

Protect the World Heritage in Kyoto

Emergent International Signature Campaign

--Please sign up to protect the UNESCO World Heritage sites in Kyoto from outrageous destructions--

Dr. Mechtild Rössler
Director, World Heritage Centre, UNESCO

Dear Dr. Rössler,

The World Heritage “Historic Monuments of Ancient Kyoto” (Japan) (C 688) are now facing the worst-ever crisis by a series of development activities.

The Shimogamo Shrine has started construction works to build luxury apartments in the Buffer Zone of the World Heritage and been destroying the precious forest. It also has a plan to construct a large warehouse in the Core Zone. **At Nijo-jo Castle, Kyoto City itself plans to cut down lots of big trees in the Core Zone and split the hedges** in order to provide with parking spaces for tourist buses. **At Ninna-ji Temple, City gave a development permit to the plans to build a convenience store and a gas station in the Buffer Zone, right in front of the Temple.** Destruction was barely avoided in Ninna-ji’s case as the plans were withdrawn thanks to the opposition by the local communities.

As stated above, the World Heritage sites in Kyoto are experiencing a critical period. On the contrary, Kyoto City, which is, following the World Heritage Convention, in the position to protect the World Heritage prioritizes developers’ requests and supports or even conducts destruction of the sites. **We have so far negotiated with City, submitted collected signatures and filed lawsuits to protect heritage’s Outstanding Universal Value and preserve its adjacent areas** for its purpose. However, in order to proceed further to prevent destruction, we have decided to make a step forward to seek cooperation with the international communities by inviting sign-up for this campaign.

We hereby ask the World Heritage Committee to give an alert to the destruction of “Historic Monuments of Ancient Kyoto” which leads to the violation of the World Heritage Convention and related Decisions of and Recommendations to the Committee. We also ask the Committee to give recommendations to Kyoto City to implement proper procedures to protect the World Heritage.

Proponents:

Tadasunomori Mirai-No Kai (Shimogamo Local Community: For the Future of Tadasunomori)

People for Shimogamo Shrine and Tadasunomori

Name	Address in Japan or in your country