

Lisbon, 11th January 2019

**Subject: Heritage in Danger – Support Request
Al-Sawaber Complex (Arthur Erickson, 1981, Kuwait City, Kuwait)**

To whom it may concern,

Docomomo International – the International Committee for Documentation and Conservation of Buildings, Sites and Neighborhoods of the Modern Movement – wishes to draw your attention for the threatened future of Al-Sawaber Complex in Kuwait City, is facing.

Al-Sawaber Complex was built based on the 1976 project developed by the renowned Canadian architect, Arthur Erickson. The shape of the complex provides easy horizontal circulation between the apartment blocks, and the placement of the buildings creates intimate spaces sheltered from the rest of the city. The architecture of this residential complex foresaw a symbiosis between mass apartment housing and the sense of privacy, valued by the Kuwaiti people. This project marked a shift in state housing typology from single-family units in the suburbs to collective living in the city.

The Sawaber has since been recognized as Modern Heritage building of cultural and historical significance by the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters; and it was also selected to be part of the Modern Century Project promoted by the World Monuments Fund.

The International Conference of urban conservation: Role of the Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape in safeguarding modern heritage in the Arab States, organized by UNESCO's World Heritage Centre and the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL), alerted back in 2015 about the loss of significance, the neglect and severe damages that important architecture from the 20th century is currently facing in the Arab world and, generally, at a worldwide scale.

During this conference, which was held in Kuwait City (1st - 3rd December 2015), it was established that a sustainable conservation approach, based on historic perspective and the integration of heritage conservation in the training of future architects and urban planners of the Arab world, would be the best solution for enhancing and safeguarding cultural heritage.

Docomomo International believes that, rather than being demolished, Al-Sawaber complex should be rehabilitated and regenerated as a mixed-use urban development while maintaining elements of its original character and structure. This sort of adaptive reuse is a much more sustainable and intelligent approach than wholesale demolition.

Docomomo International wishes to express its full support to Docomomo Kuwait and all the initiatives conducted against the demolition of Al-Sawaber complex, envisaging its preservation for future generations, either within the original function or reused, while taking into consideration the historical and the cultural significance of this project.

Looking forward for your best attention to this case.

Yours sincerely,



Ana Tostões
Chair of Docomomo International