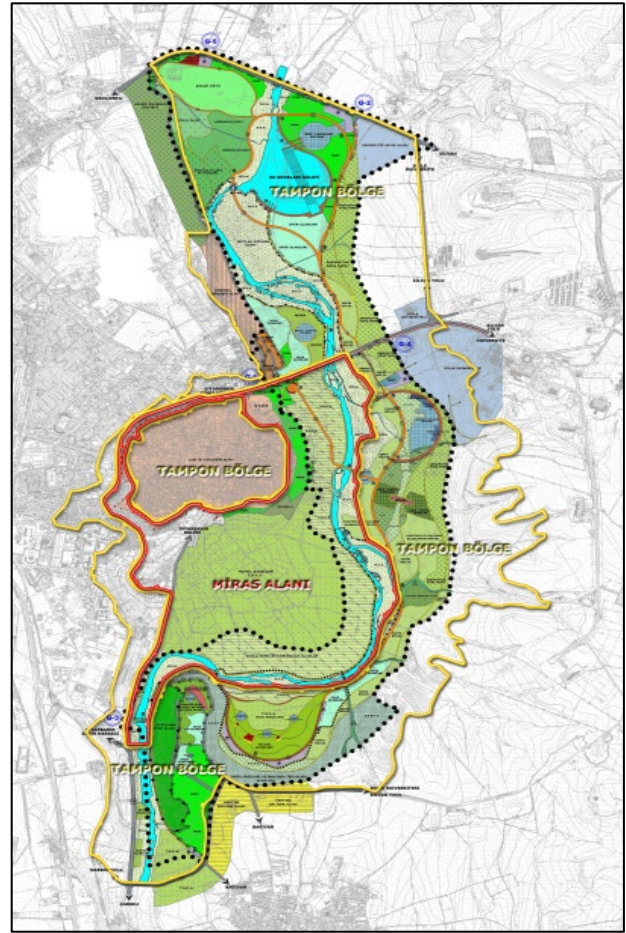
of the street is damaged, the position of it makes the street very important in terms of the historical fabric of Suriçi. However, current practices lead to a project where multi-story, high and inferior buildings facing the streets are not touched but their facades are painted white, in an attempt to bring a new identity to the inferior buildings.



11. Tigris Valley Project and Tigris River Reclamation Works: During the World Heritage nomination process of Diyarbakir Fortress and Hevsel Gardens Cultural Landscape, the Ministry of Environment and Urban Planning registered the area with total surface area of 10.985.474,95 m² that was owned by Treasury within the boundaries of Diyarbakir Province, Sur District, Yukarı Kılıçtaş Neighbourhood as “Reserve Building Area” upon Authority’s Approval No. 5181 dated 23/08/2013. However, the area registered as Reserve Building Area as per the relevant decision was inside the boundaries of the Diyarbakir Fortress and Hevsel Gardens Cultural Landscape Site Management. The Ministry started to work to implement “Tigris Valley Project” in this line. First stage of the project was put out to tender to be implemented around the On Gözlü Bridge. However, conservation experts and NGOs protested this decision as the project which were planned to be implemented during UNESCO World Heritage nomination process would interrupt the nomination, was in violation of conservation of the site and would damage original natural structure of the site and the ecosystem. After the Metropolitan Municipality and TMMOB Diyarbakir PCC has brought this matter to the jurisdiction, reserve building area decision was cancelled by the court. Thus, the legal grounds for the Tigris Valley Project was removed. It was requested that the Tigris Valley, which is the 2nd Buffer Zone of the Management Site, to be justified legally in the UNESCO World Heritage nomination process. For this reason, urban protected area Suriçi was registered as vulnerability transition zone with the Cultural Heritage Conservation Board’s decision No. 3420 dated 29.05.2015 and became subject to Law No. 2863 on Conserving Cultural Assets, upon request of the Site Management. Thus, all implementations on the site require obtaining permission from Conservation Board.



The Map which is showing border of World Heritage Site



Tigris Valley Project

However, with the letter of the Ministry of Environment and Urban Planning to the Municipalities, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Culture and Governorate on 08.12.2016, the area between the On Gözlü Bridge and Old University Bridge in the Tigris Valley was declared to be a "Special Project Area" within the scope of the paragraph (ğ) of the first clause of article 2 of the Statutory Decree on Organization and Duties of the Ministry. Considering the Plans and Coordinate Table on the annexes of the letter regarding said Special Project Area, the project was revived, asking to carry out necessary works and procedures by the relevant authorities within the scope of the legislation in force and the first stage of the project was initiated and completed. As part of the stage 2, DSİ (Turkish State Hydraulic Works) started reclamation works for Tigris River. This decision was also cancelled with the Diyarbakir 3rd Administrative Court's Decision No. 2019/101 dated 23.01.2019, as a result of the lawsuit filed by Chamber of Urban Planners Diyarbakir Branch. This decision was rejected by the court of appeals, which is the superior court, with the decision No. 2019/808 on 28.05.2019.

Tigris River is a migratory corridor for many migratory species. It is an essential area for many migratory species as it is a geographical indicator of the migratory route and it has a suitable habitat. Considering the current dams on the Tigris River as well as the dams planned to be built on the river, the most healthy section of the river in Turkey will be Diyarbakir city center. Especially as the Ilisu Dam starts to retain water, 170 km of the river will be buried under water

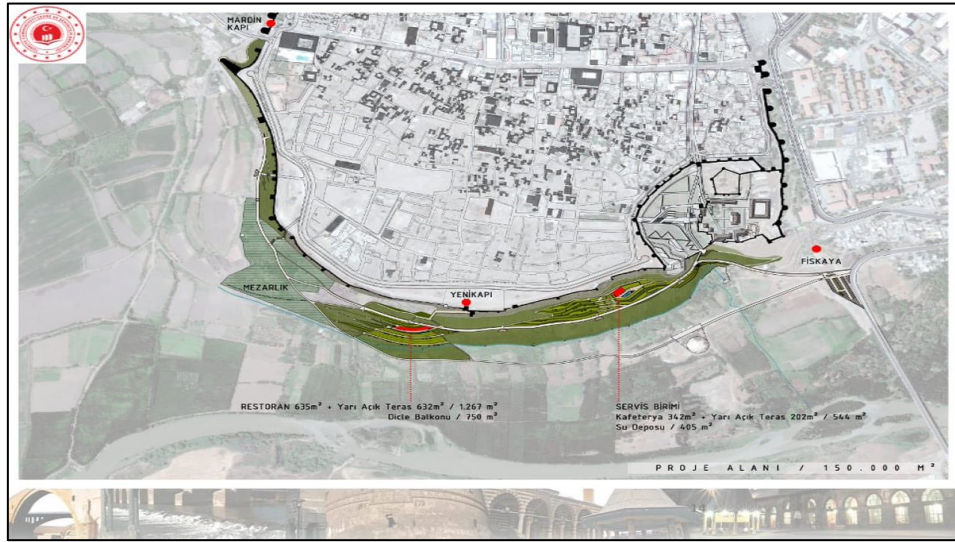
(Nature Association; 2006). Thus, Tigris, just like Euphrates river, will no longer be a river but will become a series of ponds. For this reason, this area of Tigris river included in the Diyarbakir city center will be the only place where it will maintain its river characteristics and will be included in the world heritage site management limits.

However, “River Reclamation” works started by DSİ (State Hydraulic Works) within the scope of Tigris Valley Project starts from the Sadi Bridge (Old University Bridge) on the northern border of the world heritage management site and reaches to the south and the natural river bed is changed and an artificial bed is created. Materials taken from these sites are piled on both sides of the river to make a wall. This wall ruins the natural structure of the river coast as well as the ecosystem. These works caused destruction of reeds and swamps that were a home to many different species both in and on the coast of the river. These practices will ultimately affect the Hevsel Gardens. River reclamation and recreation works within the scope of Tigris Valley Project will change the rural landscape which is registered as a world heritage as it has been leading a life for thousands of years on the coast of the city and transform it into an urban landscape. Yet, the most important factor for this area to be registered as World Heritage is the rural landscape that preserved its natural structure for thousands of years. These works on the Tigris Valley has been suspended before being complete with a right decision taken at the 43rd General Assembly of UNESCO World Heritage Center and the new decisions are expected. In addition, lack of Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment (CHEA) was a factor of this decision.



- 12. Unauthorized Implementations in the World Heritage Area “Nation’s Garden”:** A recreational area design was made with the name of “Nation’s Garden” on a 150 decares area right below the eastern walls of the Diyarbakir Fortress. Nation’s Garden starts below the Tower No. 73 and ends on the Tower No. 62, surrounding the Goat Tower. Within the scope of Nation’s Garden project, a balcony is built under the Tower No. 73, retaining wall damaging the landscape is built for terracing purposes under the road “C” in the plan and extending alongside the Walls, a road is built for vehicles on the area “E” in the plan, an irrigation system

is built for the forestation to be made under the Goat Tower and Tower No. 62 and concrete road around the tower over the rocks, right next to the Goat Tower as well as a metal railing on the side of this road are built. These practices were complete in July 2019. However, Nation's Garden projects were submitted to Diyarbakır Conservation Board after they were complete and the Conservation Board emphasized that the projects were unauthorized in its Decision No. 6988 dated 26.08.2019 however, they also took a decision requesting submission of the project to be prepared after correcting these practices in violation with the theory and rules of conservation specified in the foregoing to the Conservation Board. This decision is in fact allows developing solutions to justify the unauthorized and wrong practices. Tigris Valley Project and Nation's Garden Projects applied on the World Heritage Site were carried out without preparing a Cultural Landscape Effect Assessment Report, taking a Conservation Board decision or submitting to UNESCO World Heritage Center. This application caused the integrity, authenticity and originality of Tigris Valley and Hevsel Gardens, which are located in heritage sites.



13. Removal and sales of historical building blocks in Suriçi: Newspapers made news about removal and sales of the stones from World Heritage Diyarbakir Fortress to be used for decoration purposes in some cafes. As a result of the investigation made upon these news, it has been determined that the surface stones of the wall between Towers 47-48 and 48-49 on Mardin Gate up to the reach of average person were fallen. However, comparing the wall with the photographs taken in 2001, 2007 and 2009, it is seen that the stones on the same spots were missing in the past and the stones are not removed to be sold as the newspapers claimed. However, as no preservation, conservation or restoration was made on this part of the Walls, falling of the stones still continues, although it is very rare (10-20 pieces in total).



Mardin Gate Walls 20.02.2002



Newspaper Article Mardin Gate Walls 13.12.2019

However, during the destruction and debris removal performed by the Ministry of Environment and Urban Planning during and after the conflicts in Sur District of Diyarbakir between October 2015 and March 2016, basalt stones that belong to historical and environmental structures (including dressed surface stones, pillars, capitals, archway pieces and decorative stones) were depredated, some of them were used on the restored buildings in the demolition zone and majority of them were used as decorative items or construction materials in other neighbourhoods of Diyarbakir and Suriçi outside the conflict zone. This created a market for historical building blocks as it caused them to become a commercial product. The press covered this issue in the past, citizens submitted complaints about this issue but the authorities did not take any measures. As of today, people who commercialized this situation remove stones from historical ruins in Sur district in order to respond to the demand of customers, as the basalt stones are run out in the conflict zones and in the two neighbourhoods of Sur district (*Alipaşa and Lalebey*) where urban transformation projects take place. Recently, stones on Surp Sarkis Armenian Church were removed.

Surp Sarkis Armenian Church: This Armenian Church that dates back to 16th century has been idle for a very long time. The church was mostly exposed to damages from treasure hunters and stone removers for commercial purposes. Recently, the church was damaged on 18 December 2019. Women's gathering place at the entrance of the western gate of the church was damaged in order to remove some stones and it is seen from the blood stains on the damaged wall that the person removing the stone was hit on the head with the stone, which caused a serious injury. It is said that the injured person was hospitalized but necessary legal actions were not taken.



The destruction part of the Surp Sarkis Armenian Church 18.12.2019

Protection of empty and damaged buildings such as Surp Sarkis Armenian Church owned by Surp Giragos Armenian Foundation is the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture, Regional Directorate for Foundations, Governorate and Municipality. Unfortunately, the demand for dressed basalt stones in the city causes damage and this damage is increasing every day. Unless the necessary measures are taken, the church as well as other historical damaged buildings that are not used in the city will be damaged to get stones. Photos of a restaurant built with properly dressed basalt stones taken from historical buildings are given below. Said restaurant is located outside the neighbourhoods under blockade where conflicts take place, on a spot that is easily seen by the people as well as the authorities that are responsible for these construction works in Sur district (*According to the laws passed in Sur district, the authority of the municipality was transferred and assigned to the Ministry of Environment and Urban Planning*), without obtaining the necessary permit from the Conservation Board.



New restaurant which is made of historical Stones 18.12.2019

Using the building blocks from the buildings inside the conflict zone in Sur district, including the registered buildings, after the destruction as a commercial product and failure of the authorities to prevent this situation cause damage to other registered buildings in Sur district and even Diyarbakir Fortress.

Şerefhan Aydın
Chair of TMMOB Diyarbakir
Chamber of Architects

Dilan Kaya Taşdelen
Branch Secretary of TMMOB
Diyarbakir Chamber of Urban
Planners

Nevin Soyukaya
Former head of the UNESCO
World Heritage Site

