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Lebanon News

Jun. 08, 2018 | 12:03 AM (Last Updated: June 08, 2018 | 11:14 AM)

Army conducts heritage rescue efforts



- The Daily Star

BEIRUT: Twenty tons of construction material was flown in by helicopter to the Jabal Moussa Biosphere Reserve on the slopes of Mount Lebanon Thursday to prevent the deterioration of an archaeological site at risk of collapse. The heritage rescue operation was carried out by Lebanese Army officers stationed at the Beirut air base in cooperation with the Association for the Protection of Jabal Moussa and the Directorate of Civil-Military Cooperation, according to a statement released by the association.

The hefty cargo was loaded at the Mayrouba runway in the Kesrouan district and flown to Jabal Moussa, whose surrounding villages became part of UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves in 2009.

Piles of wood and other construction material could be seen rigged with cables and hanging from helicopters hovering in the area.

A ground crew was also deployed to help pilots place the loads.

Known as the “houses site,” the location consists of three houses abandoned in 1965.

The buildings embody local architectural heritage, characterized by decades-old vaults topped with decorative domes and a clay roof.

The intervention was long-needed to protect the buildings from the effects of weather and time.

The association faced major logistical challenges in transporting materials to the site, which is located at an altitude of 1,400 meters.

The area includes the remains of a network of canals carved in rock and soil in order to collect water in stone reservoirs. Jabal Moussa is characterized by an absence of springs, which led the region’s inhabitants to engineer alternative solutions.

The joint operation was conducted within the framework of the “Walking through time in Jabal Moussa” project, implemented by the association and funded by the Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation through the U.S. Embassy in Lebanon, in coordination with the Directorate-General of Antiquities at the Culture Ministry.

The project, scheduled to continue until December, aims to raise awareness of the history of Jabal Moussa through education and development.

Jabal Moussa is known for its spiritual and historical sites, as well as for its natural environment. Among them is the Adonis Valley, the legendary site of the death of the god Adonis according to Phoenician mythology, and rock carvings dating back to the second century A.D.

A version of this article appeared in the print edition of The Daily Star on June 08, 2018, on page 3.