

Digital Conference

Recovery of Aleppo

**Law, Architecture and Geodata Management
to Revive War-Torn Cities**

Conference Dates: 19th and 20th November 2021

Call for Abstracts

1. Background

The war in Syria began 10 years ago. We want to use this date and the international donor conference for Syria, which took place in March 2021, as an opportunity to deal and discuss in particular about the recovery of the Syrian city of Aleppo. Legal and planning expertise has been lost as a result of the war and is now lacking in local planning departments and building permit authorities. These challenges are faced also by other cities. Other war-torn cities in Syria as well as in other countries – such as Lebanon, Iraq or Yemen – will also possibly be considered in the conference. We seek to gain insights into the revitalization of urban centers in similar conflict regions of the world that are important in terms of building culture and architecture.

As reconstruction measures and land transactions have begun after the end of the war, the “zero hour” for comprehensive recovery for ancient cities such as Aleppo has long since passed. However, there is not the slightest reason for resignation – quite the opposite. This digital conference therefore sees itself as a platform for the collection of strategies that have definitely fallen short in the previous discourse and existing implementation guidelines drawn by donor organizations. It is the combination of law, architecture, planning, (digital) cadaster, data management and 3D multi-sensory geospatial data collection – to name just a few essential tools – for the reconstruction of the building fabric. In addition, Building Information Modeling (BIM) will gain increased relevance in the recovery context.

In this context, a deliberate attempt will be made to broaden horizons beyond existing so-called “toolkit” implementation approaches of development cooperation organizations such as the GIZ-Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH or UNESCO. Instead, locally adapted land use, planning and (landscape) architectural strategies will be examined for their practicability. Special attention is given to the consideration of current research results: What approaches are there, especially in ongoing and completed dissertation projects of Syrian scientists and practitioners? Where is the state of research on the restoration of destroyed urban and peri-urban areas in terms of planning, law and architecture? What chains of impact can be identified? Which networks in the field of law, architecture and geospatial data management can be newly developed and optimized?

For this purpose, the conference would like to provide interdisciplinary interested architects, archaeologists, (urban) planners, lawyers and geospatial data managers with approaches for thinking and acting to what extent cooperation possibilities and fields of activity are possible for the recovery in Aleppo and other war-ravaged cities in Syria and beyond.

With this conference, we are also pursuing the goal of supporting the initiation of functioning and sustainably resilient networks. These networks are indispensable prerequisites for the work in worldwide reconstruction and urban rehabilitation projects.

This **call for abstracts** invites applicants and scholars from different backgrounds focusing on one – or more than one – of the following main topics: law, architecture and planning, geospatial management, GIS, laser-scanning and techniques such as Building Information Modeling.

The main topics to present may include the following sub-aspects:

2. Core Themes

Session 1: Law

- The situation of construction, infrastructure and planning, cadaster in Aleppo in 2021 – Update after 10 years of war.
- Constitutional law and its meaning for development and recovery.
- Law on land tenure and real estate transactions including the Islamic *waqf* law and legal transplants.
- Recovery through civil and inheritance law instruments.
- Social housing and tenancy law.
- Law on monuments and historic buildings / heritage / antiquities law.
- Promotion or hindering for the reconstruction of destroyed infrastructure and buildings especially in historic cities (example: the old town of Aleppo) by legal instruments.
- Regulations and financing themes for renewable energy such as solar panels on roofs.
- Hierarchy of spatial and sectoral planning laws and sub-ordinances: central versus local.
- National and international legal framework for a revised and updated “social and land question” for war-torn cities.
- Role of private and public developers i.e., for land acquisition and distribution.
- Taxation instruments and land valuation methods as instruments to finance recovery.

Session 2: Architecture and Planning

- Planning systems for urban, peri-urban and rural areas.
- Toolkits for post-conflict recovery of the built cultural heritage.
- Expropriatory effects and compensation implications of legally-binding land use plans.
- Post-conflict heritage management.
- Efficiency, effectiveness and potential failures of (donor-driven) “master-plans”.
- Development plans: preparation, implementation, outcome, monitoring and evaluation.
- The role of urban planning in issues of identity, integrity and authenticity in war-torn cities.
- Strategies of preparedness, rapid risk assessment and rescue interventions in damaged monuments.
- Traditional building practices and the new generation of builders.
- Architectural strategies (urban design) of reconstruction and renovation.
- Case studies for post-war reconstruction of monuments and the urban fabric.
- Conservation and restoration of architectural elements.

Session 3: Geodata management, GIS, Geography, and block-chain

- Instruments and workflows of multi-sensory geospatial data acquisition for war-damaged cities.
- Innovative toolkits and practices for the reconstruction of cultural urban landscape.
- Digitization of cartographic data and its connection with land development and land rights registry (i.e., deeds system).
- Possible applications of block-chain and digital tracking for built and infrastructural post-war scenarios.
- The role of reality capture methods (i.e., laser scanning, photogrammetry), 3D modeling and GIS-tools in the planning processes.
- Prospects of Building Information Modeling for the recording, planning and visualization of built fabric during awarding, tendering, construction, and reconstruction.
- The technical geospatial infrastructure and training available for the local private and public stakeholders.
- Proof, storage and transferring of ownership titles and property transactions / records via block-chain models to monitor property development.
- Importance of Geography networks for the process of recovery.

3. Organizational information

Each speaker will have 20 minutes maximum for the presentation excluding additional time for brief questions of maximum 10 minutes.

If you are planning to attend the conference with an oral presentation, then please send the title and an abstract of your presentation (maximum 500 words) by **15th September 2021** to fabian.thiel@fb1.fra-uas.de

The conference will be held in English. Arabic-to-English translation might be arranged for local presentations.

4. Contact

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