



# ISESCO PROGRAMME OF ISLAMIC CULTURE CAPITALS

2005 - 2025



The Third Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers (Doha, 29-31 December 2001) issued a resolution whereby it adopted the draft programme of the capitals of Islamic culture submitted by the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and invited the OIC Member States to nominate cities of which ISESCO shall select - each year - three capitals of Islamic culture, representing the Arab, Asian and African regions. The said Conference also decided to proclaim Makkah Al-Mukarramah as the first city celebrated as capital of Islamic culture.

In accordance with the Resolution issued by the Twenty-Ninth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (Khartoum, Republic of the Sudan, 25-27 June 2002) on this matter, ISESCO has formulated an integrated conception of the programme of the capitals of Islamic culture, whereby it proposed thirty capitals from the Arab, Asian and African regions to become capitals of Islamic culture over the next ten years, after the celebration of Makkah al-Mukarramah as the first capital of Islamic culture. The said conception includes the proposed criteria for the selection of the capitals of Islamic culture, along with the broad lines and general trends of the activities proposed for the celebration of the selected capital.

The Fourth, Sixth and Ninth sessions of the Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers (Algiers, People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, 15-17 December 2004), (Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan, 13-15 October 2009) and (Muscat, 2-4 November 2015) adopted the list of Islamic Culture Capitals for the years (2005-2024).

# CAPITALS OF ISLAMIC CULTURE NOMINATED FOR THE YEARS (2005 - 2014)

Adopted by  
the 4<sup>th</sup> Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers

Year	Arab region	Asian region	African region
2005		Makkah Al-Mukarramah (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia)	
2006	Aleppo (Syrian Arab Republic)	Esfahan (Islamic Republic of Iran)	Timbuktu (Republic of Mali)
2007	Fez (Kingdom of Morocco) Tripoli <sup>1</sup> (Libya)	Tashkent (Republic of Uzbekistan)	Dakar (Republic of Senegal)
2008	Alexandria (Arab Republic of Egypt)	Lahore (Islamic Republic of Pakistan)	Djibouti <sup>2</sup> (Republic of Djibouti)
2009	Kairouan (Tunisian Republic)	Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) Baku <sup>3</sup> (Republic of Azerbaijan)	N'Djamena (Republic of Chad)
2010	Tarim (Republic of Yemen)	Dushanbe (Republic of Tajikistan)	Moroni (Union of Comoros)
2011	Tlemcen <sup>4</sup> (People's Democratic Republic of Algeria) Nouackchott <sup>5</sup> (Islamic Republic of Mauritania)	Jakarta (Republic of Indonesia)	Conakry (Republic of Guinea)
2012	Najaf <sup>6</sup> (Republic of Iraq)	Dhaka (People's Republic of Bangladesh)	Niamey (Republic of Niger)
2013	Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah <sup>7</sup> (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) Tripoli (Republic of Lebanon) <sup>8</sup>	Ghazni (Islamic Republic of Afghanistan)	Kano (Federal Republic of Nigeria)
2014	Sharjah (State of the United Arab Emirates)	Bishkek (Republic of Kyrgyzstan)	Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)

<sup>1</sup> Tripoli was, as an exception, celebrated as the fourth capital of Islamic culture for the year 2007 on the occasion of its hosting the 5<sup>th</sup> Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers.

<sup>2</sup> The celebration of Djibouti as a capital of Islamic culture for the year 2008 of the African Region was postponed, upon an official request from the Djibouti government.

<sup>3</sup> Baku was, as an exception, celebrated as the fourth capital of Islamic culture for the year 2009 on the occasion of its hosting the 6<sup>th</sup> Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers.

<sup>4</sup> Tlemcen was, as an exception, celebrated as the fourth capital of Islamic culture for the year 2011 on the occasion of its hosting the 7<sup>th</sup> Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers.

<sup>5</sup> The celebration of Nouackchott as a capital of Islamic culture for the year 2011 of the Arab Region was postponed, upon an official request from the Mauritanian government.

<sup>6</sup> The celebration of Najaf as a capital of Islamic culture for the year 2012 of the Arab Region was postponed, upon an official request from the Iraqi government.

<sup>7</sup> Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah was, as an exception, celebrated as the fourth capital of Islamic culture for the year 2013 on the occasion of its hosting the 8<sup>th</sup> Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers.

<sup>8</sup> The celebration of Tripoli (Lebanon) was postponed, upon an official request from the Lebanese government.

# CAPITALS OF ISLAMIC CULTURE FOR THE YEARS (2015 - 2025)

Adopted by  
the 9<sup>th</sup> Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers

Year	Arab region	Asian region	African region
2015	Nizwa (Sultanate of Oman)	Almaty (Republic of Kazakhstan)	Cotonou (Republic of Benin)
2016	Kuwait (State of Kuwait)	Malé (Republic of Maldives)	Freetown (Republic of Sierra Leone)
2017	Amman (Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan)	Sennar <sup>9</sup> (Republic of the Sudan)	Mashhad (Islamic Republic of Iran)
2018	Al Muharraq (Kingdom of Bahrain)	Nakhchivan (Republic of Azerbaijan)	Kampala (Republic of Uganda)
2019	Al-Quds (State of Palestine)	Tunis <sup>10</sup> (Republic of Tunisia)	Bandar Seri Begawan (Brunei Darussalam)
2020	Cairo (Arab Republic of Egypt)	Bukhara (Republic of Uzbekistan)	Bissau (Republic of Guinea Bissau)
2021	Doha (State of Qatar)	Bamako (Republic of Mali)	Islamabad (Islamic Republic of Pakistan)
2022	Banjul (Republic of the Gambia)	Damascus (Syrian Arab Republic)	Bandung (Republic of Indonesia)
2023	Yaoundé (Republic of Cameroon)	Benghazi (Libya)	Selangor (Malaysia)
2024	Abidjan (Republic of Côte d'Ivoire)	Marrakesh (Kingdom of Morocco)	Kabul (Islamic Republic of Afghanistan)
2025	Lomé (Republic of Togo)	Mogadishu (Federal Republic of Somalia)	Achgabat (Republic of Turkmenistan)
	Maputo (Republic of Mozambique)		

<sup>9</sup> Sennar will, as an exception, be celebrated as the fourth capital of Islamic Culture for the year 2017 on the occasion of its hosting of the 10<sup>th</sup> Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers.

<sup>10</sup> Tunis will, as an exception, be celebrated as the fourth capital of Islamic Culture for the year 2019 on the occasion of its hosting the 11<sup>th</sup> Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers.

## BROAD LINES OF THE PROGRAMME ON THE CELEBRATION OF ISLAMIC CULTURE CAPITALS

The preparation for the celebration of the capital of Islamic culture shall consist of the following two phases:

### Ahead of the celebration year:

The country whose city is nominated as capital of Islamic culture shall, in coordination with ISESCO, prepare the following:

#### ● Measures to be taken by Member States

- 1- To set up the supreme committee for celebrating the capital.
- 2- To designate the bureau of the supreme committee and sub-committees and to determine their mandate<sup>(1)</sup>.
- 3- To designate the national coordinator of the celebrations and the focal point to communicate with ISESCO General Directorate.
- 4- To design the logo of celebrations in coordination with ISESCO.
- 5- To prepare a complete set of advertising materials for the celebrations (leaflets, badges, banners, videos ...).
- 6- To prepare an introductory academic material on the capital to be distributed to media and posted on ISESCO website and other websites dedicated to the celebrations.
- 7- To draw up the national programme of the activities scheduled for the celebrations and to ensure follow-up to its implementation throughout the year.
- 8- To fix the official launch date of celebrations in coordination with ISESCO.
- 9- To fix the official closing date of celebrations in coordination with ISESCO.

#### ● Measures to be taken by ISESCO

- 1- To designate the focal point to communicate with the supreme committee of celebrations.
- 2- To draw up the schedule of educational, scientific, cultural and media activities to be contributed to the celebrations.
- 3- To follow up the national programme of celebrations and to participate in some of its activities.
- 4- To contribute to preparations for the official launch and closing ceremonies of celebrations.

<sup>1</sup> Il est préférable de prendre en compte le plus grand degré de représentativité afin de comprendre les différents participants de ministères concernés, d'instances de la société civile, de clubs culturels et du secteur privé.

- 5- To design medals for the celebration and distribute them during the official launch ceremony.
- 6- To maintain coordination and follow-up action and provide counsel concerning the implementation steps in order to ensure the success of celebrations.

### **Throughout the celebration year**

Throughout the celebration year, celebratory cultural activities shall be intensified for a week. The launching of the official festivities in celebration of the capital of Islamic culture shall take place with the participation of the official authorities of the country concerned, along with the cooperating parties. The logos of ISESCO and the capital of Islamic culture shall both be displayed side by side on all documents, publications, posters, banners and announcements dedicated to the celebrations.

The programme of celebration may consist of the following activities:

- Holding conferences and symposia, and delivering lectures on the cultural history of the city, its eminent figures, and its scientific and civilizational contribution to the Islamic heritage, in addition to its archaeological landmarks and cultural centres.
- Staging exhibitions of books, manuscripts, documents and posters, in addition to studies conducted on the celebrated capital, and the relevant historical records, maps and drawings. Another exhibition can be staged to bring into light the architectural evolution of the city and its major archaeological landmarks.
- Devising billboards introducing the city or some of its historical or cultural landmarks.
- Planting banners celebrating the occasion and presenting the activities geared thereto.
- Organizing visits for the benefit of participants to the city's museums, key archaeological landmarks, and to libraries of the ancient and new medinas in order to learn about their manuscripts, documents and acquisitions, in addition to visits to such culturally radiant places as mosques, palaces, zawayas and bazars.
- Holding fairs on the different handicrafts.
- Organizing cultural and artistic events and festivals featuring poetry and theatre evenings, in addition to cultural artistic works.
- Organizing information and open days in a number of educational and cultural institutions of civilizational radiance.
- Organizing contests for young artists from the cultural capital in all fields of research, as well as scientific and literary writing. The competitions will constitute an occasion to pay tribute to the city's most eminent figures who served culture,

either in the past or the present. Adequate prizes and medals shall be awarded for this purpose within the limits of the available resources.

It is worth mentioning that every Islamic cultural capital has its own specificities that cannot be considered within this general proposal. It shall devolve upon the organizing committee to elaborate the relevant detailed programmes.

### **ISESCO's contribution to the programmes of the celebration of Islamic culture capitals**

Being intent on shoring up the efforts of the Member States whose cities are selected as capitals of Islamic culture, and as part of participation in the activities carried out in celebration of these cities, ISESCO dedicates a cultural and educational week to the celebrated city, during which it shall implement some of the educational, scientific and cultural activities included in its Action Plan, which have a national, regional and international dimension.

ISESCO can dedicate other activities to be agreed upon with the authorities concerned in the Member States.

### **Criteria for the selection of Islamic culture capitals**

The celebration of Islamic culture capitals has called for drawing up a set of criteria and preconditions for the selection of the cultural capital. ISESCO has already elaborated a draft project on these criteria, which it has distributed among the Member States, in order that the selection of the capital of Islamic culture shall be based on objective conditions that guarantee the soundness of the nomination and achieve the main objective of the project, namely the celebration of cultural cities that are endowed with a distinguished cultural history as well as tangible and intellectual heritage worthy of appreciation and presentation. The main selection criteria feature the following:

**FIRST:** The city nominated should be enjoying a confirmed historical status and a large scientific renown conferring on it a prominent cultural position in its country and region throughout Islamic history.

**SECOND:** The city should have an outstanding contribution to both Islamic culture and universal culture confirmed through the scientific, cultural, literary and artistic works of its scholars, men of letters, intellectuals and artists.

**THIRD:** The city should have its own scientific research centres, manuscript libraries and educational archaeological centres, making it a destination for researchers and people interested in the different fields of science, culture and knowledge.

**FOURTH:** The city should host cultural institutions active in individual and group cultural promotion (festivals, cultural events, book fairs, painting exhibitions, plays, translation, and publication.)

**FIFTH:** The nomination for the capital of Islamic culture should be accompanied by a detailed study on the city, meeting all or part of the aforementioned criteria. The presentation shall include:

- A well-documented historical and geographical presentation highlighting the cultural importance of the city in terms of:
  - Reference works written about the city or making mention thereof;
  - Its historical or modern libraries of manuscripts and records;
  - Its famous archaeological landmarks and Islamic architectural works (old schools, historical mosques, historical public gardens, bastions, palaces, zawayas, bazars, hospices and famous mausoleums);
  - Its famous handicrafts and folklore;
  - Its famous museums and sites of memory;
  - Major regional or international cultural conferences, symposia and events it hosted, if any.
- A proposed general programme to be implemented in celebration of the city as Islamic culture capital for one year, as well as a brief presentation of local, regional and international cooperating parties, if any, and the nature of their contribution.
- The estimated budget allocated by the country concerned to the celebration programme.
- The competent authority supposed to assume the coordination, implementation and follow-up of the celebration programme along with ISESCO.

For more details on the capitals of Islamic culture, please visit the following site:

[www.isesco.org.ma](http://www.isesco.org.ma)



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