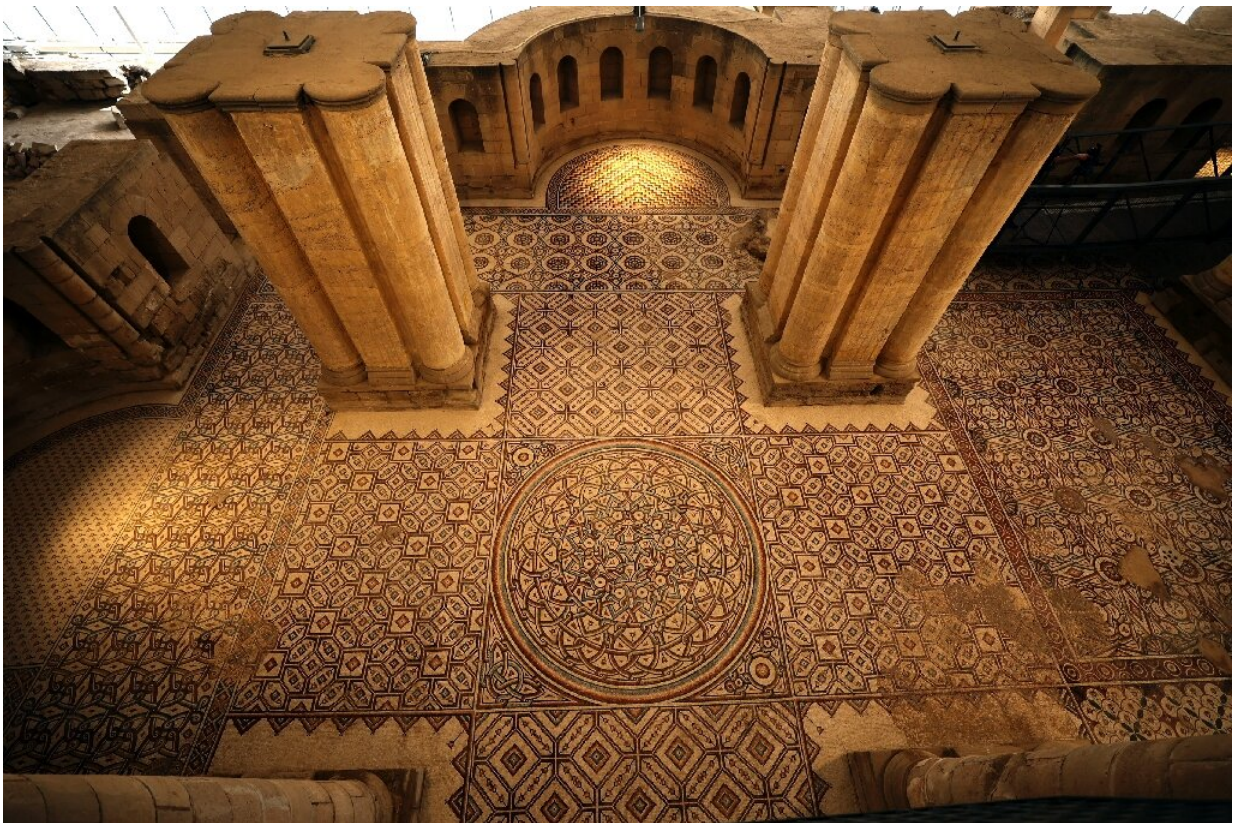


Palestinians unveil huge mosaic at Jericho desert castle

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One of the largest mosaic panels in the world has been unveiled following a multi-year restoration project at Hisham's Palace in the West Bank city of Jericho on October 28, 2021.

Palestinian authorities on Thursday unveiled one of the largest floor

mosaics in the world, in the occupied West Bank city of Jericho, after years of restoration.

Resembling a fine carpet, the vast mosaic covers 836 square metres (8,998 square feet) at the Hisham Palace, an Umayyad Islamic desert castle dating from the eighth century.

The images, seen on dozens of panels, include a lion attacking a deer to symbolise war and two gazelles which symbolise peace, as well as delicate floral and geometric designs.

Hisham Palace had lain forgotten for centuries until it was rediscovered in the 19th century, and explored in the 1930s. It was then that the mosaic was uncovered beneath the dust.

But it still remained neglected until five years ago when the site was closed to visitors as a \$12 million Japan-funded [restoration](#) effort was launched.

"This [mosaic](#) contains more than five million pieces of stone from Palestine which have a natural and distinctive colour," Saleh Tawafsha, the under-secretary at the Palestinian tourism and antiquities ministry, told AFP during the unveiling ceremony.

He said he hoped that the restoration will draw tourists to Jericho, which lies in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.



Palestinian officials say the carpet-like mosaic that covers about 836 square metres contains more than five million pieces of stone.

The Hisham Palace near the Dead Sea covers about 150 acres (60 hectares) and comprises baths and an agricultural estate.

The Ummayyad Dynasty lasted from 660 to 750 AD.

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