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Addendum Evaluations of Nominations of Cultural and Mixed Properties

ICOMOS report for the World Heritage Committee
Extended 45th session of the World Heritage Committee /
Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia / 10-25 September 2023

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World Heritage List Nominations of Sites of Memory Associated with Recent Conflicts

In compliance with the World Heritage Committee's in Decision 18 EXT.COM 4

VI Cultural properties

A Africa

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VI Cultural properties

A Africa

B Europe – North America

C Latin America and the Caribbean

Memorial sites of the Genocide (Rwanda) No 1586

1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party

Memorial sites of the Genocide: Nyamata, Murambi, Gisozi and Bisesero

Location

Nyamata, Bugesera District, Eastern Province
Murambi, Nyamagabe District, Southern Province
Gisozi, Gasabo District, Kigali City
Bisesero, Karongi District, Western Province
Republic of Rwanda

Brief description

Between April and July 1994, an estimated one million people were killed across Rwanda by armed militias called *Interahamwe* that targeted Tutsi, but also executed moderate Hutu and Twa people. The victims of the Genocide are commemorated in the nominated serial property composed of four memorial sites. Two of the serial component parts were scenes of massacres: a Catholic church built in the hill of Nyamata in 1980 in the Eastern Province and a technical school built in the hill of Murambi in 1990 in the Southern Province. The hill of Gisozi in Kigali City hosts the Kigali Genocide Memorial built in 1999, where more than 250,000 victims have been buried, while the hill of Bisesero in the Western Province hosts a memorial built in 1998 to remember the fight of those who resisted their perpetrators for over two months before being exterminated.

Category of property

In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a serial nomination of four *sites*.

Included in the Tentative List

15 June 2012 as “*Sites mémoriaux du génocide: Nyamata, Murambi, Bisesero et Gisozi*”

Background

This nomination dossier has been submitted in January 2019. Further to the World Heritage Committee decision 42 COM 8B.24 (2018) that launched a reflection on “*whether and how sites associated with recent conflicts and other negative and divisive memories might relate to the purpose and scope of the World Heritage Convention and its Operational Guidelines*”, the evaluation of this nomination did not start.

An open-ended Working Group was established upon decision 44 COM 8 of the World Heritage Committee

(2021); the group elaborated *Guiding principles for the preparation of nominations concerning sites of memory associated with recent conflicts (Guiding Principles)*, which have been adopted by the Committee at its 18th Extraordinary Session (2023). In line with decision 18 EXT.COM. 4, the Committee also lifted “*the moratorium on the evaluation of sites of memory associated with recent conflicts*”.

Decision: 18 EXT.COM. 4

The World Heritage Committee, [...]

8. Decides to lift the moratorium on the evaluation of sites of memory associated with recent conflicts and also decides that the nominations of such sites for inscription on the World Heritage List may be evaluated on a case-by-case basis;

9. Further decides that nominations of sites of memory associated with recent conflicts, submitted by 1 February 2022 and considered complete, will be processed under the procedures and criteria applicable at the time of their submission;

The State Party sent a letter to the World Heritage Centre on 24 January 2023 requesting that ICOMOS resume the evaluation of this nomination in view of its presentation at the extended 45th World Heritage Committee session.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission

Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the nominated serial property from 4 to 12 March 2023.

Additional information received by ICOMOS

A letter was sent to the State Party on 17 February 2023 requesting further information about memorialisation, comparative analysis, selection of the component parts, buffer zones, factors affecting the nominated property and potential development projects, conservation and research, interpretation, and management.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 24 March 2023.

A second letter was sent to the State Party on 17 May 2023 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel.

Further information was requested in the second letter including: context and historical background, documentation of the reconciliation process, interpretation strategy, attributes, protection, management system and management plan, and conservation.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 12 June 2023.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

5 May 2023

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history

In 1994, during a period of around hundred days, between April and July, an estimated one million people were killed across Rwanda by armed militias called *Interahamwe* that targeted Tutsi, but also executed moderate Hutu and Twa people.

The Genocide happened in the context of a civil war initiated in 1990 with the invasion of north Rwanda by an armed group of Tutsi refugees based in Uganda, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), who claimed their right to return to Rwanda and be part of the government. In 1993, the Arusha Accord peace agreement mediated by the Organisation of African Unity (later replaced by the African Union) was signed by the Rwandan government and the RPF to establish a shared transitional government that would lead to general elections. The immediate trigger for the Genocide is seen to have been the shooting down of the plane of the Rwandan President, Juvénal Habyarimana, a Hutu leader of the National Revolutionary Movement for Development, as it attempted to land at Kigali airport on April 6, 1994.

The nomination dossier mentions that the Genocide of 1994 was preceded by large-scale massacres in 1960, 1963, 1966, 1973, 1990 and 1992. An estimated 20,000 were killed in what is called the Bahutu Revolution of 1959-1962 following which large numbers of Tutsi, estimated between 150,000 to 300,000, fled the country, mainly to neighbouring Uganda. The Bahutu Revolution prompted the transfer of power from the Tutsi, who had effectively ruled Rwanda from at least the 18th century, to a Hutu government that declared Rwanda independent in 1962. It also explains that since the abolition of the monarchy and the accession of Rwanda to independence (1959-1962), the Tutsi people from the region of Gikongoro where Murambi hill is located, were subject to persecution. Massacres took place already in 1960 and 1963. This situation only aggravated during the Second Republic (1973-1994).

The complex context of the Genocide is nevertheless not described in the nomination dossier, in terms of the history of Rwanda in the decades leading up to 1994, and almost no information is provided for the longer-term historical context of the pre-colonial and colonial periods.

During the Genocide, places of worship, schools, and other public buildings that Tutsi people used as refuge, became scenes of massacres. Thousands of people, including children and elderly, were also killed at their homes, in their villages, in the streets, escaping or fighting, by militias, neighbours and friends who used

machetes, knives, grenades and rifles. Women and girls were raped and slaughtered.

While the whole country was affected by the Genocide and hundreds of memorials have been established commemorating the victims, the nominated serial property consists of four memorial sites selected by the State Party to represent the totality of places where the killings occurred. The section on history and development of the nomination dossier focuses only on these four sites, while a wider explanation of the events that took place in the whole territory and their impact on the larger region of the African Great Lakes, as well as an explanation of the memorialisation of the Genocide at national and regional levels, are not provided.

Nyamata

This site represents places of worship where Tutsi victims searched for protection and refuge, but which were ultimately used as extermination spaces. It consists of a former Catholic church built in 1980 in the Bugesera district, including a nave below its main hall, in which remains of the victims are displayed, the graves in the surroundings of the building, and a garden of memory. The building walls are made of terracotta bricks and the roof is made of iron sheeting.

A commemoration ceremony is held every 14 April to remember the many thousands of people (numbers vary between 10,000 and 45,000) killed inside the former church in 1994.

Murambi

This site represents all public places where Tutsi were killed during the Genocide, such as public administration buildings, stadiums, court buildings, schools, military and gendarmerie camps. It consists of a technical secondary school located in Nyamagabe district that was under construction since 1990 at the time of the Genocide, ancillary buildings, in some of which the mummified bodies and skulls and bones of victims are displayed, the graves of the victims who perished at this site, and a garden of memory surrounding the buildings. One of the mass graves that were discovered has been left visible.

All buildings are made of terracotta bricks with roofs of iron sheeting, except of the oval part of the administration building that is covered in self-supporting sheeting roof.

Every 21 April, a commemoration ceremony is held to remember the 50,000 people killed on this site.

Gisozi

A memorial was built on this site in 1999, as a burial place for the victims of the city of Kigali, and as an educational space to raise awareness and promote reconciliation. The site consists of a group of buildings including graves, an amphitheatre, rooms to relieve traumatised people, the place of the flame of hope and the garden of memory.

The central building is a terracotta bricks construction with a polygonal shape. In a memorial wall, 2.000 names of victims have been recorded, while around 300.000 victims have been buried in fourteen tombs. The graves of the victims of the genocide are seen to testify to “[hu]man’s intolerance towards his fellow [hu]man”, and to be a symbol of reconciliation between peoples.

During the period of national mourning held every year from April 7 to July 15, the flame of hope is lit. The opening and closure of the commemoration period are held in this memorial site every year.

Bisesero

A memorial was built on Bisesero hill, in Karongi District, in 1998. It is composed of tombs built at the top of the hill containing the bodies of victims from the region and three buildings, each with three rooms, symbolising the nine former communities of the Kibuye Prefecture. The displays include human skulls and bones. Monuments are found in the garden of memory, including one composed of spears used by the victims to defend themselves, and others with stones that they used as weapons. A designed path going from the entrance of the site to the top of the hill recalls the fight of the victims.

This component part is seen as a symbol of the resistance of the Tutsi people of the Kibuye region, both during the killings of the Bahutu revolution of 1959 and of the Genocide of 1994, during which they were completely annihilated. It also represents all places where victims perished while resisting their perpetrators. A commemoration ceremony is held every 27 June.

The area of the four component parts totals 24.65 ha, with buffer zones totalling 160.81 ha. The boundaries are defined by the limits of the plots of land where the four memorial sites are located. The component parts are surrounded by residential houses, forests, green areas and village fields, as well as unpaved roads. The component part of Gisozi is cut in two pieces by a main road that runs from the city centre to the Free University of Kigali. Each component part has a buffer zone.

While Gisozi and Bisesero memorial sites were built in the aftermath of the Genocide to bury and commemorate the victims of Kigali City and Kibuye Prefecture respectively, the former church of Nyamata underwent a process of negotiation with the Catholic Church before becoming a memorial site. Graves were built in 1995, and a new church was built in the vicinity to replace it. Murambi became a memorial site immediately after the Genocide and the graves were built in 1996. All four memorial sites are open to the public serving as cemeteries for the victims, spaces of reflection, commemoration and education.

The nomination dossier does not provide any further details on the cessation of the Genocide when the RPF eventually took control of the country, nor on the subsequent historical development in the context of the

construction of the post-colonial nation-state of Rwanda, nor does it provide information on how the reconciliation process developed, who was involved and the role of the memorial sites in this process.

In its second letter sent to the State Party in May 2023, ICOMOS noted that the context and historical background of the Genocide was missing in the nomination dossier, as well as documentation on the process of reconciliation. In the additional information provided in June 2023, the State Party expanded on the historical background and explained that the population of Rwanda was traditionally composed of three social categories called Tutsi, Hutu and Twa that used the same language, Kinyarwanda, and which follow the same belief systems and culture with a common history. It considers that the occupation and colonisation of Rwanda during the 19th and 20th centuries, first by the German Empire (1898-1916) and then by the Belgian Empire (1916-1962) introduced the theory of race inequality transforming these social categories into ethnic groups within which the Tutsi were seen as a privileged and superior group. While German and Belgian colonisers initially supported the Tutsi group that was in power at the time of occupation, Belgians then turned their support to the Hutu group. This triggered the Bahutu Revolution in 1959, when the Tutsi elite, educated in the context of the Belgian colonisation, started to claim its independence. One aspect of the colonisation process under the Belgian Empire was the introduction of identity cards in 1933 which designated the different groups as “races”: Mututsi, Muhutu and Mutwa. These identity cards are considered by the State Party to be the main instrument that led to a division within the Rwandan people. They were used to discriminate against one group or another in education, from administrative responsibilities, and later, in 1994, these were used by *génocidaires* to identify their targets.

The State Party explained that the Genocide ended on 4 July 1994, when the RPF took Kigali City, and from then, the United Nations created the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda to judge the massacres that were qualified as genocide in 1998. ICOMOS acknowledges the additional information provided by the State Party but considers that a broader description of the historical context which led to the Genocide, beyond the national context, and the four memorial sites selected, should be formulated in order to place the event in the global context, to better understand its outcomes and impacts beyond Rwanda, and to define the rationale for the serial approach.

Regarding the reconciliation process, the State Party provided additional details in June 2023, explaining the functioning of the Gacaca courts that were established as a foundation for the transitional justice, as ordinary criminal tribunals, to judge perpetrators of the Genocide.

According to the State Party, the reparations provided to the victims by the State have so far consisted of symbolic reparations through the construction of monuments, memorial sites and the organisation commemorative events in honour of the victims of the Genocide. The

nominated serial property forms part of this process aiming at promoting reconciliation and resilience, providing a space for reflection for survivors, families of victims, perpetrators and visitors. ICOMOS notes the efforts of the State Party, and considers that further documentation and description of the transitional justice, reconciliation and memorialisation processes undertaken in the aftermath of the Genocide are needed to better understand the identification and selection of the nominated component parts.

State of conservation

In the case of Nyamata and Murambi, the buildings have suffered damages during the Genocide which are reflected in the walls and iron-sheet roofs pierced by bullets and grenades shrapnel. These damages have been maintained as evidence of the massacres and require to be conserved as they are. Metal doors and windows have been restored while respecting the original state of the damage to serve as evidence of the destruction. The structures of the buildings are in good state of conservation.

In Nyamata, metal doors, windows, roof, and walls were severely damaged, and the large gate was broken off. Sheets with bullet and grenade holes were covered in 1995 with transparent plastic sheets in order to preserve the original metal with all traces of the impacts of bullets and grenades and to prevent leakages into the rooms containing the personal objects of the victims and other movable artefacts, as well as human skulls which are evidence of the Genocide. In 1995, graves have been accommodated around the former church where victims have been buried while the building was restored. Graves have been restored in 2016.

In Murambi, some of the buildings were unfinished at the time of the Genocide. Works on roofs, walls, doors and windows have been done to protect the buildings. Victims were removed from mass graves since 1995 in order to provide them with a decent burial. Graves have been accommodated in the gardens surrounding the buildings. One of the mass graves has been left open as a testimony. The site has undergone three main phases of restoration in 1996, 2000 and 2016, especially the main administration building.

The memorials of Bisesero and Gisozi, having been built after the Genocide, are in good state of conservation.

Because all structures are made of sensitive materials such as terracotta, iron and wood, ICOMOS considers that preventive measures are necessary in order to address material decay.

ICOMOS notes that the collections of movable heritage contained and exhibited in the memorial sites which consist of mummified human remains, skulls, clothes and personal belongings of victims, as well as the weapons used by the *génocidaires* are in a vulnerable state of conservation. ICOMOS acknowledges that the State Party is working on partnerships with specialised foreign

institutions, such as the University of Pennsylvania, USA, and the University of Hamburg, Germany, for the adequate handling, conservation and presentation of the evidence of the Genocide, as well as capacity building. ICOMOS considers that displaying human remains of victims is highly sensitive and therefore would recommend that the State Party consider that these remains receive a decent burial.

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation of the built structures is good, whereas the display of human remains and personal artefacts belonging to the victims is highly vulnerable.

Factors affecting the nominated property

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the nominated property are environmental, development and potential tourism pressures.

In general terms, all four memorial sites are exposed to environmental pressures due to their building materials (terracotta, metal and wood) vulnerable to the tropical mountain climate. Cracking walls, dust, herb and the growth of trees roots require a regular maintenance. Furthermore, the component parts are exposed to termites, bats and bird droppings which also require monitoring and regular cleaning. Natural decay of earthen materials at Nyamata and Murambi requires a preventive assessment.

In terms of development, in the case of Nyamata, the building of the former church is currently surrounded by the new church, the houses of the priests and three schools. The memorial site has been protected by a fence to control the pressure of onlookers. At present, negotiations are on-going between the government and the Catholic Church to add the adjacent cemetery as an extension to the component part.

The Gisozi site is divided in two by a road, the northern part being under heavy development pressure with houses adjacent to the site. Since the component part is located in a semi-industrial zone, it faces issues of rainwater evacuation and waste management. A relocation of the industrial units is envisaged in order to improve the environment of the Nybugogo marshland, part of which lies within the boundary of the nominated property and the other in the buffer zone.

In Bisesero, unregulated mining of cassiterite (ore containing tin) in the valley separating the neighbouring hills of Bisesero and Nyakigugu represents a long-term threat. Mining activities need to be strictly regulated and contained, and environmental measures should be developed and implemented in order to protect the site from pollution and erosion. In addition, the Bisesero hill is exposed to lightning strikes. To mitigate this issue, a lightning conductor system was installed in all four

component parts. ICOMOS considers that this installation has an important visual impact and would recommend that it be replaced an alternative that generates less visual pollution.

Even though tourism pressures do not currently pose a threat, preventive measures should be taken in view of a potential development of infrastructure in the surroundings of the nominated serial property, and a potential increase in influx of visitors to the memorial sites which are vulnerable due to their size, construction materials and the collections of movable heritage contained and exhibited within the buildings.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation of the built fabric is good, whereas the display of human remains and personal artefacts which belonged to the victims is highly vulnerable to environmental factors. Alternative solutions would need to be found rapidly, including the burial of human remains. The main external factors affecting the nominated serial property are mining development in the setting of Bisesero and industrial units in the setting of Gisozi, together with a potential of tourism pressure.

3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification

The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- The four component memorial sites bear witness to the Genocide targeting Tutsi people that occurred in the whole territory of Rwanda in 1994, and symbolise one of the worse crimes against humanity. The buildings on two sites have been safeguarded as they were during the Genocide.
- The component memorial sites are monuments associated with the Genocide and evoke a massacre that unfolded in hundred days killing more than one million civilians, the majority Tutsis, and have become exceptional sanctuaries of memory, places of recollection, gathering and commemorations allowing collective mourning.
- The four component memorial sites bear witness to the cruelty and intolerance of the events, commemorate the victims, and, since, the end of the Genocide represent a symbol of unity and reconciliation and the desire for peace and tolerance to be transmitted to future generations.

ICOMOS notes that the justification for Outstanding Universal Value, as set out in the nomination dossier, is mainly based on the scale and scope of the massacre and the horror, pain and outrage it evokes. However, the wider historical context for the Genocide, the reasons why it happened, who was involved and how it relates to the history of the region have not been set out. Nor does the nomination dossier explain the work undertaken since the

end of the Genocide to develop a shared understanding of its causes as a framework for long-term reconciliation.

The State Party clarified some of these aspects in the additional information provided in June 2023. However, a wider understanding of the historical background of the Genocide in its geocultural context is still needed, particularly one that extends beyond the colonial era and to adjacent countries, in order to fully comprehend the international significance of the nominated serial property. ICOMOS considers that further documentation on the process of reconciliation also should also be provided to better understand the transitional justice and memorialisation processes undertaken in Rwanda and the place of the nominated serial property within this process, as well as the messages upon which it is based. ICOMOS notes that, as a relatively recent event, the understanding and appraisal of the Genocide are still ongoing and its outcomes evolving, and considers that a longer-term perspective for reflection might be needed to fully comprehend the scope and impacts of the event at a global level.

Based on the nomination dossier and the additional information, ICOMOS considers that the key attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value are the buildings and structures damaged during the Genocide in Nyamata and Murambi, and the aspects that convey memories of the events. Collections of movable heritage and evidence of the Genocide contained within these buildings, which include human remains, personal belongings of the victims and other elements can be seen to support the attributes.

According to the *Guiding Principles*, sites of memory are defined as “*places where an event happened that a nation and its people (or at least some of them) or communities want to remember. Sites associated with recent conflicts are specific sites with material evidence, in conformity with Articles 1 and 2 of the Convention, or landscape features which can be linked to their memorial aspect and that commemorate the victims of these conflicts. These sites, accessible, or made accessible, to the public, represent a place of reconciliation, remembrance, peaceful reflection, and must play an educational role in order to promote a culture of peace and dialogue*”. Hence, only sites with tangible evidence of the events that happened can be understood as “sites of memory” under the World Heritage Convention.

While the component sites of Nyamata and Murambi can be considered sites of memory under this definition, further information is needed to clarify how the component sites of Gisozi and Bisesero could be considered sites of memory, as they have been built as memorial sites in the aftermath of the Genocide. The nomination dossier explains that all hills in Rwanda have been places of massacres, but it has not been specified what is the material evidence linked to the events preserved in the hills of Gisozi and Bisesero. In June 2023, the State Party mentioned that the hill of Gisozi and the hill of Bisesero have been as well scenes of massacres, where mass

graves and bodies have been found. While narratives associated with the massacres that occurred in the hill of Bisesero have been included in the nomination dossier, material evidence and potential attributes in both Gisozi and Bisesero have not been clearly described or mapped in the nomination dossier or additional information.

Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis has been developed around the concept of sites of memory.

The nomination dossier only examined one property inscribed on the World Heritage List, Robben Island (South Africa, 1999, criteria (iii) and (vi)) with the conclusion that the nominated property differs from Robben Island because of the very nature of the genocide, which is the extermination of part or all of a people, and the resilience of the Rwandan people, which allowed for a rapid reconstruction of the country. ICOMOS notes that even if both properties are linked to events related to crimes against humanity (apartheid, murder and extermination), the nature of both properties is different, the former built as a prison and not the scene of a genocide, and the second consisting of buildings that were not purposefully built to commit a genocide. However, in Robben Island, its original function is directly connected to its Outstanding Universal Value while in the case of the Memorial sites of the Genocide, the original function of the buildings is not directly connected to the Genocide in the cases of Nyamata and Murambi, though the present function of all the nominated component parts is linked to the transmission of the memory of the Genocide.

In February 2023, ICOMOS requested the State Party to expand the comparative analysis to include properties associated with similar events to the Genocide in Rwanda, both inscribed on the World Heritage List, being part of Tentative Lists of States Parties or sites that might present similar values and attributes to the nominated serial property.

In additional information provided in March 2023, the State Party extended the comparative analysis to include the Hiroshima Peace Memorial (Genbaku Dome) (Japan, 1996, criterion (vi)) and the Auschwitz Birkenau German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (1940-1945) (Poland, 1979, criterion (vi)).

For Hiroshima, similarities rather than differences were found in relation to the memorial being the only surviving building of the destruction by atomic bomb and where the buildings do not possess a significant architectural value but a historical value connected to the memories that these evoke.

For Auschwitz, it was concluded that the nominated serial property differed because the victims of the Genocide in Rwanda were murdered by their own fellow compatriots that lived in the same hills and the Genocide was extended to the whole country. In addition, Auschwitz Birkenau was designed and built with the purpose of

being a concentration and later, extermination camp, while two of the Memorial sites of the Genocide are linked to the Genocide as scenes of massacres, but are not connected to it in their function. Furthermore, the memorial sites of Gisozi and Bisesero have been purposefully built to commemorate the Genocide, but in the aftermath of the event.

The Memorial sites of the Genocide were also compared to properties included in Tentative Lists, such as the Funerary and Memory sites of the First World War (Western Front) (Belgium, France, Tentative List), and the ESMA Museum and Site of Memory – Former Clandestine Center of Detention, Torture, and Extermination (Argentina, Tentative List).

For the sites of the First World War (Western Front), although these include graves as does the nominated property, there are distinct differences. In the first case, the graves are those of soldiers whereas in Rwanda the buried people are civilians. In addition, ICOMOS notes that in the case of the sites of the First World War (Western Front), these have been built in the aftermath of the event (First World War) like the component memorial sites of Gisozi and Bisesero, but also notes that the values proposed lie in the architectural design and spatial articulation of the cemeteries and individual graves, whereas in the nominated property, these are collective graves without a systematic and spatial planning design.

In the case of the ESMA Museum and Site of Memory, there seems to be some similarities as people were killed but due to ideological differences, not ethnic or racial differences. ICOMOS notes that in the case of the ESMA Museum and Site of Memory, the property is directly linked to the events as it hosted the clandestine centre of detention and torture, similarly to Nyamata and Murambi, and the buildings of both properties were not conceived for the purpose of extermination, as in the case of Auschwitz Birkenau.

ICOMOS considers that other properties in the Tentative Lists or not included in any Tentative Lists could have been used as comparators, such as the Former M-13 prison/Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum/Choeung Ek Genocidal Centre (former Execution Site of S-21) (Cambodia, Tentative List), the Armenia Genocide Memorial (Armenia), and the Srebrenica Memorial Center (Bosnia and Herzegovina) which also commemorate victims of genocides.

The State Party did not provide comparisons with sites that are not inscribed, or are not on Tentative Lists, and particularly sites associated with related histories and those in the same geocultural region.

ICOMOS requested clarifications to the State Party regarding the selection of the component parts. The State Party explained in additional information that the National Commission for the Fight against Genocide (CNLG) identified, in 2019, 207 memorial sites and 159 cemeteries of the Genocide in thirty districts. The State

Party explained that the four component memorial sites were selected as representative of the others: Nyamata represents all places of worship where killings were committed; Murambi represents public places where Tutsi people were killed; Bisesero represents places where the victims resisted and fought before perishing and was selected because of the long fierce resistance of those who were exterminated in this hill; Gisozi represents the genocide as a crime of state as it stands in the capital city and as well, represents the reconciliation efforts undertaken by the nation. ICOMOS acknowledges this symbolic and representative selection, but considers that more information on the full process and scope of the Genocide and its outcomes is needed to clarify how these four component sites are more representative and/or important than others located in other hills and other areas of the country, and/or how only these four component memorial sites can reflect the memories of the Genocide for present and future generations of humanity as a whole.

ICOMOS considers that more information on the context and historical background of the Genocide in Rwanda would be needed in order to provide a shared understanding of the causes of the massacres and the values and international significance that the nominated serial property could convey, as well as a justification for the serial approach and the selection of the component parts. ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis does not justify consideration of this property for the World Heritage List at this stage.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (iii) and (vi).

Criterion (iii): *bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the buildings of the four component memorial sites are a testimony to a dark period of human history, symbolising the process of extermination undertaken by an extremist and criminal state. The State Party postulates that the four component memorial sites are the result of a genocidal ideology and that their spatial planning provides a comprehensive and immediate understanding of the Genocide as a crime against humanity.

Although culture is a notion that does not cover only the positive aspects of how human beings stay in the world and relate to each other but is more general in nature, ICOMOS does not consider that it is possible to celebrate or commemorate an extermination process or the genocidal ideology as a cultural tradition in regard to expressing heritage values. ICOMOS does not consider that the way in which the criterion was phrased in the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* accommodates the interpretation of the notion of cultural tradition as put

forward by the State Party. While some of the buildings are testimonies to the Genocide massacres, these do not reflect in their design, forms and structures, a genocidal ideology as they have not been purposefully planned to commit exterminations. The component memorial sites of Nyamata and Murambi have been built for different purposes (a place of worship and a school respectively), and they circumstantially became scenes of massacres, while Gisozi and Bisesero have been built as burial and commemoration sites for the victims in the aftermath of the event.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has not been justified.

Criterion (vi): *be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the component memorial sites are associated with the massacres committed during the Genocide and represent places of remembrance while recalling the cruelty and intolerance of the events. At the same time, the State Party postulates that the component memorial sites are a symbol of unity and reconciliation and of triumph of the desire of peace and tolerance, that awareness about the potential threat of extremist ideology to future generations.

ICOMOS recognises the importance of the Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda. In order to remember this event, the United Nations General Assembly has established the International Day of Reflection on the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda on April 7, recalling the importance of early warning and prevention of mass atrocities and the need to intervene in situations of genocide. Furthermore, the Genocide in Rwanda led to the establishment of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (1994-2015) which contributed to the process of creation of the International Criminal Court (2002). However, ICOMOS notes that, in order to apply criterion (vi) in light of the *Guiding Principles*, additional information is needed on the context and causes of the massacres, as the Genocide did not happen in isolation; it was not a spontaneous event but rather was preceded by a long-related history that needs to be presented in order to understand the values and messages that the nominated property could convey. In the additional information provided in June 2023, the State Party presented some information on the background of the Genocide and its historical context, however, ICOMOS considers that more information is needed, in particular to place this event in a longer-term historical context and within its geocultural region to better understand its global significance and the justification for the serial approach as well as the selection of the component parts. Further information on the memorialisation and reconciliation processes – including how memories have been gathered and collated and how they might be seen to contribute to and reflect an ongoing reconciliation process – is needed to establish the

universal significance of the nominated serial property, based on a shared understanding of why the Genocide happened with a reflection of how similar pre-conditions can be prevented in the future. ICOMOS observes that, as a recent event, a longer-term perspective would be necessary for a historical appraisal of the event to settle, and understands that a process of reflection on the outcomes of the event is still ongoing as its impacts are still evolving. ICOMOS considers that fixate values and meanings as requested by the World Heritage Convention at this stage, might bring difficulties.

ICOMOS considers that, although this criterion has the potential to be justified when a wider contextualisation of the event would be provided, it has not been demonstrated at this stage.

ICOMOS considers that the global significance of the event needs to be justified by providing a comprehensive description of the context and historical background of the Genocide and its outcomes to clarify the serial approach and to base a rationale for the selection of the component parts; that criterion (iii) has not been justified; and that criterion (vi) has potential to be justified but has not been demonstrated at this stage.

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The integrity of the nominated serial property is based on the extent to which the wholeness and intactness of the attributes that transmit the memories of the Genocide with which the component parts are associated have been preserved and on whether all the attributes necessary to express the proposed Outstanding Universal Value are present within the boundaries of the nominated property.

ICOMOS considers that more information is necessary to understand how integrity, as defined in the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, can be demonstrated for the nominated property as a whole, as the context and causes of the Genocide have not been presented comprehensively in the nomination dossier. At present, the conditions of integrity required are not fully met to justify the selection of the component parts, namely, whether these are all the sites needed and whether these selected sites enable a complete understanding of the events.

Furthermore, the restorations and modifications to the sites in Nyamata and Murambi have not been documented to understand the extent of its potential impacts on the integrity of these individual component parts. ICOMOS requested further information on the restorations undertaken at these component parts in May 2023, and, in its response provided in June 2023, the State Party indicated that in 2017, restoration works have been done in both sites and that these have been documented. Architectural plans have been attached to this additional information; however, in terms of the works undertaken in 1995 and 2016 for Nyamata, and

undertaken in 1996, 2000 and 2016 for Murambi, mentioned in the nomination dossier, additional information has not been provided.

ICOMOS considers that the integrity of the main building of the former church of Nyamata, which has been preserved in the state it was in immediately after the massacres, is vulnerable to natural deterioration because of the building materials, and vulnerable to urban development because of its location.

ICOMOS considers that the integrity of the school of Murambi, which was under construction during the Genocide, has been affected by the works undertaken in the aftermath of the massacres, both in the buildings and the surrounding gardens where new graves have been built, but more information remains needed to assess its integrity conditions.

The integrity of the collections of movable heritage and evidence of the Genocide contained within the buildings allocated in the component parts, including the mummified bodies, skulls, personal belongings of the victims are highly vulnerable to environmental factors and require prompt actions for protection.

Authenticity

The authenticity of the nominated serial property is based on how well the attributes convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value which relates to the Genocide, to memories of the Genocide and to messages of reconciliation. Therefore, the buildings, in their materials, form and design need to testify to the massacres that occurred in 1994. In the case of Nyamata, the materials, form and design of the building of the former church have been maintained and the restorations have focused on the accommodation of graves in the garden of memory, and an exhibition in the underground of the main hall of the building, as well as the provision visitor facilities. A high degree of authenticity is still preserved in the interior and exterior of the main building of the former church, even though its use and function have changed from a place of worship to a place of commemoration.

In the case of Murambi, the main administration building has been modified with works undertaken in 1996 to transform the place into a memorial site potentially impacting on its authenticity. Graves have been accommodated in the garden of memory. As the site was under construction during the Genocide, and later partially completed and restored, more information was needed in order to assess its authenticity. ICOMOS requested further information from the State Party in May 2023, which replied in June 2023 that the works undertaken in 2017 have not affected the authenticity of the site. However, more information is still needed regarding the restorations and other works undertaken in 1996, 2000 and 2016.

In terms of memories and narratives of the events associated with the nominated serial property, ICOMOS

considers that more information on how these memories and narratives have been gathered and selected is necessary to understand the links between the proposed attributes and the proposed Outstanding Universal Value and to effectively assess the conditions of authenticity as set out in the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity, as defined by the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, have only been partially met at this stage, and that more information on the context and historical background is needed to assess the integrity of the nominated serial property as a whole. ICOMOS considers as well that more information is needed on restorations and construction of the memorial sites of Nyamata in 1995 and 2016, and Murambi in 1996, 2000 and 2016 in order to understand their impacts on the integrity and authenticity of these individual component parts.

Boundaries

There are no permanent inhabitants within the nominated serial property and 1.443 inhabit the totality of the four buffer zones. The boundaries have been defined based on the plots of land where the memorial sites are located. ICOMOS notes that the component part of Gisozi is divided in two parts, and considers that these two parts should be merged by including the road currently dividing the component part.

Buffer zones have been designed based on planning instruments and include plots of land that are in the ownership of the State or that are in negotiations with the government. In Nyamata, the inclusion of the cemetery of the former church within the boundaries of the component part is being negotiated.

ICOMOS considers that the planning mechanisms in place in the buffer zones should ensure an added layer of protection to the component parts, in particular for the component part of Nyamata which is vulnerable to development pressures due to its size and location.

Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription

In summary, ICOMOS considers that a comparative analysis should be developed as regards the selection of the component parts, within the hundreds of memorial sites existing in Rwanda. The comparative framework should be based on a comprehensive explanation of the events, their context and historical background, in order to provide a shared understanding of the causes of the massacres and the values that the nominated serial property could convey, and that could serve to justify the serial approach. Criterion (iii) has not been justified and criterion (vi) has the potential to be justified but has not been demonstrated at this stage. The conditions of integrity and authenticity have not been fully demonstrated at this stage.

4 Conservation measures and monitoring

Documentation

The nomination dossier provides maps and layouts of the four component memorial sites. However, for the buildings of the component parts of Nyamata and Murambi that were scenes of massacres, there is no documentation provided on their conditions right after the Genocide. Due to the circumstances of the Genocide and its aftermath, it is unclear whether a survey was undertaken in these two sites to assess their state of conservation. Restoration works on these buildings have been undertaken in 1995, 1996, 2000 and 2016 but details have not been provided in the nomination dossier. In June 2023, the State Party provided additional information on the restoration works undertaken in 2017.

In order to create a baseline that can serve for the adequate management, conservation and monitoring of the nominated serial property, ICOMOS considers that it would be necessary to document in detail the present state of conservation, as there was no assessment of the buildings in 1994-1995 before restoration works were undertaken. For the component parts of Gisozi and Bisesero, ICOMOS considers that assessing their current state of conservation and document it in order to establish a baseline for management, conservation and monitoring is necessary.

Conservation measures

The approach to conservation required for the component parts is not homogenous, since the buildings in Nyamata and Murambi are tangible testimonies to the Genocide, while Gisozi and Bisesero were built after the Genocide.

Restorations and remodelling works have been undertaken in the component parts of Nyamata and Murambi in order to protect the evidence of the damage in the buildings during the Genocide, and to accommodate graves for the victims. The component parts of Gisozi and Bisesero have been recently built, 1999 and 1998 respectively, and have not undergone any particular damage. Maintenance works are being performed regularly.

In February 2023, ICOMOS requested further information regarding the conservation strategy for the nominated serial property. The State Party responded in March 2023 that since 1994, conservation of evidence of the Genocide has been carried out in partnership with associations of survivors, authorities at all levels and the local population. It further explained that conservation is carried out at three levels: a) Regular maintenance of the memorial site by the site managers in collaboration with the population and local authorities, especially through community work; b) Processing of the material evidence of the Genocide by the technicians of the Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement; and c) Scientific processing and conservation by experts in collaboration with the technicians of the Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement as part of a transfer of knowledge strategy. The Ministry facilitates and provides all necessary support

to those involved in the conservation of evidence of the Genocide. ICOMOS notes that the conservation strategy is generally focused on the collections of movable heritage consisting of human remains, textiles from the clothing as well as other personal belongings of victims, and weapons used both by the *génocidaires* to kill the victims and by the victims to defend themselves. However, a conservation strategy for the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value has not been developed. ICOMOS considers that a baseline for the conservation of the component parts of Nyamata and Murambi needs to be developed, in particular for the former church of Nyamata and for the buildings of the school in Murambi, in order to maintain the material evidence of the Genocide in its physical fabric. This baseline should also consider the setting of the memorial sites in order to assess any potential impacts on the heritage values of the nominated component parts.

Establishing a baseline for the component parts of Gisozi and Bisesero will be also important for developing a long-term conservation strategy of these memorial sites and their setting.

ICOMOS noted that all the component parts include exhibition of human remains of the victims and areas with graves where the victims were buried, which appear to have been progressively enlarged. ICOMOS noted as well that the exhibitions are vulnerable to the environment pressures and that human remains would potentially be buried in the medium or longer term. In addition, ICOMOS noted that the graves could potentially need works of expansion to accommodate for more bodies and tombs. In May 2023, ICOMOS requested additional information from the State Party regarding its approach to the conservation of human remains and potential expansion of graves located within the nominated serial property. In June 2023, the State Party responded that there would be no new burials or graves in the serial nominated property.

Monitoring

The monitoring process for the four component parts relies on four indicators which focus on the maintenance of the gardens, the conservation of doors and windows, the maintenance of the graves and the extent and number of areas affected by rainwater stagnation. Several actors are in charge of different aspects of the monitoring, including the Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement, the districts of Bugesera, Nyamagabe, Karongi and Gasabo, the associations of survivors and the representatives of local population.

ICOMOS considers that the monitoring system needs to be designed to monitor the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. ICOMOS notes that a baseline needs to be established, as well as key indicators that would address the main threats to the conservation of the nominated property, which are principally related to the environment and urban development. ICOMOS considers that this needs to be designed in accordance to the clarifications required in terms of the selection of the

component parts and the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

ICOMOS considers that documenting the state of conservation of the nominated serial property is necessary, as well as establishing a baseline that would guide the conservation, management and monitoring of the nominated serial property. ICOMOS considers that the monitoring system needs to be developed based on the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

5 Protection and management

Legal protection

The four nominated memorial sites have been registered in the national inventory of cultural heritage elaborated in 2004. A designation of the four memorial sites on the list of national heritage, to be issued by the Ministry of Culture, is in process of being adopted, on the basis of article 14 of the Law No 28/2016 of 22/7/2016 on the Preservation of Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge. It is foreseen that the boundaries of the four component sites with respective maps will be annexed to the designation order. ICOMOS considers that the adoption of this designation for the legal protection of the component parts as cultural heritage is fundamental. ICOMOS requested further information on this matter in May 2023, and in June 2023, the State Party responded that the designation order will be adopted promptly, as it is currently being considered by the Rwandan Commission on Legislative Reform.

All five plots of land where the nominated component parts are located are in the ownership of the state. In addition, the sites are also protected under the Law No 15/2016 of 02/05/2016 regulating the Commemoration Ceremonies of the Genocide against the Tutsi and Organising and Managing the Memorial Sites of the Genocide against the Tutsi; the Law No 09/2007 of 16/02/2007 on the Responsibilities, Organisation and Functioning of the National Commission for the Fight against Genocide that was replaced in 2021 by the Prime Minister's Order No 021/03 of 21/10/2021 determining mission, responsibilities and organisational structure of the Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement (MINUBUMWE) that took over the responsibilities of the National Commission for the Fight against Genocide (CNLG); the Organic Law No 04/2004 of 08/04/2005 on the Modality for Protecting, Safeguarding and Promoting the Environment in Rwanda where its article 82 prohibits the dumping of any substances likely to destroy sites and monuments of scientific, cultural, tourist or historical interest; and the National Policy against Genocide, its Ideology and for the Management of its Consequences, developed in 2014. Besides, the State Party clarified in the additional information provided in March 2023 that a National Policy on National Unity and Civic Engagement is under elaboration and will include a section on the preservation of the memory of the Genocide against the Tutsi. ICOMOS requested further information in May 2023 on the contents of this policy and its expected adoption. The State Party explained in the additional information provided in June 2023 that the policy has been

finalised; the process of developing the strategic plan is on the way and expected to be completed during the year 2023. In addition, the State Party clarified that the content of the policy focuses on the preservation of the historical memory of the Genocide against the Tutsi and includes among other important points, the establishment and maintenance of the Memorial sites of the Genocide, as well as the archives including those of the Gacaca courts and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.

ICOMOS requested additional information regarding the rationale used for the delineation of the buffer zones and the regulations in place to provide an added layer of protection to the nominated serial property. In particular, ICOMOS noted that the buffer zone of the Murambi component part was tight that explanations were needed to better understand the reasons for this delineation. The State Party responded that the buffer zones were defined in the Ministerial Order 16/MOJ/AG19 of 09/09/2019 on the Commemoration of the Genocide against the Tutsi. Articles 34 and 35 regulate the maintenance, protection and management of the buffer zones of Memorial sites of the Genocide. For the four component parts, the buffer zones provide an added layer of protection preventing development that is not authorised by the Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement, the district where the memorial site is located (Bugesera, Nyamagabe, Gasabo and Karongi) and the security services in charge. The State Party agreed that the buffer zone of Murambi could be expanded in relation to the links of the setting with the protection of the memorial site.

Three of the component parts are also contemplated in the relevant development plans of the towns where they are located, namely Nyamata, Nyamagabe and Kigali. Because Bisesero is located in a rural area, it is contemplated in the development plan of the Twumba sector. According to the nomination dossier, these plans would have been updated between 2018 and 2020. In order to protect the integrity of the nominated component parts, the CNLG was set to participate in the revisions and update of these plans.

Management system

Since the submission of the nomination dossier by the State Party, the institution that was responsible for the four memorial sites, namely the CNLG, has been replaced by the newly established Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement. The State Party explained in the additional information provided in March 2023 that the memorial sites at national level, which correspond to the four memorial sites included in the nominated serial property, are managed by this Ministry that assigns managers to each site. In addition, local communities, which include the population living in the vicinities of the sites, the associations of survivors, the schools and the religious groups, support the regular cleaning of the memorial sites through community work. ICOMOS considers that as cultural heritage, the nominated serial property management system should count with the participation of the Ministry of Culture and other heritage related national agencies. In May 2023, ICOMOS

requested further information on the role played by the Ministry of Culture in the management system of the nominated serial property. The State Party responded in June 2023, that in March 2023, the former Ministry of Youth and Culture was changed to be in charge only of Youth, and that the attributions of the Ministry of Culture have been given to the Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement (MINUBUMWE). It further clarified that currently the management of the nominated serial property is under the Department of the Memory and Prevention of the Genocide.

A management plan was developed for the timeframe of 2018-2022. It was developed with a participatory approach, including all relevant stakeholders, including the CNLG, the former Ministry of Culture, the districts of Bugesera, Nyamagabe, Karongi and Gasabo, the associations of survivors, the partners in the management of the sites (e.g. AEGIS Trust for Gisozi), and the local population. ICOMOS requested additional information on its implementation, evaluation and update in view of its expiration. The State Party responded that the management plan had been developed by the previous manager, namely the CNLG and that its evaluation is foreseen in the fiscal year 2022-2023 with a task team having been set up to develop the next management plan for the period 2023-2028. The State Party further clarified in the additional information sent in June 2023 that the elaboration of the new management plan will start in July 2023.

ICOMOS considers that the next management plan should be based on a baseline for the conservation of the serial nominated property and that Heritage Impact Assessments need to be incorporated into the planning system to protect the component memorial sites from any adverse development in their buffer zones or wider setting. While the property is not prone to risks, in the context of climate change, disaster risk management protocols should also be incorporated in the management plan, considering risks of fire, heavy rains, droughts and flooding that could impact on the nominated component parts.

Visitor management

The component memorial sites have visitor facilities and guides. Visitor management actions have been developed for the Kigali Genocide Memorial with the implementation of radio guides in different languages. Parking lots have been accommodated for each of the component parts. While a visitor strategy has not been developed for the nominated serial property, the Kigali Genocide Memorial receives a greater number of visitors, both locals and foreigners, than the other memorial sites which are more visited by local residents and students. ICOMOS notes that the component memorial sites play an important role at the local level, for the local population and the people of Rwanda in general, as spaces of commemoration and reconciliation, for visiting, by family members principally, and remembering the victims, and for the future generations to be educated on the history of Rwanda and the prevention of genocide.

ICOMOS requested further information regarding the interpretation of the nominated serial property to clarify which actors are involved in the process and whether multiple perspectives on the events have been taken into account. Furthermore, ICOMOS asked whether the State Party was planning to elaborate an interpretation strategy for the nominated serial property as a World Heritage Site. The State Party clarified in the additional information provided in March 2023, that the interpretation of the memorial sites has been developed based on the testimonies of the survivors and the perpetrators, supported by researchers during the process of elaboration of the nomination dossier. It also mentioned the role of the Gacaca courts, from a legal perspective, which provided testimonies on the events, including testimonies of the perpetrators. ICOMOS considers that further information on these processes is needed to understand the development of the presentation and interpretation of the nominated serial property.

ICOMOS considers that a visitor and interpretation strategy should be further developed to allow a wider understanding of the historical context of the Genocide, based on the documentation of the reconciliation process. Such a strategy should not only embrace the historical past but also its present day meaning. Furthermore, such full interpretation should be available at all the nominated component parts associated with the Genocide.

Community involvement

The local population and associations of survivors (IBUKA) and family members of the victims have been part of the memorialisation process of the four memorial sites included in the nominated serial property. Families visit their relatives in the gardens of memory where graves have been accommodated for the victims. The local population are in charge of regular cleaning of the memorial sites through community work.

In May 2023, ICOMOS requested clarifications on whether the nomination process has been based on an inclusive dialogue involving all relevant stakeholders, based on a shared understanding of the events both nationally and regionally. The State Party responded in June 2023 that the nomination of the serial property is supported by the Rwandan population in general, and that it has been the result of a process which included the local communities living in the surroundings of the nominated component parts, but also the survivors, schools, universities, and Rwandan diaspora communities among other relevant actors.

ICOMOS acknowledges the additional information provided by the State Party and considers that further information is needed to clarify how memories of all those impacted by the conflict have been collected and collated to identify, protect, conserve, present and interpret the nominated serial property, and how these are contributing to the on-going reconciliation process.

Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the legal protection of the nominated serial property as national cultural heritage should be adopted promptly. The management plan should be updated taking into consideration an established baseline for the nominated component parts. Moreover, ICOMOS considers that a visitor and interpretation strategy should be further developed and its content expanded in coordination and with the participation of all relevant actors, in particular local communities, associations of survivors and families of the victims. Furthermore, ICOMOS considers that protocols for disaster risk management should be incorporated in the updated management plan, and Heritage Impact Assessments be integrated in the planning framework.

6 Conclusion

The Genocide in Rwanda in 1994 is a highly notable event due to its intensity – the number of people exterminated in a relatively short period of time –, and its modality – pre-meditated and organised extermination of civilians by neighbours, family members and militias. The Genocide in Rwanda has been influential at a global level in the process of creation of the International Criminal Court (2002), through the establishment of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (1994-2015). In order to remember the Genocide in Rwanda, the United Nations General Assembly has established the International Day of Reflection on the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda on April 7, recalling the importance of early warning and prevention of mass atrocities and the need for the international community to intervene in situations of genocide.

The nomination dossier and additional information provided by the State Party explain the circumstances of the Genocide in four hills where memorial sites have been erected. However, a wider understanding of the events, both in terms of historical background and spatial impacts has not been presented, nor the outcomes of the Genocide and their influence at a regional or global level have been discussed. ICOMOS understands that as a recent event, its outcomes and influence are still ongoing, and observes that a reflection on its historical impacts requires a longer-term perspective. However, in light of the requirements of the World Heritage Convention, the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* and the *Guiding Principles*, further contextualisation of the event is necessary in order to justify the serial approach, the selection of the four component memorial sites presented in the nomination dossier and criterion (vi), to better understand the global significance of the nominated property.

According to the definition that is provided by the *Guiding Principles*, only sites with tangible evidence of the events that happened can be understood as ‘sites of memory’ under the World Heritage Convention. Two of the four

component parts, Nyamata church and Murambi school, contain tangible evidence of the massacres that were perpetrated there and fully reflect the horrors of this Genocide. As regards the component parts of Gisozi and Bisesero, further information is needed to clarify how they could be considered sites of memory, as they have been built as memorial sites in the aftermath of the Genocide. Even though narratives associated to the event in Bisesero are presented, further clarification on the potential attributes of these two component sites is necessary to demonstrate the proposed Outstanding Universal Value under criterion (vi).

More details need to be provided on the context and historical background of the Genocide, as it was not a spontaneous event, but one linked to tensions that have a long history with regional implications. The nomination dossier has not explored the wider historical and regional context and has tended to concentrate on the massacres and their immediate history in the four particular hills of Nyamata, Murambi, Gisozi and Bisesero. ICOMOS considers that the Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda should be placed in a broader historical and geocultural context than the national one to further the understanding of the many factors that led to it, in order to justify how the nominated sites, demonstrate international value.

A broader understanding of the context and history needs to inform the interpretation and presentation of the nominated serial property considering a diversity of voices. Interpretation needs to present a complete history at each of the component parts and to embrace both the historical past and present-day meanings.

A further dimension that needs to be strengthened is how narratives of the event from all sides have been gathered and collated, and how they contribute to ongoing reconciliation processes.

The legal protection as memorial sites is adequate, however, a cultural heritage designation is in process of being adopted. ICOMOS considers that the adoption of this designation is fundamental for the appropriate conservation of the nominated serial property. The management system relies on the Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement which collaborates with the districts and with local communities, associations of survivors as well as family members of the victims through memorialisation processes and community works. ICOMOS considers that as cultural heritage, the nominated serial property should also count with the participation of relevant heritage-related national and local agencies in its management system, in particular to provide the technical expertise for heritage conservation and management.

ICOMOS considers that a baseline for conservation, management and monitoring of the nominated component parts should be developed. The management plan has expired and is in the process to be updated for the period 2023-2028. ICOMOS considers that this management plan should focus on the establishment of a

baseline for the conservation and monitoring of the nominated component parts, and that it should incorporate considerations for disaster risk management as well as a visitor and interpretation strategy. Furthermore, ICOMOS considers that Heritage Impact Assessments should be integrated into the planning system for the buffer zones and wider settings of the nominated property.

7 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the examination of the nomination of the Memorial sites of the Genocide: Nyamata, Murambi, Gisozi and Bisesero, Rwanda, to the World Heritage List be **deferred** in order to allow the State Party, with the advice of ICOMOS and the World Heritage Centre, if requested, to:

- Provide a wider historical and geocultural framework to allow a broader understanding of the context of the Genocide and its impacts and outcomes at regional and global levels, in order to frame and strengthen a justification for Outstanding Universal Value that would support a serial approach and a rationale for the selection of the component parts that would provide a complete understanding of the events;
- Provide further details and documentation on how narratives of the event from all sides have been gathered and collated, and how they are contributing to the ongoing, long-term reconciliation process.
- Develop an interpretation and presentation plan for the component parts that embraces a diversity of voices, with the complete history explained at each nominated component site and their present-day meaning;

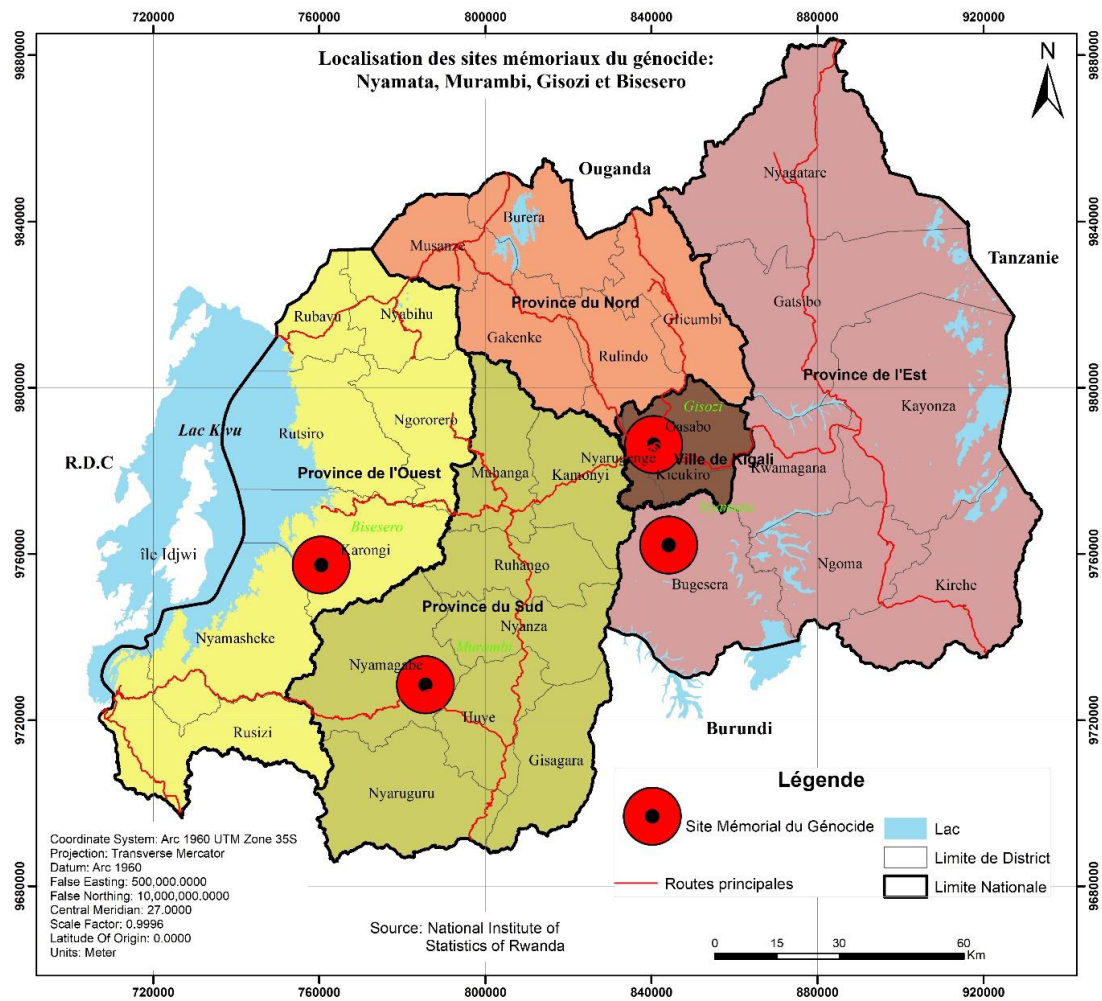
Any revised nomination should be visited by a mission to the site.

Additional recommendations

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

- a) Documenting and preparing a baseline for the conservation, management and monitoring of the component parts of the nominated serial property,
- b) Adopting the designation of the component parts as national cultural heritage,
- c) Updating the management plan including disaster risk management protocols and a visitor and interpretation strategy that is participatory and inclusive of all relevant actors,

- d) Incorporating Heritage Impact Assessments into the planning framework of the buffer zones and wider setting of the nominated property,
- e) Developing a monitoring system that includes key indicators that are related to the key attributes and main threats;



Map showing the location of the nominated component parts

VI Cultural properties

A Africa

B Europe – North America

C Latin America and the Caribbean

Funerary and memory sites of the First World War (Belgium, France) No 1567rev

1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the States Parties

Funerary and memory sites of the First World War
(Western Front)

Location

Provinces of Liège, Luxembourg, Namur, Hainaut and
West-Flanders
Belgium

Departments of Nord, Pas-de-Calais, Somme, Oise, Aisne,
Seine-et-Marne, Marne, Ardennes, Meuse, Meurthe-et-
Moselle, Moselle, Vosges, Haut-Rhin, Bas-Rhin
France

Brief description

The Funerary and memory sites of the First World War
(Western Front) is a transnational serial property
encompassing 139 sites located between the north of
Belgium and the east of France, along the First World War
Western Front where war was fought between the
German and the Allied forces between 1914 and 1918.

The nominated component parts vary in scale from large
necropolises, holding the remains of tens of thousands of
soldiers of several nationalities, to tiny and simpler
cemeteries, and single memorials. The component sites
include different types of necropolises – military,
battlefield burial grounds, hospital cemeteries and
cemeteries where the remains were regrouped later –
often combined with memorials.

Category of property

In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I
of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a serial
nomination of *monuments* and *sites*.

Included in the Tentative List

France: 7 April 2014
Belgium: 14 April 2014

Background

The present nomination has been evaluated by ICOMOS
in 2018. However, at that time, due to fundamental
questions posed by the nomination in relation to whether
sites associated with negative and divisive memories
belong to the scope of the World Heritage Convention and
if so, how, ICOMOS recommended that *“the examination
of the nomination [...] be postponed”*.

The World Heritage Committee decided (42 COM 8B.24)
to adjourn the consideration of this property *“until a
comprehensive reflection has taken place and the
Committee [...] has discussed and decided whether and
how sites associated with recent conflicts and other
negative and divisive memories might relate to the
purpose and scope of the World Heritage Convention and
its Operational Guidelines”*. The same decision also
indicates *“that the nomination of the Funerary and
memory sites of the First World War (Western Front),
Belgium and France, could only be considered by the
Committee upon further review by the Advisory Bodies in
light of Committee decision referred to above and upon
receipt of additional information to be provided by the
States Parties concerned”*.

An open-ended Working Group was established by
decision 44 COM 8 of the World Heritage Committee. The
Working Group elaborated the *Guiding Principles for the
preparation of nominations concerning sites of memory
associated with recent conflicts (Guiding Principles)*,
which have been adopted by the World Heritage
Committee at its 18th Extraordinary session. Pursuant to
decision 18 EXT.COM 4, the World Heritage Committee
also lifted *“the moratorium on the evaluation of sites of
memory associated with recent conflicts”*.

ICOMOS has therefore revised its evaluation in the light
of the additional information provided by the States
Parties and the *Guiding Principles*.

The revised evaluation is presented in this text.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission

Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS
International Scientific Committees, members and
independent experts.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the
property from 28 September to 21 October 2017.

Additional information received by ICOMOS

ICOMOS sent a first letter to the States Parties on 28 July
2017 requesting further information about the justification
of the selection of component parts for the nominated
series; information about missing individual records; the
logic behind the delineation of the boundaries of
nominated component parts and their buffer zones;
protection status of the component parts and of their
buffer zones; and an update on the development of the
management system.

ICOMOS sent a second letter to the States Parties on
29 September 2017, requesting further information about
the explanation for the sites that have been excluded from
the nominated series; protection mechanisms for the
component parts and their buffer zones; management of
the component parts and of the overall nominated series.

Finally, an Interim Report was provided to the States
Parties on 24 January 2018, summarising the issues and

provisional findings of the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel during its November 2017 meeting.

The States Parties responded respectively on 13 September 2017, 7 November 2017 (with further integrations submitted on 17 November 2017) and finally on 28 February 2018. The additional information provided has been integrated into the relevant sections of this report.

Additional information was requested and received in 2023 as follows:

Further to a letter by the World Heritage Centre, dated 2 February 2023, recalling decision 42 COM.8B 24, the States Parties submitted, on 28 February 2023, additional information on how the *Guiding Principles* are met by the nomination, on the actualisation of protection, boundaries, as well as on commemoration and research.

A letter was sent by ICOMOS to the States Parties on 23 March 2023, requesting further information about the historic context, the selection of the component parts in relation to the criteria, conservation, management, and interpretation.

Additional information was received from the States Parties on 24 April 2023.

Following the extraordinary session of the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel held on 4-5 May 2023, a letter was sent to the States Parties on 17 May 2023, requesting further information about the selection of the component parts of the series and the justification for inscription and details concerning the modification to the boundaries made to some component parts in the French territory.

Additional information was received from the States Parties on 13 June 2023.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
5 May 2023

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history

The Funerary and memory sites of the First World War (Western Front) are a nominated serial property formed by 139 sites and monuments located between the north of Belgium and the east and north-east of France. The sites are scattered throughout an area corresponding to what was the First World War Western Front, where war was fought between the German and the Allied forces between 1914 and 1918.

The nominated series is comprised of large necropolises preserving the remains of tens of thousands of soldiers of several nations, often enhanced by imposing or evocative monuments and landscape arrangements; cemeteries dedicated to the fallen of a single nationality; graveyards for the nations of the Commonwealth; tiny and simpler cemeteries and ossuaries collecting the remains of the fallen, as well as memorials. The series also includes two examples of cemeteries and monuments dedicated to civilian victims.

The nomination dossier presents the funerary models adopted by each State for the commemoration of their fallen and then provides a description of each component site.

The Commonwealth graveyard model was conceived under the coordination of the Imperial War Graves Commission (IWGC), which engaged famous personalities, such as Rudyard Kipling, and renowned architects, sculptors and landscape architects to plan and lay out the cemeteries. As a rule, and differently from other States, the IWGC did not engage in the regrouping of the fallen of the nations under the British Empire, so the Commonwealth cemeteries are generally rather small. After the war, several architects were called upon to rearrange the burial grounds already in existence since the war, according to models defined by four main architects: Reginald Blomfield, Edwin Lutyens, Herbert Baker and Charles Holden. Blomfield adopted a classical language, and a landscaping approach closer to the art of gardening; he conceived the idea of a standard Cross of Sacrifice to mark the graves. Lutyens elaborated designs in a vernacular language inspired by the Arts and Crafts movement, inserted harmoniously into the landscape thanks to the work of garden designer Gertrude Jekyll; he conceived a religious remembrance symbol: the Stone of Remembrance, to respect the differing religions of the Commonwealth nationalities. Overall, the landscaping of Commonwealth cemeteries follows the English garden tradition, with different textures, colours, and densities.

The series includes forty-eight cemeteries of the Commonwealth.

Belgium:

- WA08 German and Commonwealth Military Cemetery of Saint-Symphorien
- WA09 Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Hyde Park Corner Cemetery"
- WA10 Commonwealth Military Cemetery and memorial to the missing "Berks Cemetery Extension" and "Ploegsteert Memorial to the Missing"
- WA11 Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Strand Military Cemetery"
- WA12 Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Prowse Point Military Cemetery"
- WA13 Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Mud Corner Cemetery"
- WA14 Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Toronto Avenue Cemetery"

- WA15 Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Ploegsteert Wood Military Cemetery"
- WA16 Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Rifle House Cemetery"
- FL08 Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Tyne Cot Cemetery" and Commonwealth memorial to the missing "Tyne Cot Memorial"
- FL09 Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Polygon Wood Cemetery"
- FL10 Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Buttes New British Cemetery"
- FL11 Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Essex farm Cemetery"
- FL12 Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Welsh Cemetery (Caesar's Nose)"
- FL13 Commonwealth Military cemetery "No Man's Cot Cemetery"
- FL14 Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Track X Cemetery"
- FL15 Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Buff's Road Cemetery"
- FL18 Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Bedford House Cemetery"
- FL19 Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Larch Wood Cemetery"
- FL20 Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Woods Cemetery"
- FL21 Commonwealth Military Cemetery "1st D.C.L.I. Cemetery, The Bluff"
- FL22 Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Hedge Row Trench Cemetery"
- FL24 Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Spanbroekmolen British Cemetery"
- FL25 Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Lone Tree Cemetery"
- FL27 Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery"

France:

- ND01 Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery"
- ND02 Commonwealth Military Cemetery and Australian Memorial "V.C. Corner Australian Cemetery and Memorial"
- ND03 Commonwealth Military Cemetery and Memorial "Louvervall Military Cemetery" and "Cambrai Memorial"
- ND04 German Military Cemetery of la Route de Solesmes and Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Cambrai East Military Cemetery"
- ND06 Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Le Quesnoy Communal Cemetery Extension"
- PC01 Indian Memorial of the Commonwealth "Neuve Chapelle Memorial"
- PC04 Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Canadian Cemetery n°2"
- PC05 Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Givenchy Road Canadian Cemetery"
- PC06 Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Lichfield Crater"

- PC07 French National Necropolis of la Targette and Commonwealth Military Cemetery "La Targette British Cemetery"
- PC11 Commonwealth Military Cemetery and Memorials "Faubourg d'Amiens Cemetery", "Arras Memorial" and "Arras Flying Services Memorial"
- PC12 Commonwealth Military Cemetery and Memorial "Dud Corner Cemetery" and "Loos Memorial"
- PC13 Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Etaples Military Cemetery"
- PC14 Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Wimereux Communal Cemetery"
- SE01 Commonwealth Memorials "Beaumont Hamel (Newfoundland) Memorial", "29th Division Memorial", Commonwealth Memorial Park "Beaumont Hamel (Newfoundland) Memorial Park" and Commonwealth military cemetery "Hunter's Cemetery"
- SE02 Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Mill Road Cemetery"
- SE03 Commonwealth Monument to the missing "Thiepval Memorial" and French-Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Thiepval Anglo-French Cemetery"
- SE04 Commonwealth Military Cemetery and Memorial "Pozières British Cemetery" and "Pozières Memorial"
- SE05 South-African National Memorial "The South Africa (Delville Wood) National Memorial" and Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Delville Wood Cemetery"
- SE07 Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Rancourt Military Cemetery"
- SE09 Australian National Memorial "Villers-Bretonneux Memorial" and Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Villers-Bretonneux Military Cemetery"
- SE10 Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Noyelles-sur-Mer Chinese Cemetery" and Chinese memorial "Noyelles-sur-Mer Chinese Memorial"
- SE11 Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Louvencourt Military Cemetery"

Some of the above-mentioned component sites include also cemeteries of other nations and therefore are listed under their respective model of reference. To these cemeteries, two memorials are also added: the Nieuport Memorial and the Menin Gate.

In France, the idea to develop burials for the fallen in war emerged from associations of combatants who wanted to honour their comrades but this was soon taken over by the State. Established on 25 November 1918, the National Commission for Military Graves adopted a symmetrical and rectilinear type-plan for all cemeteries, which was put in place repetitively, rarely modified to adapt to the setting. In line with Auguste Perret's approach, the architectural language had to be classical but expressed through modern materials: concrete was the material selected for the built elements. The French cemeteries adopted four grave markers: the Latin cross for the Christians; stelaes engraved with a Crescent and

oriented East-West so as to ensure that the dead look towards Mecca for the Muslims; stelaes engraved with a Star of David for the Jews; and a simple stela for agnostics, atheists or those who adhered to other religions. The space of each grave was fixed at three square metres, each grave separated from the next by a ninety centimetres interval. Little vegetation was initially envisaged for the French cemeteries, although current rearrangements have brought in more elaborate landscaping.

The nomination dossier includes among the French-type cemeteries the following:

Belgium:

- WA03 Le Plateau French Military Cemetery
- WA04 L'Orée de la Forêt French Military Cemetery
- WA05 Le Radan French-German Military Cemetery
- WA07 La Belle Motte French Military Cemetery
- FL16 Saint-Charles de Potyze French Military Cemetery

France:

- PC07 French National Necropolis of la Targette and Commonwealth Military Cemetery "La Targette British Cemetery"
- PC10 Notre-Dame-de-Lorette National French Necropolis
- SE06 Rancourt National French Necropolis and Chapel of French Memory
- OI01 Cuts National French Necropolis
- OI02 Thiescourt National French Necropolis and Thiescourt German Military Cemetery
- OI03 Compiègne (Royallieu) National French Necropolis
- AI04 Le Sourd National French Necropolis and Le Sourd German Military Cemetery
- AI05 National French Necropolis of prisoners of Effry
- AI08 Craonnelle National French Necropolis
- MA03 Saint-Hilaire-le-Grand Russian Cemetery and Chapel
- MA04 National French Necropolis, German Military Cemetery and Polish Military Cemetery "le Bois du Puits"
- MA06 National French Necropolis and German Military Cemetery of la Crouée
- ME04 La Maize National French Necropolis
- ME05 Douaumont French Ossuary, National French Necropolis, Jewish Monument and Muslim Monument
- ME09 Le Faubourg Pavé National French Necropolis
- ME11 Le Trottoir National French Necropolis
- MM03 Pierrepont National French Necropolis
- MS01 Riche National French Necropolis
- MS03 L'Espérance National French Necropolis
- MS04 National French Cemetery of Sarrebourg war prisoners
- MS05 Chambièrre National French Necropolis
- MS06 Lagarde National French Necropolis

- VS01 La Fontenelle National French Necropolis
- VS02 La Chipotte National French Necropolis
- VS03 Les Tiges National French Necropolis
- HR01 Le Wettstein National French Necropolis
- HR05 Le Silberloch National French Necropolis, Hartmannswillerkopf National French Monument and Crypt
- HR09 Moosch National French Necropolis

It is noticed that the description ascribes the Plateau French Military Cemetery, the Orée de la Forêt French Military Cemetery and the French-German Military Cemetery of le Radan to the German type; however, they have been listed under the French type in the nomination dossier.

Some of the above-mentioned component sites include also cemeteries of other nations and therefore are listed under their respective model of reference.

Further component sites related to the French losses are included in the nomination. They comprise fourteen additional necropolises and cemeteries:

France:

- ND05 Assevent National French Necropolis and German Military Cemetery
- AI07 Cerny-en-Laonnois National French Necropolis, Cerny-en-Laonnois German Military Cemetery and Memorial Chapel of Chemin des Dames
- SM01 La Grande Tombe de Villeroy National French Necropolis
- MA07 L'Opéra National French Necropolis
- MA08 28th Brigade "La ferme des Wacques" National French Necropolis
- MA09 National French Necropolis of the Ossuary Monument of the Foreign Legion (Henri Fansworth)
- AR01 Chestres National French Necropolis with the German Military Cemetery of Chestres
- MA11 Saint-Thomas en Argonne National French Necropolis and National French Necropolis of the Gruerie Monument ossuary
- MA12 La Harazée National French Necropolis
- ME02 La Forestière National French Necropolis
- HR04 Duchesne National French Necropolis
- HR08 Germania French Military Cemetery
- AR03 French military plot of the dead of November 11, 1918 of Vrigne-Meuse

Two cemeteries of civilians:

France:

- MA05 Mondement-Montgivroux communal French Cemetery and French Chapel
- MM02 Gerbeviller French Square to the civilian victims

And five memorials and three ossuaries:

Belgium:

- FL23 Mount Kemmel French Ossuary

France:

- ME01 Haute-Chevauchée French Monument Ossuary
- MA10 Navarin French Ossuary and Monument to the Fallen of the Champagne Armies
- AI09 French Memorial “Les fantômes”
- MA01 French Memorial of the Battles of the Marne
- ME06 Douaumont Fort
- ME07 French Stelae to the Executed of Fleury-devant-Douaumont (civilians)
- ME08 High Memorial of the Trench of the Bayonets at Douaumont

The German model was developed rather late, since most of the graveyards formed during the war were either in France or Belgium. The association *Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge* (VDK) was established in 1919 with the mission to build or reorganise the war graveyards but its objectives could be achieved only after the Second World War. The German landscape architect Robert Tischler inspired the main principles for the arrangement of the German necropolises with the aim of preserving the sombre character of the cemeteries. The Christian cross, originally in tarred wood, was retained but replaced either by metal or stone, directly hammered into the grass; only trees adorn the graveyards, the light and shadow they create during the day aimed at providing a sense of mourning, meditation, and absorbed recollection. However, no unified design is imposed on the German cemeteries, which therefore enjoy a variety of arrangements. The dead soldiers are buried in groups of four, six or eight, sometimes up to 20 under the same cross. The vegetation is maintained in a natural way that gives the sense of ‘free nature’; the presence of trees also dictates the organisation of the graves, breaking up the rigid symmetry.

The series includes 22 German-type cemeteries. They are:

Belgium:

- WA05 Le Radan French-German Military Cemetery
- WA08 German and Commonwealth Military Cemetery of Saint-Symphorien
- FL02 Vladslo German Military Cemetery
- FL06 Langemark German Military Cemetery

France:

- ND04 German Military Cemetery of la Route de Solesmes and Commonwealth “Cambrai East Military Cemetery”
- ND05 Assevent French Necropolis and German Military Cemetery
- PC08 La Maison Blanche German Military Cemetery
- SE08 Rancourt German Military Cemetery
- OI02 Thiescourt French Necropolis and German Military Cemetery

- AI02 Saint-Quentin German Military Cemetery and French-German monument
- AI03 Veslud German Military Cemetery
- AI07 Cerny-en-Laonnois French Necropolis and German Military Cemetery and Memorial Chapel of Chemin des Dames
- MA04 French National Necropolis, German Military Cemetery and Polish Cemetery “le Bois du Puits”
- MA06 National French Necropolis and German Military Cemetery of la Crouée
- AR01 Chestres German Military Cemetery and National French Necropolis
- AR04 Apremont German Military Cemetery
- ME10 Consenvoye German Military Cemetery
- ME12 Gobessart German Military Cemetery
- MM04 Pierrepont German Military Cemetery
- MS02 L'Hellenwald German Military Cemetery
- MS07 Lagarde German Military Cemetery
- HR02 Hohrod-Bärenstall German Military Cemetery

Some of the above sites are also ascribed to other funerary models, as they encompass also cemeteries of other nations. The series also include the following German cemeteries or memorials that were not seen as reflecting the German model:

France:

- Le Sourd German Military Cemetery (part of AI04)
- HR03 Kahm German Military Cemetery in Lapoutroie
- HR06 Uhlands' German Military Cemetery in Hartmannswiller
- AR02 German Monument of the Saint-Charles Cemetery in Sedan

The American model was developed by the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC), created in 1923, inspired by the French architect Paul Philippe Cret, who emigrated to the United States in 1903. He conceived a sober, classical language and a layout based on symmetry and perspective axes. The American cemeteries developed around the memorial, and include a chapel and a building for the manager of the site; the burials are grouped in sectors, each occupying 4 square meters. The stelae are in Carrara marble. Curtains of trees delimit the perimeter of the cemeteries and planted areas order their inner spaces. The gardening is inspired by geometry. The types of plants and species used were inventoried and respected in the case of replacement.

The series includes three American-type cemeteries. They are:

France:

- AI01 Aisne-Marne American Cemetery and Memorial
- ME03 Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery and Memorial
- MM01 St. Mihiel American Cemetery and Memorial

The Belgian cemeteries feature geometric and symmetrical layouts. As a rule, the remains are buried

individually but, in some cases, one can find the remains of two or more soldiers grouped together under the same stela. The stela model was conceived by the architect Fernand Symons and officially adopted in 1925; in stone, they were adorned by spirals, reliefs and a garland. The official stelae replaced the previous crosses in wood or the hero crosses, shaped as Celtic crosses and made out of concrete. The vegetation appears in the form of hedges and shrubs, tree species include evergreens, broadleaved trees, weeping willows, bay-trees and yews.

The series includes three Belgian-type cemeteries. They are:

Belgium:

- WA02 Robermont Military plots in Liège
- FL04 Oeren Belgian Military Cemetery in Alveringem
- FL05 Houthulst Belgian Military Cemetery

The series includes also the following components that commemorate the Belgian losses:

Belgium:

- WA01 Fort de Loncin
- WA06 Enclosure of the Executed in Tamines (civilians)

Graveyards built by other nations or not ascribable to any of the above models include the following:

France:

- PC02 Portuguese Military Cemetery of Richebourg-l'Avoué
- PC09 Czechoslovakian Military Cemetery of Neuville-Saint-Vaast
- MA02 Italian Military Cemetery of "Bligny"
- HR07 Romanian Military Cemetery of Soultzmat
- AI06 Danish Military Cemetery of Braine
- BR01 Ensemble of stelae and ancient French and German tombs of le Petit Donon
- MA03 Saint-Hilaire-le-Grand Russian Cemetery and Chapel

The last is, however, also included in the dossier in the list of French-type cemeteries.

The series also includes monuments and memorials of other nations:

Belgium:

- FL07 Canadian National Monument "The Brooding Soldier"
- FL26 Irish Monument "Island of Ireland Peace Tower"
- FL03 Crypt of the Tower of Yser

France:

- PC03 Canadian National Memorial "Vimy Memorial"

It should be noted that some of the components are further fragmented into separate elements (e.g. FL11, FL15 (Belgium)).

The description of the individual component sites is provided according to their location: in Wallonia, Flanders or French Departments. Some sixty-nine components have been grouped in memorial sectors. They encompass the setting of the components in which battles were fought and form the buffer zones of the sites included in these sectors. However, a number of component sites enjoy independent buffer zones, not being explicitly associated with any memorial sectors (seventy in total, out of which five are in Wallonia, fourteen in Flanders and fifty-one in France).

The memorial sectors are presented below.

In Belgium:

- Tintigny (Wallonia - WA)
- Ploegsteert (WA)
- Polygon Wood (Flanders – FL)
- Pilkem Ridge (FL)
- Hill 60/The Bluff (FL)
- Spanbroekmolen (FL)

In France:

- Fromelles (Nord)
- Richebourg (Pas-de-Calais)
- Vimy (Pas-de-Calais)
- Neuville-Saint-Vaast (Pas-de-Calais)
- La Vallée de l'Ancre (Somme)
- Rancourt-Bouchavesne (Somme)
- Chemin de Dames (Aisne)
- Souain (Marne)
- Argonne (Marne, Ardennes, Meuse)
- Verdun-Douaumont (Meuse)
- Pierrepont (Meurthe-et-Moselle)
- Morhange / Riche (Moselle)
- Lagarde (Moselle)
- Le Linge (Haut-Rhin)
- La Tête des Faux (Haut-Rhin)
- Le Vieil Armand-Hartmannswillerkopf (Haut-Rhin)

In the additional information submitted in February 2018 in response to the ICOMOS Interim Report, the States Parties provided an account of the relationship between the memorial sectors and the development of the war and relevant battles with which the cemeteries are associated.

As presented in the nomination dossier, the area of the 139 component parts totals 879,99 ha, with buffer zones totalling 29.086,94 ha.

The nomination dossier first provides an account of the evolution from collective to individual burials in the 19th and 20th centuries and of the affirmation of the burial rite related to the First World War. It then proceeds to summarise the main historic milestones of each and every component site.

The extensive human losses caused by battles and trench war of the First World War triggered, already during the conflict, efforts to ensure the identification of the fallen, their individual burial whenever possible, and, subsequently, the transposition of the remains in individual graves in national necropolises or, after 1921, in the family tomb or in the military enclosures of the country of provenance, according to repatriation policies.

The nomination dossier sees this phenomenon as an unprecedented occurrence, both in terms of scale and organisation.

The dossier refers to precedents in this sphere, such as provisions adopted after 17 July 1862 in the United States following the Civil War for the individual burial of Union soldiers in cemeteries (Battle of Gettysburg – 1863, and Arlington Cemetery – 1864), or those taken after the 1870-1871 Franco-Prussian War.

At the dawn of the First World War, France still maintained collective burials, whilst Germany, America and Britain had already opted for individual burials of the fallen in combat. In particular, Britain adopted the principle of individual burials during the Boer War (1899-1902), to honour the volunteers who fought in that war.

The unprecedented scale of the losses in the first five months of the war made it urgent to address the issue of what type of funerary rite might be performed and what role the State had to play in responding to the requests of families to see the remains of their loved ones returned.

During the first weeks and months, initiatives were disparate in character but collective burials became more and more unacceptable, and the first regulations were issued for burial procedures that allowed for later identification of the buried soldiers.

After the war, the policy of identification of the fallen continued, in order to repatriate the remains, if possible, systematically.

The reburial in individual graves within regrouped cemeteries took place in the early 1920s. France favoured the regathering in large necropolises; Britain and the Commonwealth, on the other hand, preferred the rearrangement of the original burial grounds. By 1925 the majority of the regrouping necropolises were laid out and burials arranged.

In the following years, between the 1920s and 1930s, memorials and monuments were erected either as complementary commemorations to the cemeteries or independently. Examples of these include the Necropolis and Chapel of Notre-Dame-de-Lorette, the Chapel of the Reconnaissance of Dormans, the ossuary in Douaumont, the monument and ossuary of Hartmannswillerkopf (France); Thiepval, Richebourg-Neuve-Chapelle, the monuments at Nieuport, Ploegsteert, the Menin Gate, the Wall at Tyne Cot, and Dud Corner in Loos-en-Gohelle (United Kingdom). The United States inaugurated its

major necropolises of Argonne-Meuse, Aisne-Marne and Thiaucourt in 1937. German cemeteries and memorials were set up on the initiative of a private association (VDK): the four necropolises of Langemark, Hoogde, Menin and Vladslo were partly built in the 1920s and then completed in the 1950s. Not all projects were carried out at the same pace, particularly when related to difficult memories (e.g. defeats).

The inauguration ceremonies of the 1920s-1930s were accompanied by celebrations in the presence of the highest State and institutional representatives.

The activity of identification of the fallen continued throughout the decades, although not as systematically as in the immediate post-war decades. Commemorative celebrations and rites began to be regularly carried out in the 1920s and continued regularly, particularly at certain sites, whilst in others the celebrations saw their scope reduced from national to regional or local level.

Important ceremonies took place at many cemeteries and memorials in the 1960s, for the 50th anniversary of the War. The 1990s witnessed commemoration ceremonies performed by former British Dominions as well as by States belonging to the former Soviet Bloc.

The commemorations for the centennial of the First World War began in 2014 and was completed in 2018.

State of Conservation

ICOMOS notes, and this applies particularly to French necropolises, that maintenance is governed essentially by practical, economic, memorial and aesthetic considerations, but is not necessarily linked to the proposed attributes with which each component part contributes to reflect the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

Based on the information provided by the States Parties and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation of the nominated property is uneven: for a number of component parts this has been found good, but several others lack sufficient maintenance.

Factors affecting the nominated property

Based on the information provided by the States Parties and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the nominated property are different depending on the setting in which the component parts can be found.

Factors affecting the nominated component parts in agricultural and rural areas are mainly the development of energy infrastructure (e.g. wind turbines and power lines, e.g. in Nord, Aisne, Vosges, Moselle), of transport and of agricultural infrastructure, as well as agricultural activities. In the first case, the most significant impact would be on the setting and on the spirit of the place. Road upgrading often does not consider the presence of these sites, affecting their access and ceremonies. Agricultural

activities and related infrastructure may impact on the setting of these sites and in some cases also have direct impacts (e.g. damage by heavy machinery to the fences around some sites). Mechanisms to mitigate such impacts are not in all cases in place. There have been many situations of plaque theft that have been noted, particularly in German cemeteries. There is no specific mitigation measure in place or planned.

Factors that can affect the nominated sites in urban and peri-urban areas are real estate and infrastructure development. In any case, the proximity of unregulated roads, real estate, commercial, and industrial infrastructure will have an impact on the setting, the spirit of the place, and the form. The impact could be visual, auditory, and physical. Some of these sites already show unregulated construction impacts that have not considered their value. Examples include building dwellings whose mass, volume, materials and colours detract from the ability to appreciate the link between these sites and their environment. In the majority of cases, municipalities and cities have taken note and regulated in their zoning apparatus the type of construction. However, when there is no heritage protection status at the site, it is difficult to establish binding regulations that involve heritage experts.

In a large majority of cases, especially in the departments of Haut and Bas-Rhin, Moselle and Vosges, the sites are part of a forest environment governed by the forest code administered by the National Forest Bureau (ONF). Some of these forests are state-owned and wholly administered under the authority of the ONF and its mandate, whilst others are communal, and there the ONF mandate is to set specifications to exploit the forest. The forest code obliges ONF to develop exploitation plans, which may include the identification of sensitive areas. The major issues are related to the archaeological dimension of areas related to the First World War and to what extent the forestry regulations take this into account.

Some sites suffer greatly from high traffic pressure (this is reported especially for sites in Belgium).

ICOMOS considers that many component parts suffer from the impacts of transformations that have occurred in their vicinity.

ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting a number of component parts of the property are urban pressures, energy and transport infrastructure, particularly windfarms and high-traffic roads. In forested areas, archaeological remains may fall under forestry management pressures. ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation of the component parts of the nominated series is uneven, with many sites in a good state of conservation but many others exhibiting a varied level of maintenance and conservation implementation. The main problem is the lack of a consistent approach to maintenance and conservation within the same management agency and across the different agencies. ICOMOS considers that both the factors affecting the

nominated property and the maintenance/conservation approach have a negative influence on the integrity of the component parts and also make the significance of the nominated property less legible. A comprehensive common approach to maintenance should be developed, to ensure that its outcomes are controlled *ex ante*, particularly with regard to impacts on the cemeteries, in order to preserve their conception.

3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed Justification

The nominated property is considered by the States Parties to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- The nominated series attests to a completely new approach to the fallen in combat, recognised individually.
- The nominated series reflects an entirely new cult of the dead brought forth by the massive human losses caused by the First World War and as a response to the inhumanity of war.
- The nominated series illustrates a completely new architectural movement that responds to the commemoration needs brought about by the immense scale of the conflict, and that is specific to each fighting party.
- Altogether the nominated series illustrates a living tradition aiming to perpetuate the individual memory of the disappeared and a cult of the dead based on humanistic and civil values which invite recollection, reconciliation and peace.

In February 2018, based on an expanded comparative analysis, the States Parties proposed a reworded justification for inscription which revolves around the following axes:

- The nominated series expresses the immense trauma of societies and grief of survivors and families caused by a war waged at an unprecedented industrial scale which mobilised civilians across the world and caused enormous losses that shattered families and societies for decades.
- The nominated property attests to a new way of dealing with the fallen, based on the identification of the dead, systematic individual burial irrespective of nationality, rank, culture, class, confession or philosophical conviction. Initially practiced by comrades or inhabitants near battlefields, it became institutionalised.
- The nominated series represents a remarkable architectural ensemble reflecting mourning and recollection through their arrangements and elements and illustrating different aesthetic models.
- The nominated series is associated with a century long living tradition that mobilise local people, national organisation and people from all over the world.

Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis has been developed around two levels: firstly, comparisons to justify the selection of component parts; and secondly, a comparison with other properties considered similar to the nominated property, in order to justify the nominated series as a whole.

The first level of comparison is based on the following parameters: historic value of the place as a testimony of funerary rites and of the emblematic war events; the presence of landscape and architectural elements (monumental architecture of high quality, specific spatial organisation, presence of landscape and horticultural elements, insertion in a memorial landscape); identity and cultural elements (the site is representative of a nation, of a people, of a specific role in the war, or the site is connected with a specific tradition); the intangible and artistic elements (the site witnesses regular commemorations, is enriched by artistic achievements); and elements of originality (the site is unique, representative of a typology or it presents several attributes); an assessment of integrity and authenticity is also taken into account.

In 2018, ICOMOS noted shortcomings in the rationale for the selection of the component parts and requested additional information and clarifications from the States Parties. Despite the efforts deployed and the additional explanations provided by the States Parties, the selection of component parts for the nominated series remained unconvincing. In particular, ICOMOS found that the inclusion of a number of sites did not appear to reflect the parameters indicated by the States Parties for their selection, nor did they contribute to illustrate the justification for the criteria under which the series is nominated. On the one hand, for example, the cemeteries and monuments to the civilians did not match the justification proposed for the potential Outstanding Universal Value or criteria (iii) and (iv), which focus on the commemoration of the fallen in combat. On the other hand, the cemeteries built in recent times (e.g., Fromelles) did not enjoy a sufficient time-depth to be able to justify criteria (iii) or (vi). Many component parts did not offer a convincing reflection of criterion (iv) and, overall, only a very limited number of them were able to reflect all three criteria, which is what is required for the component parts of a series. Despite the apparently limited focus of the proposed justification, the selection of the component parts of the nominated series did not appear fully consistent with this focus. This lack of clarity relates to the fact that the definition of the nominated property was somehow confused. The understanding of what funerary and memory sites might be is implicitly addressed in the justification for nomination where a focus is put on the necropolises. However, this definition conflicted with the reality of many component parts, in particular regarding planning intent, the presentation of attributes and cultural expressions, and it was not adequately reflected by the selected component parts of the nominated series.

Therefore, when the evaluation of this nomination resumed in January 2023, ICOMOS requested additional

information from the States Parties on how the component parts of the nominated series had been selected in relation to the identified attributes supporting the justification for inscription and the selected criteria. ICOMOS also requested a synoptic table that tied the parameters of the selection and the criteria, in order to further the initial work done during the evaluation procedure in 2018.

In their reply, the States Parties explained that the selection has considered the ensemble of the parties involved in the conflict, the nationalities and origins of the combatants, and the different statuses of the deceased: in combat, following injuries, in detention, executed, military and non-military. The component parts include cemeteries, necropolises, ossuaries and mass graves as well as monuments and memorials erected to commemorate the fallen in the First World War. The selection includes component parts that were created during or immediately after the conflict but also more recently.

The explanation is complemented by a table linking the attributes and the criteria, as well as another table which ties each attribute with the specific contribution of each proposed component part.

The additional information and tables have allowed ICOMOS, in conjunction with all the documentation submitted previously and in light of the *Guiding Principles*, to understand more clearly the scope of the nomination and the rationale for the selection of the nominated component parts, as well as to identify more precisely where weaknesses in the composition of the nominated series reside, as not all the selected component parts contribute to make up a robust series.

In particular, the *Guiding Principles* define the sites of memory as “places where an event happened that a nation and its people [...] or communities want to remember. Sites associated with recent conflicts are specific sites with material evidence, in conformity with Articles 1 and 2 of the Convention, or landscape features which can be linked to their memorial aspect and that commemorate the victims of these conflicts. These sites, accessible, or made accessible, to the public, represent a place of reconciliation, remembrance, peaceful reflection, and must play an educational role in order to promote a culture of peace and dialogue.” Hence, only sites with tangible evidence of the events that happened can be understood as “sites of memory” under the World Heritage Convention.

The above paragraph of the *Guiding Principles* led ICOMOS to question the inclusion within the nominated series of memorial sites purposely created to memorialise the victims, but which do not contain tangible evidence of the event being commemorated and are not part of funerary sites.

In other words, it is the funerary sites, for their association with the First World War and the immense loss it caused,

that might be considered for inscription on the World Heritage List, as they contain tangible evidence of the event being commemorated.

The comparison of the nominated series with other comparable properties is based on two aspects: the specificity of the funerary practices and the historic interpretation context. The comparison notes that many World Heritage properties – namely 117 according to the research – include funerary sites from ancient to more recent times but only a limited number expresses a memorial value; this type of survey is extended to the tentative lists. The nomination dossier then mentions the World Heritage properties related to the Second World War: Auschwitz Birkenau – German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (1940-1945), Poland, 1979, (vi), Hiroshima Peace Memorial (Genbaku Dome), Japan, 1996, (vi), and Bikini Atoll Nuclear Test Site, Marshall Islands, 2010, (iv) and (vi).

The key elements of the comparative analysis focus on two First World War sites on the Tentative Lists of States Parties: “The Walk of Peace from the Alps to the Adriatic – Heritage of the First World War” (Italy, Slovenia) and the sites of Çanakkale and Gelibolu (Turkey), as well as the Balkan and the Eastern Fronts. The Eastern Front preserves several cemeteries, but they are said to play a role as national emblems rather than as international commemorative places; additionally, according to the nomination dossier, the awareness of the heritage significance of these sites occurred rather late, many being left in abandonment in the interwar period, suffering also intentional damage. The nomination dossier concludes that none of these fronts presents the density of testimonies, in terms of funerary sites, as the Western Front; however, both the ‘Walk of Peace’ and Çanakkale and Gelibolu would preserve funerary and memory sites that might complement the nominated series.

In 2018, despite the additional argumentation and the expansion of the comparative analysis, ICOMOS considered that it remained unconvincing in its conclusions as the nature of the proposed justification, that the attributes and the composition of the nominated series were unclear, and that the fundamental issues raised by the nomination in relation to the scope of the World Heritage Convention needed to be addressed by the World Heritage Committee.

The reflection developed since 2018 on sites of memory associated with recent conflicts, the additional information and explanation provided by the States Parties, particularly in attempting an appraisal of the magnitude and scope of the war in relation to the value of the nominated property, have assisted ICOMOS in considering the nominated series as a tangible reflection of an event of outstanding universal significance which also determined a significant period of human history with long-lasting impacts on individuals, communities and societies across the world.

Hence, despite the weaknesses of the comparative analysis, ICOMOS came to the conclusion that the proposed series could be considered for inscription on the World Heritage List, but on different grounds than those proposed by the States Parties and in a reduced configuration.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (iii), (iv) and (vi).

Criterion (iii): *bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;*

This criterion is justified by the States Parties on the grounds of the installation and generalisation of a new tradition of the cult of the fallen, in which each victim is commemorated and recognised individually without distinction of social or cultural affiliation. Each body is buried in an individual grave in military cemeteries or in dedicated enclosures in civilian cemeteries, and unidentified remains are collected in ossuaries. Monuments to the Missing are erected for those who do not have an identified individual grave.

In 2018, ICOMOS observed that commemorating the individual soldiers that died in the war and providing them, wherever possible, with individual graves and headstones was an achievement, but it could not be seen as an exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition.

Additionally, the memorialisation of the fallen dates back to the end of the 18th century. An essential condition for the development of the latter was the transition from a cult of the religious and famous dead to secular and citizen worship. The device of mass conscription converts the citizen into a soldier. Previously, being a soldier was a profession, but then it became a duty and a condition for the establishment of citizenship in the 19th century. As a result, death and burial in a mass grave were no longer accepted as an occupational hazard. From then on, the Nation was obliged to recognise individually its dead regardless of their social background (for example: order of the King of Prussia, Frederick William III, in 1813).

The additional information submitted in February 2018 contained a revised justification for this criterion, which focused on the fixing and full establishment of principles related to individual burial and recognition of the fallen combatants which had emerged in previous conflicts but which only were undertaken systematically and on a massive scale during the First World War.

However, ICOMOS considered that the application of this criterion remained too narrow and not adequate to justify it.

For ICOMOS it remains difficult to consider the individual burial of fallen soldiers, in the first decades of the 20th century, as an exceptional testimony to a civilisation or a cultural tradition, although it was certainly a massive endeavour, made necessary by the scale of human losses caused by the war.

In the additional information provided in 2023, the States Parties confirmed the original wording proposed to justify criterion (iii).

In the context of the nomination, ICOMOS considers that the nominated property is first and foremost evidence of a period of upheaval in world history rather than evidence of the establishment of a tradition for the burial of soldiers killed in action.

Therefore, ICOMOS considers that, even in light of the additional information provided by the States Parties and of the intervening reflection on sites of memories associated with recent conflicts, this criterion remains unjustified.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has not been demonstrated.

Criterion (iv): be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;

This criterion is justified by the States Parties on the grounds that the creation of a new typology of decorative, architectural and landscape elements reflect cultural sensitivities or national styles, large-scale constructions and organised sites for the memory of all combat deaths and, being located around major combat sites, they are associated with the presence of elements that directly reflect the conflict.

In 2018, ICOMOS considered that the justification proposed in the nomination dossier, which focused solely on the fact that soldiers received a decent burial and well-designed funerary monuments, was far too narrow and somehow overlooked the tragedy that made necessary this massive undertaking.

In the additional information provided in February 2018, the States Parties proposed a revised justification for this criterion, focusing on the notion of a new architectural, decorative and landscape typology developed purposely as a response to the heavy loss of life caused by the First World War. Although ICOMOS considered that the new wording was more appropriate than the original justification, it also noted that the definition of the nominated property remained unclear. ICOMOS further noted that it would be difficult to apply to the nominated series the notion of a memorial landscape, as this would need to encompass other aspects, such as the topographical changes to the landscape (trenches, shell holes, etc.), defensive constructions (bunkers and war

infrastructures), and many others, which are not considered in the nominated series.

The additional information provided by the States Parties, the reflection developed since 2018 on sites of memory associated with recent conflicts and the adoption of the *Guiding Principles* by the World Heritage Committee in January 2023, have provided orientation and insights to clarify the definition of the nominated series which should focus essentially on funerary sites as a response to the inhumane scale of losses caused by the conflict.

ICOMOS therefore considers that this criterion could be appropriate for a reduced series of funerary sites in so far as the outstanding scale, scope and dignity of the ensemble could be seen to illustrate an extremely significant stage in human history, namely the First World War and its aftermath, through the way it reflects both the scale and immense tragedy of a dehumanising war and the desire for peace and human dignity that it generated in communities and States traumatised by their losses.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion could be demonstrated through a revised justification and a more confined series focused on funerary sites.

Criterion (vi): be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance;

This criterion is justified by the States Parties on the grounds that funerary and memory sites respond to the desire to perpetuate the individual identity of the war victim and to re-humanise societies traumatised by the disappearance of a large part of their population. The shared memory of the fallen has a current and dynamic dimension, which is reflected by collective commemorations, institutional or associative events, international, national or local, as well as private pilgrimages, individual or family visits.

Whilst in many cemeteries and memorial sites on the Western Front there is an active tradition of repeated rituals for the memory of the dead that goes back to the post-First World War period, ICOMOS considers that the nomination lacks a comparative analysis which shows how this tradition is distinguished from other rituals such as those associated with the Second World War or the memory of the Unknown Soldier. The argument of a tradition of memorial rituals still present after nearly 100 years would appear more appropriate to justify criterion (iii), in so far as cemeteries and memorial sites were built in order to carry out this tradition.

The additional information provided in February 2018 by the States Parties in response to the Interim Report sent by ICOMOS, included a revised justification for this criterion that focused on the commemorative intent of these sites and the active visits that continue to this day.

ICOMOS however noted that not all the nominated component parts exhibit the same level of temporal perspective and continuity in commemorative terms that would be necessary for this criterion to be demonstrated.

Following the reception in 2023 of additional information concerning the composition of the nominated series, the scope of the war and its impacts, and based on further reflection by ICOMOS in conjunction with the adoption of the *Guiding Principles*, ICOMOS considers that criterion (vi) could be relevant to the nominated series because of its association with the First World War which can be considered as an event of outstanding universal significance.

The definition of the nominated property would need to be clarified by focusing on the funerary sites, in accordance with the *Guiding Principles*. In this sense, an ensemble of funerary sites erected in a relatively short time, in a large but confined area in which a large number and a diversity of soldiers who fell in the First World War were buried, could be considered to be tangibly and directly associated with an event of outstanding universal significance, so that the nominated property could be seen as an outstanding reflection of the global scope, scale and devastation of the war as well as the human loss.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion could be demonstrated, but through a revised justification and a reduced series focused on funerary sites.

ICOMOS considers that criterion (iii) has not been demonstrated, while criteria (iv) and (vi) could be demonstrated through a revised justification and a reduced series focused on funerary sites.

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

It is explained in the nomination dossier that the integrity of the nominated series is based on different axes: the will of governments to commemorate individually the soldiers killed in action; the reflection of the geographical scope of the Western Front; the multinational scope of the belligerents and their cultural references; and the stylistic and typological diversity of the cemeteries and memorials, the different periods of construction and their symbolic meaning.

In 2018, ICOMOS considered that, overall, the integrity of the nominated series was not demonstrated, because of the unclear definition of the nominated property and because it was not evident what component parts really contributed to the series and to the illustration of the proposed justification for inscription. Inconsistencies between what is commemorated in the revised justification for the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, the criteria, and what is included in the nominated series were identified. This had a negative impact on the overall integrity of the nominated series.

The additional information and explanations provided in 2023 by the States Parties, the in-depth reflection of ICOMOS on the sites of memory associated with recent conflicts and on this nomination, as well as the guidance provided by the *Guiding Principles* approved in January 2023 have assisted ICOMOS in identifying which component parts would need to be removed from the nominated series, so that it can represent an ensemble that would convey a revised justification for inscription revolving around the idea that the nominated property illustrates in an outstanding manner, through the density, variety and design quality of the component parts, the endeavour to regain a sense of humanity as a response to a cataclysmic event and a period of history of global importance, based on criteria (iv) and (vi).

After careful examination of the component parts, the additional information provided by the States Parties, the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, and the in-depth exchanges within the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel, ICOMOS considers that the following component parts would need to be removed from the nominated serial property:

- Memorials purposely constructed to commemorate the fallen during the First World War which are not included or not clearly linked with cemeteries and their design. These are:

Belgium:

FL01 Monument to the disappeared of the Commonwealth "Nieuport Memorial"
FL07 Canadian National Monument "The Brooding Soldier"
FL26 Irish Monument "Island of Ireland Peace Tower"

France :

AI09 French Memorial "Les fantômes"
ME07 French Stelae to the Executed of Fleury-devant-Douaumont
MA01 French Memorial of the Battles of the Marne

- Component parts that only reflect national values. These are:

Belgium:

WA01 Fort de Loncin
FL03 Crypt of the Tower of Yser

- Component parts that were created for and are associated with different events than the First World War and for which the message is unclear in relation to the justification for inscription. These are:

France:

AR02 German Monument of the Saint-Charles Cemetery – the monument was built as an act of defiance and not of peace in an existing cemetery

linked to previous conflict and so bearing a confusing message.

- Component parts that offer a message similar to other component parts but their qualities in relation to the proposed attributes are minor or absent and therefore do not contribute to expressing the attributes supporting the justification for inscription. These are:

Belgium:

WA10 Commonwealth Military Cemetery and memorial to the missing "Berks Cemetery Extension" and "Ploegsteert Memorial to the Missing"

WA11 "Strand Military Cemetery"

WA12 "Prowse Point Military Cemetery"

WA13 "Mud Corner Cemetery"

WA14 "Toronto Avenue Cemetery"

WA15 "Ploegsteert Wood Military Cemetery"

WA16 "Rifle House Cemetery"

FL09 "Polygon Wood Cemetery"

FL12 "Welsh Cemetery (Caesar's Nose)"

FL13 "No Man's Cot Cemetery"

FL14 "Track X Cemetery"

FL15 "Buff's Road Cemetery"

FL20 "Woods Cemetery"

FL21 "1st D.C.L.I. Cemetery, the Bluff"

FL22 "Hedge Row Trench Cemetery"

FL24 "Spanbroekmolen British Cemetery"

FL25 "Lone Tree Cemetery"

France:

ND01 "Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Cemetery"

ND05 Assevent National French Necropolis and Military German Cemetery

PC14 "Wimereux Communal Cemetery"

SE02 "Mill Road Cemetery"

OI03 Compiègne French National Necropolis

AI04 Le Sourd French National Necropolis and Le Sourd German Military Cemetery

AI05 National French Necropolis of prisoners of Effry

AI08 Craonnelle National French Necropolis

SM01 French National Necropolis "La Grande Tombe de Villeroy"

MA04 National French Necropolis, Military German Cemetery and Military Polish Cemetery – it is noted that the Polish burials date back to the Second World War

MA05 Mondement-Montgivroux communal French Cemetery and French Chapel

MA06 National French Cemetery and Military German Cemetery of la Crouée

AR01 Chestres Military German Cemetery and National French Necropolis

MA11 Saint-Thomas-en-Argonne National French Necropolis and National French Necropolis of the Gruerie Monument ossuary

MA12 La Harazée National French Necropolis

ME02 La Forestière National French Necropolis

ME04 La Maize National French Necropolis

ME09 Le Faubourg Pavé National French Necropolis

MM02 Gerbéviller French Square of the civilian victims

MM03 Pierrepont National French Necropolis

MM04 Pierrepont German military cemetery

MS03 L'Espérance National French Necropolis

MS06 Lagarde National French Necropolis

VS02 La Chipotte National French Necropolis

VS03 Les Tiges National French Necropolis

HR02 Hohrod-Bärenstall German military cemetery

HR03 – Kahm German military cemetery

HR08 Germania French Military Cemetery

HR09 Moosch National French Necropolis

- Component parts whose integrity is affected by factors that prevent their significance from being properly conveyed. These are:

Belgium:

WA03 Le Plateau French Military Cemetery

FL19 Larch Wood Cemetery.

In addition to more conceptual problems, component parts FL01 Nieuport Memorial (Belgium), AI04 Le Sourd French National Necropolis and Le Sourd Military German Cemetery, AI05 National French Necropolis of prisoners of Effry, AI09 French Memorial "Les fantômes" (France) and those from FL12 to FL15 (Belgium) also have significant integrity issues due to negatively impacting factors in their immediate setting.

Component parts PC03 Canadian National Memorial "Vimy Memorial", PC04 Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Canadian Cemetery n°2", PC05 Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Givenchy Road Canadian Cemetery" are all included in the Vimy Ridge Site of Canada (France) and are therefore protected. To justify consideration of these three component parts for inclusion in the nominated series as a site of memory, the boundaries of the component parts should be modified and encompass most or the entirety of the Vimy Ridge National Historic Site of Canada.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that since the criteria for justifying the proposed Outstanding Universal Value have not been demonstrated at this stage, attributes of Outstanding Universal Value cannot be confirmed and integrity, as defined by the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, is not demonstrated at this stage but could be by a reduced series focusing on funerary sites that exclude the above-mentioned component parts on the basis of a revised justification for inscription and on a revised wording for criterion (iv) and (vi). ICOMOS considers that a reduced and refocused series as suggested above would suffice to convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

Authenticity

The nomination dossier holds that the nominated component parts express their function as places of worship for the dead. They attest to the endeavour of providing to each fallen in combat an individual burial and a recognition of their sacrifice. The layout, arrangements, shape and materials reflect the cultural references of each nation and the way in which an individual fallen in combat is commemorated.

In 2018, ICOMOS considered that the problem of an unclear definition of the nominated series had an impact on authenticity, particularly with respect to cultural diversity. Not all component parts contained attributes expressing the three proposed criteria: the lack of clarity in the nomination and the inconsistencies between what appeared to be the aim of the commemoration and the reality of what was nominated harmed the overall credibility of the nomination.

ICOMOS also considered that the whole series as presented suffered from shortcomings deriving from the way in which justification for inscription has been built, from the lack of sufficient historical perspective and from the inconsistencies in the selection of the component sites, which was not clear and did not appear to reflect the rationale proposed for the selection. This lack of clarity also had repercussions on the way the boundaries of the nominated component parts and particularly of their buffer zones have been designed.

Management constraints impacted on the authenticity of the component parts: for instance, the layout of the vegetation has been simplified, materials (e.g., small walls, doors, crosses) and layouts (new alignment of the crosses) changed, and in the same cemetery crosses made of different materials are found, impacting on their overall visual impression. Maintenance strategies do not seem to take into consideration the design and the layout of the component parts, and historic documentation does not seem to be referred to or used for the implementation of these strategies.

In summary, in 2018 ICOMOS considered that since the criteria for justifying the proposed Outstanding Universal Value were not demonstrated at that stage, the authenticity of the whole series, as defined by the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, could not be confirmed.

The additional information provided by States Parties in 2023, along with the reflection carried out by ICOMOS on sites of memory associated with recent conflicts, and the guidance provided by the *Guiding Principles* adopted by the World Heritage Committee in January 2023, have assisted ICOMOS in understanding how a reduced series focusing only on funerary sites might have the potential to justify criteria (iv) and (vi) through a revised justification, and hence how authenticity as defined by the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* might be met. Issues concerning the

conditions of authenticity of individual component parts in terms of their ability to convey attributes supporting justification for inscription are parallel to those of integrity and can be addressed by removing the component parts identified previously from the nominated serial property.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of authenticity of the whole series have not been met but could be if a reduced series, focusing only on funerary sites, was nominated for inscription on the basis of a revised justification and criteria (iv) and (vi).

Boundaries

The nomination dossier does not provide much detail on how the boundaries of the nominated component parts and of their buffer zones have been defined. ICOMOS noted that the approach for the delineation of the boundaries of the buffer zones is not clear – in some cases, they are very tight, and in others quite wide. ICOMOS, therefore, requested additional information on this aspect on 28 July 2017. The States Parties responded on 13 September 2017, explaining the main objectives pursued through the buffer zones and providing explanations on what mechanisms ensure the protection of the nominated component parts. In the case of France, a detailed table explaining the rationale for each component was provided. On the other hand, Belgium provided some examples of how the buffer zones guarantee the protection of the property.

Based on the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that, in many instances, the boundaries of the nominated component parts excluded relevant features related to the proposed justification for inscription. In other cases, the buffer zones were drawn too tightly.

In 2018, ICOMOS considered that both the delineation of the boundaries of the nominated component parts and of the buffer zones suffered from inconsistencies and lack of clarity in the nomination due to a confused definition of the nominated property as a whole and because of a lack of effective protection mechanisms.

In February 2023, the State Party of France provided updated information on the delineation of boundaries of the buffer zones for several of component parts, namely MA06, MA07, MA08, MA09 and MA10, ME05, ME06, ME07, ME08, ME10, HR01, HR02, HR03, HR04.

Furthermore, the *Guiding Principles* adopted by the World Heritage Committee in 2023 in conjunction with further reflection and analysis on the present nomination, have allowed to clarify what could be a clearer definition of the series and of the potential reasons for its eligibility for the World Heritage List. In turn, this has also made it possible for ICOMOS has got more clarity about specific recommendations on how to modify the boundaries of some nominated component parts and of some buffer zones. These are presented below.

Belgium:

The component part WA02 Robermont Military plots should also include the burial grounds and tombs of the German soldiers, as this is the only site where the fallen of all parties are represented.

For component part WA06 Enclosure of the Executed in Tamines, ICOMOS considers that only the cemetery should be retained in the nominated series.

France:

The boundaries of the nominated component parts PC03 Canadian National Memorial “Vimy Memorial”, PC04 Commonwealth Military Cemetery “Canadian Cemetery n°2”, PC05 Commonwealth Military Cemetery “Givenchy Road Canadian Cemetery” should be modified and merged into one single component part to include the Vimy Ridge National Historic Site of Canada.

For component part ND04 German Military Cemetery of la Route de Solesmes and Commonwealth “Cambrai East Military Cemetery”, ICOMOS recommends including only the two military cemeteries and excluding the civil cemetery.

For component part PC09 Czechoslovakian Military Cemetery of Neuville-Saint-Vaast, ICOMOS recommends that it be included in the same buffer zone as component parts PC07 French National Necropolis of la Targette and Commonwealth Military Cemetery “La Targette British Cemetery”, and PC08 La Maison Blanche German Military Cemetery, as they seem part of the same memorial sector.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the nominated serial property and of the buffer zones could be adequate if they are modified as recommended above.

ICOMOS further considers that mechanisms for the protection of the wider setting of the component parts should be envisaged to preserve them from the visual impacts of the wind farms, as well as to safeguard and enhance the visual connections among component parts.

Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription

In summary, when ICOMOS first evaluated the nominated property in 2018, it considered that its definition was confused as it was unclear what was to be commemorated through the proposed series. It also remained unclear how funerary and memory sites were defined or understood as the reality of many component parts conflicted with the implicit definition that emerged from the justification for inscription. The comparative analysis remained unconvincing and not able to support the nominated series under the proposed justification for inscription. ICOMOS expressed fundamental reserves in the way the nominated series was conceived and on the overall narrow arguments proposed to justify inscription and the criteria. On the one hand, ICOMOS considered

that criterion (iii) was not justified and difficult to demonstrate. Criterion (vi) was not demonstrated either by the proposed arguments and by the nominated series. On the other hand, the revision of the proposed justification for criterion (iv) proposed by the States Parties was an improvement, but the lack of a clear definition of the nominated property compromised the possibility of justifying the criterion. The in-depth reflection on sites of memory associated with recent conflicts carried out by the Open-ended Working Group established by the World Heritage Committee, and the reflection carried out by scholars and organisations, including ICOMOS, as well as the adoption by the World Heritage Committee of the *Guiding Principles*, have offered guidance to evaluate under what conditions this nomination could be seen eligible for inclusion on the World Heritage List. In particular, the *Guiding Principles* have provided a definition of what should be understood as a “site of memory” within the framework of the World Heritage Convention. This definition assists in clarifying the definition of the nominated series and supports a refocusing on funerary sites, as they contain tangible evidence of the event that is being commemorated. Whilst the States Parties have not provided further revised wording for the justification for inscription or the proposed criteria, nor has the nominated series been revised, the States Parties have made an additional effort to clarify the nature of the component parts included in the nominated series, and in responding to the additional questions that ICOMOS asked in March 2023. The additional information provided by the States Parties, particularly the attempt to contextualise more widely the First World War, its underlying reasons, its consequences, clarified the reasons that led to building these sites and how the nominated property could tangibly reflect all this.

ICOMOS is grateful for the additional information and reflection on the conflict, on the origins and nature of the component parts forming the nominated series, as this has contributed to further ICOMOS reflection on the nomination and to understand it as a tangible reflection of an event of outstanding universal significance which also determined a significant period of human history with long-lasting impacts on individuals, communities and societies across the world.

Based on the above, ICOMOS considers that a revised and reduced series focusing only on funerary sites, as identified by ICOMOS, has robust potential to justify consideration for inscription on the World Heritage List under criteria (iv) and (vi). The outstanding scale, scope and dignity of an ensemble of funerary sites could be seen to illustrate an extremely significant period in human history, namely the First World War and its aftermath, through the way it reflects both the scale and immense tragedy of a dehumanising war and the desire for peace and human dignity that it generated in communities and States traumatised by their losses. Such an ensemble, erected in a relatively short time, in a large but confined area in which a large number and a diversity of soldiers who fell in the First World War were buried, could be considered to be tangibly and directly associated with an

event of outstanding universal significance so that the nominated property could be seen as an outstanding reflection of the global scope, scale and devastation of the war and the human loss.

4 Conservation measures and monitoring

Documentation

ICOMOS considers that the inventory process has been well developed by the different organisations involved in the management of the nominated property.

The inventories appear to be complete, to varying degrees. These inventories generally meet the specific needs of each type of site, but the resources deployed vary considerably from one site to another. These differences in resources are not necessarily linked to administrative status (state, municipality or association). The nomination includes sources and a wealth of information that is not immediately available to site managers. This information should be made available to support their management and maintenance work as well as interpretation.

ICOMOS considers that it would be desirable to adopt a more coherent approach to documentation and to develop it on the basis of the experiences of the management agencies in a more systematic way.

Conservation measures

Maintenance, conservation measures and interpretation are carried out by the agencies responsible for the management of the component parts. Municipalities are in charge of the conservation and management of the surrounding areas outside the nominated component parts.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) manages individually all sites under its responsibility and carries out maintenance, cleaning, conservation interventions, including restoration and reconstruction. Conservation follows a 5-year cycle; structural maintenance is done every 5 years based on previous on-site inspection. The policy for the conservation of headstones is based on four steps, reconstruction being the last option. Despite the existence of a policy, ICOMOS found its application not always consistent.

The German War Graves Commission (*Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge* – VDK) maintains the elements of the cemeteries through subcontracting, whilst its staff carry out inspections and manage activities with municipalities and volunteers.

The French Ministry of Defence carries out maintenance and conservation work. ICOMOS has found that no consistent approach to the reality on the ground in the various cemeteries is applied. A more rigorous conservation management approach with reference principles and recommendations would assist in the task.

The Belgian Ministry of Defence is responsible for the maintenance of the Wallonian and Flemish sites. Also in this case, ICOMOS noted inconsistencies in maintenance approaches across cemeteries.

Agreements exist among States to ensure that tombs of soldiers belonging to a different nation than the hosting cemetery are maintained. However, this does not apply in all cases, and this results in an uneven state of conservation of headstones.

ICOMOS notes that the most visited sites enjoy more careful conservation and maintenance compared with less-known sites.

Monitoring

The nomination dossier reports that monitoring is carried out in each country according to the respective legal framework.

ICOMOS considers that a monitoring system needs to be set up in order to ensure the periodical assessment of the state of conservation and of the effectiveness of the conservation/maintenance measures at each component part based on the same set of indicators, for the purpose of comparability. ICOMOS also considers that a monitoring system to assess the effectiveness of management objectives would also assist in their implementation.

ICOMOS considers that a more consistent approach is necessary in addressing conservation and maintenance within the same management agencies and across agencies. Expertise in the maintenance and conservation of heritage properties should be sought in order to address more adequately and coherently the conservation and maintenance needs of the funerary sites as an ensemble that has been nominated to convey the same message and the same values.

ICOMOS also considers that a common monitoring system needs to be developed and agreed upon between the two States Parties in order to ensure a common approach to periodical evaluation of the state of the nominated property and of its component parts.

5 Protection and management

Legal protection

Legal protection differs in Belgium and France. In Wallonia the protection of immovable cultural properties is regulated by the Decree 1 April 1999. Protection mechanisms for buffer zones include the *sites classés* or the protection zones. The Decree 11 April 2014 has modified the Code of Urban Planning, Territorial Management, Heritage and Energy strengthening the status of the buffer zones of World Heritage properties within the planning system in Wallonia.

In Flanders the nominated component sites enjoy the strongest level of protection available under the Decree 5

June 2009 as amended by the Decree 12 July 2013 and the Order 16 May 2014. For the protection zones, legal protection (according to the decrees quoted above), the Sector Plan, and the buffer zone of World Heritage sites as per the revised Flemish Code of Territorial Management, provide for the required protection measures. The World Heritage buffer zone implies that within a 100 metres radius from the property, any intervention needs to be given a binding opinion by the Agency for Cultural Heritage, whereas over 100 metres only buildings taller than 15 metres require such an opinion. Finally, two executive spatial provincial plans – Plan Palingbeek, Hill 60 and surroundings and Mount Kemmel – contain provisions preserving the setting of some of the component sites.

In France, the protection of the component parts relies on different norms. They include the Heritage Code, the Environment Code, the mechanisms envisaged by the CAP Law (July 2016) with the Significant Heritage Sites (SPR) and the amendments inserted into the Urban Planning Code.

Additionally, cemeteries enjoy protection from development within a 100 metres radius in rural areas and a 36 metres radius in urban areas (SUP).

In 2018, buffer zones were protected or planned to be protected as follows: falling within the protection zone – *abords* – of a historic monument, falling within a *site classé* or *site inscrit*, earmarked in the local urban plan (PLU) or in the Territorial Coherence Scheme (SCOT); for the component parts located in rural areas, buffer zones are usually covered by protection for natural values or as managed forests.

ICOMOS noted that the legal protection was complex and differed between component sites, particularly in France, and that many component parts were still awaiting protection under heritage legislation. ICOMOS also noted that some of the protection measures, such as the SUP for cemeteries or the protection under the National Forestry Bureau, did not address specifically the protection needs of the proposed value or the attributes of the component parts.

The nomination dossier mentions several sites in Wallonia and France for which legal protection was under development. During the evaluation procedure carried out in 2018, ICOMOS noted that for a number of component parts the protective designation under heritage legislation was completed.

The States Parties also clarified in their response transmitted in February 2018 that the Wallonia, Flemish and French legal frameworks apply to all component parts, none of which enjoys extraterritorial rights. The soil where these cemeteries are located was given in perpetual concession to other States for the purpose of the burial and memorialisation of their fallen.

In February 2023, the States Parties provided updated information with regard to the progress in establishing legal protection. In Belgium all component parts enjoy legal protection and buffer zones have been enhanced.

Similarly, in France, legal protection at the national level has advanced and, in February 2023, the number of component parts that enjoy national designation as heritage properties has increased to eighty-three, while twenty-seven are protected through urban planning instruments (*Plans Locaux d'Urbanisme*); the completion of some heritage designations is awaited in 2023.

Management system

The management of the component parts of the nominated property is divided into two distinct areas, the responsibilities of which fall to different institutions. The first concerns the conservation and maintenance of the component parts, which are entirely under the responsibility of the *Direction de la Mémoire et du Patrimoine* (DMPA), the *Office national des anciens combattants et victimes de guerre* (ONAC-VG), the *Souvenir Français*, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC), the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) and the *Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge* (VDK), and the States of Canada, Australia, South Africa, Italy, Portugal and Denmark.

On the other hand, enhancement and protection of the areas surrounding the component parts are the responsibility of local and regional authorities. The management plans are defined at the departmental level, responding to directives issued by the transnational steering committee and at the national level. Then each departmental action plan is composed of local action plans. Municipalities and departments can organise conservation and maintenance actions around the funerary and memory sites, but it is not their role to intervene themselves in these places.

The overall transnational management in Belgium and France is coordinated by the Transnational Steering Committee for the Funerary and memory sites of the First World War (Western Front). This Committee is articulated into two committees: the Coordinating Body that ensures the transnational coordination, and the Transnational Scientific Council.

The Flemish Coordination, the Wallonia Coordination, and the French Coordination form the Coordinating Body. The Flemish Coordination is composed of a Steering Committee and a Municipal Coordination. The Wallonia Coordination is composed of a Steering Committee, a Management Committee and a Scientific Committee. The French Coordination is composed of a Scientific Committee, a Territorial Conference, and a Departmental Coordinations.

In Flanders, heritage management is carried out via means of multiple consultation and information sessions with different actors. A declaration of intent was signed in Nieuport on 11 June 2015. Working groups will be

established in each commune to follow the implementation of the decisions of the Steering Committee. The working groups will be composed of all actors concerned (for each site) and will be chaired by the Heritage Agency of Flanders. The working groups will be convened at least once a year. Flanders Heritage has developed since 2002 an integral strategy to preserve and protect the heritage of the First World War. This strategy is implemented by specialists from Flanders Heritage who function as a centre of expertise for the sites of Flanders.

The Steering Committee in Wallonia brings together decision-makers for the component parts: site managers (VDK, CWGC, DMPA), mayors, and ambassadors of the other countries concerned. It approves the management plan prepared by the Management Committee, and adopts policy and budget decisions, as part of the management plan and the multi-year action plan.

The Management Committee is composed of the site managers, services and local actors concerned with the site and its development. Its mission is to prepare the management plan, ensure the day-to-day management, draw up an annual program of actions and establish the budget estimates that are related to its implementation.

The French Coordination is based on a two-tiered structure involving a Territorial Conference, supported by a Scientific Committee, and a Departmental Coordination. The coordination is supported by the Association "Landscapes and Memorials of the Great War" (*Paysages et sites de mémoire de la Grande Guerre*). A technical team is dedicated to the operational part of the management.

The Scientific Committee represents the scientific reference body for the Territorial Conference or for the Departmental Coordination. One member represents France in the Transnational Scientific Council. The Departmental Coordination, on the other hand, plays a role at the local level, as it works on the ground with the local administrations.

The management plan annexed to the nomination dossier explains that transnational management will become effective if the nominated property is inscribed on the World Heritage List.

No overall management plan is mentioned. The component parts in Wallonia are covered by one single regional management plan, and the same goes for the component parts located in Flanders. In France, management plans exist at the departmental level. Action plans developed to implement the management plans are based on different themes in Wallonia, Flanders or France.

In France, departmental plans aim at involving the local actors around the national main management actors. Management guidelines are developed around four axes: protecting, conserving, knowing, enhancing.

Visitor management

The nomination dossier does not provide much information on approaches to interpretation, although at some of the nominated component parts, an updated interpretation of the Western Front is provided. Updated information was provided by the States Parties in 2023, in particular on activities carried out in France with regard to educational activities and raising awareness among the younger generations, as well as activities aimed at the general audience, including transnational twinning activities, and thematic visits.

With regard to tourism, walking and biking itineraries have been developed to discover funerary sites and related monuments or memorials. Actions to promote intermodality in transport and support the network of public transportation systems have also been implemented.

Community involvement

Since 2018, the Association "Landscapes and Memorials of the Great War" (*Paysages et sites de mémoire de la Grande Guerre*) has expanded the scope of international cooperation to involve and raise awareness among the national communities from former colonised countries which suffered human losses during the conflict. Two international conferences on the nominated property and the First World War were organised, and scholars from the nations involved in the war were invited to be part of the Scientific Committees. A research programme has been conceived to involve representatives from all continents. At the local level, educational activities have been conceived for all age groups.

Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property

ICOMOS notes that the legal protection has been strengthened: in Belgium, all the nominated component parts are covered by heritage designations, and in France the majority of the nominated component parts are now protected under the heritage legislation. Nonetheless, a few component parts remain only protected by local planning instruments (*Plan Local d'Urbanisme*, PLU) or because they are included in protected areas or protection zones of historic monuments. It is crucial to protect under the national heritage legislation all the component parts of the nominated property to ensure adequate protection, and provide a basis for conservation and maintenance based on heritage considerations and value.

An overall transnational coordinated management structure has been established but so far this has not led to coordination of approaches in the management of the nominated component parts by responsible entities. In principle, the management institutions for the funerary sites must be integrated into management systems, at international, national and local levels, due to their responsibilities in the matter. The management approach appears still fragmented and varies according to the bodies responsible for management, but also according to the size and relevance of the sites for visitors. The overall management structure developed by the Transnational Steering Committee operates in parallel

and is somewhat separated from the management systems in place for each nominated cemetery, monument and ossuary. These management systems do not appear to be influenced by the fact that all the nominated component sites, despite management practices developed over decades, are now part of an ensemble and should also be able to reflect this through a management approach that is based on shared principles and directions, grounded on the common proposed Outstanding Universal Value and message that the nominated serial property aims to convey. The absence of a common approach to conservation and management results in considerable differences in the way the nominated cemeteries and sites are dealt with. The main structuring elements for the management plans in Wallonia, Flanders and in the French departments differ from one another and it seems difficult to achieve a comprehensive transnational vision and approach. ICOMOS also observes that most of the nominated component sites do not enjoy an individual management plan providing principles and approaches to be followed; at best, specifications are provided for each and every work to be carried out. This has an impact on the quality of interventions undertaken to maintain the component sites and also sustain the overall unevenness in the management approach. The announced Framework Agreement, mentioned in the additional information sent in April 2023, if signed and implemented, would represent an important advancement that can form the basis for more effective coordination in the management of the French section of the nominated property that could also have a positive impact on the overall transnational coordination and cooperation.

The lack of an explicit common approach to interpretation that goes beyond the celebration of the individual burials of the soldiers who died in action appears as one of the weaknesses of this nomination. The additional information provided by the States Parties in 2023 on this matter does not indicate that a significant advancement has been achieved since 2018 in conceiving a common interpretation strategy for the nominated property, which, in accordance with the *Guiding Principles*, is a fundamental requirement for all sites of memory associated with recent conflicts.

In summary, ICOMOS considers that legal protection and protective measures have improved and will be adequate when all the nominated component parts will be covered by designation under heritage legislation. With regard to management, ICOMOS considers that an overall and coherent management and conservation approach needs to be developed and agreed upon among all actors, particularly those responsible for the daily management and maintenance, that would be able to respect the specificity of each component part and at the same time to provide a common framework.

A common shared strategy for the interpretation of the nominated property and of what it means in relation to the scale and impacts of the First World War on individuals, communities, societies, nations and states, which can

coordinate and update the presentation of the nominated property is urgently required to ensure that a concerted and shared narrative is offered at the component parts of the nominated series. Such a strategy should incorporate narratives related to the role played by the nations formerly colonised by European countries and the tribute they paid in the conflict.

6 Conclusions

In 2018, when ICOMOS first evaluated the nomination of the Funerary and memory sites of the First World War (Western Front), it considered that the nomination raised fundamental issues and several questions related to the scope and requirements of the World Heritage framework. Above all, ICOMOS noted fundamental issues with regard to the purpose and scope of the World Heritage Convention and its relevance to celebrate properties that commemorate aspects of wars and conflicts. Then, issues were identified in relation to the understanding of the cultural significance of the nominated series and its context, and therefore in relation to what the States Parties aimed to commemorate through this nomination.

On one hand, the scope of the nomination appeared extremely broad, and on the other hand, far too narrow and limited when it came to the definition of the potential Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property and the underlying issues of its manifold cultural significance. The lack of clarity in the definition of the nominated series and of its commemorative aim affected the way in which the series was configured, the rationale for the selection of the component parts and the delineation of their boundaries. ICOMOS also considered that a broader understanding and reappraisal of the First World War would have contributed to bringing into focus the way in which memorialisation has interpreted and sometimes even altered the actual events, thus allowing to reach a more comprehensive and multifaceted understanding of the meaning and significance of the nominated property. Other important issues concerned conservation, protection and management.

Further to Decision 42 COM 8B.24 of the World Heritage Committee, a series of reflections on sites of memory associated with recent conflicts and the challenges they pose in relation to the World Heritage Convention was undertaken. An Open-ended Working Group was established by the Committee to reflect on this matter. The Working Group developed the *Guiding principles for the preparation of nominations concerning sites of memory associated with recent conflicts* (*Guiding Principles*) which were adopted in January 2023 at the 18th Extraordinary Session of the World Heritage Committee. The adjournment of consideration of this nomination was lifted and ICOMOS therefore resumed the evaluation of the nominated property as submitted in 2017.

This means that the nomination that ICOMOS evaluated in 2023 maintains the same configuration in terms of

component parts, the same justification for inscription and the same criteria.

The *Guiding Principles* have provided useful orientation and, in conjunction with the additional information provided by the States Parties, have allowed ICOMOS to understand how the lack of clarity in the definition of the nominated property could be addressed and under what conditions an ensemble of nominated component parts could be seen as a tangible reflection of and response to an event of outstanding universal significance and a significant period in human history.

In 2018, ICOMOS considered that the justification for the selected criteria ((iii), (iv) and (vi)) was not demonstrated. However, criterion (iv) and (vi) could have been justified, but through different arguments than those proposed by the States Parties. The *Guiding Principles*, the additional information provided by the States parties and further reflection on this nomination has led to bring into focus potential arguments to demonstrate criteria (iv) and (vi) in conjunction with one another.

The *Guiding Principles* define the sites of memory, within the framework of the World Heritage Convention, as places that contain material evidence of the event being commemorated. The World Heritage Convention recognises cultural heritage as monuments and ensembles, which exhibit Outstanding Universal Value from the point of view of history, art, or science, and sites also from aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological points of view. These views have led ICOMOS to consider that a clarification of the definition of the nominated property could be achieved by focusing the nominated series on funerary sites. Confusion was also generated by the selection of the component parts, which often contradicted the arguments put forward to justify the selection and the attributes of the nominated property. Therefore, ICOMOS carried out a close analysis of the nominated component parts and identified those which did not appear to contribute to the justification for inscription, which were similar to other component parts but exhibited less attributes, integrity or authenticity, or exhibited essentially national values.

Therefore, ICOMOS considers that a reduced series that focuses on funerary sites has the potential to justify criterion (iv) and (vi) as an ensemble that illustrates a hugely important period in human history – World War I – and represents an outstanding response and effort to an event of outstanding significance through establishing and practicing human values aimed to rehumanise societies following the immense tragedy of that dehumanising war.

A number of adjustments to the boundaries of a few nominated component parts have also been identified by ICOMOS as necessary, to ensure their integrity and authenticity.

A common approach to conservation and maintenance is still lacking and the approaches implemented at this stage

are still fragmented, resulting in an uneven state of conservation of the nominated component parts and in maintenance activities which are often not based on consideration of the heritage value of these component sites.

The legal protection of the nominated component parts has significantly improved and, when this evaluation was approved, only a few component parts in France were still awaiting heritage protection designations. It will be important to finalise this process for all the component parts retained in the nominated series.

Transnational management coordination on the other hand, does not appear to have advanced since 2018 and need to be significantly strengthened and operationalised. The information that in France a Framework Agreement, gathering all responsible actors, from the State institutions, site managers, and representatives of local administrations, is planned to be signed to strengthen coordination and collaboration on key projects and management axes, is welcomed and encouraged.

A coordinated and shared interpretation and presentation strategy for the whole series and for each component parts nominated for inscription, as well as for its significance and meaning in relation to a comprehensive understanding of the impacts of the First World War should be developed and implemented as a matter of urgency.

7 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the nomination of the Funerary and memory sites of the First World War (Western Front), Belgium, France, be **referred back** to the States Parties to allow them to:

- Reduce the selection of component parts of the nominated series to focus on funerary sites and exclude the memorials which do not include tangible evidence of the event being commemorated, and are not clearly linked with cemeteries and their design; the component parts that only reflect national values; the component parts that were created for and are associated with different events than the First World War; the component parts that do not contribute to the justification for inscription; and the component parts that exhibit less attributes, or which do not meet the conditions of authenticity and integrity;
- Refocus the justification for inscription on the way the ensemble of funerary sites represents a tangible and outstanding response to an event of outstanding universal significance, the First World War, a significant period of human history with long-lasting impacts on individuals, communities, societies and nations across the world, under revised formulations for criteria (iv) and (vi);

- Protect all component parts through national designations in accordance with the current heritage legislation;
- Adjust the boundaries of the following nominated component parts as follows:

Belgium:

- Enlarge the boundaries of component part WA02 Robermont Military plots to also include the burial grounds and tombs of the German soldiers;
- Reduce the boundaries of component part WA06 Enclosure of the Executed in Tamines to include only the cemetery;

France:

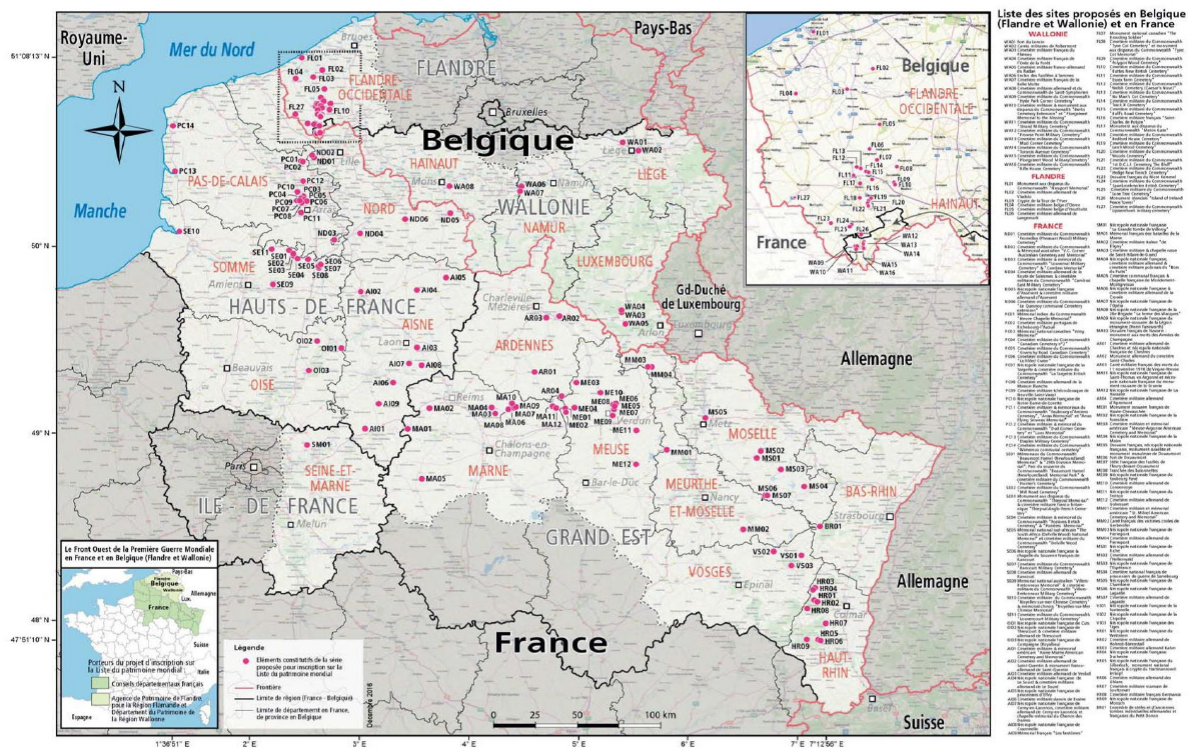
- Revise the boundaries of component parts PC03 Canadian National Memorial "Vimy Memorial", PC04 Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Canadian Cemetery n°2" and PC05 Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Givenchy Road Canadian Cemetery" and merge them to form one single component part to cover part or the entirety of the Vimy Ridge National Historic Site of Canada;
 - Exclude the civil cemetery from component part ND04 German Military Cemetery of la Route de Solesmes and Commonwealth "Cambrai East Military Cemetery" and retain only the two military cemeteries;
 - Modify the buffer zone of component parts PC07 French National Necropolis of la Targette and Commonwealth Military Cemetery "La Targette British Cemetery", and PC08 La Maison Blanche German Military Cemetery to include also component part PC09 Czechoslovakian Military Cemetery of Neuville-Saint-Vaast, as it is part of the same memorial sector;
- Sign and operationalise the Framework Agreement prepared by the State Party of France among all relevant actors for the management of the French section of the nominated serial property;
 - Adopt a common conservation and management approach that safeguards the specificity of each component part and reinforces their capacity to convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated serial property;
 - Strengthen the transnational coordination and cooperation in management;
 - Develop a common transnational interpretation strategy for the nominated serial property that incorporates narratives related to the tribute paid during the First World War by the nations formerly colonised by European countries.

Additional recommendations

ICOMOS further recommends that the States Parties give consideration to the following:

- a) Involving in the conservation and maintenance of the nominated component parts heritage experts and conservators to align maintenance activities with heritage good practices,
- b) Establishing protection mechanisms for the wider setting of the nominated component parts to prevent or reduce impacts from energy and transport infrastructure development,
- c) Regulating the speed of vehicles where roads run close to nominated cemeteries to reduce risks and disturbance to the experience of these sites,
- d) Improving the monitoring of the nominated serial property to reduce and avoid vandalism or theft,
- e) Improving collaboration on documentation to develop a coherent system of documentation,
- f) Developing a common transnational monitoring system, based on the attributes of the nominated property and on the same set of indicators, that would allow for a joint periodical evaluation of the state of conservation of the nominated serial property;

Sites funéraires et mémoriels de la Première Guerre mondiale (Front Ouest)



Map showing the location of the nominated component parts

VI Cultural properties

A Africa

B Europe – North America

C Latin America and the Caribbean

ESMA Museum and Site of Memory (Argentina) No 1681

1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party

ESMA Museum and Site of Memory - Former Clandestine Centre of Detention, Torture and Extermination

Location

Autonomous City of Buenos Aires

Brief description

The nominated ESMA Museum and Site of Memory - Former Clandestine Centre of Detention, Torture and Extermination is located in the former Officers' Quarters within the complex of the Former Navy School of Mechanics in Buenos Aires. During the civil-military dictatorship (1976-1983), the Officers' Quarters building at ESMA (*Escuela Superior de Mecánica de la Armada*) was the Argentine Navy's principal secret detention centre for holding captive, interrogating, torturing and eventually killing, armed and non-armed opponents who had been abducted in Buenos Aires, of a national strategy to destroy the armed and nonviolent opposition to the military regime.

Category of property

In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a *monument*.

Included in the Tentative List

25 April 2017

Background

This nomination dossier has been submitted in January 2022. Further to the World Heritage Committee decision 42 COM 8B.24 (2018) that launched a reflection on *"whether and how sites associated with recent conflicts and other negative and divisive memories might relate to the purpose and scope of the World Heritage Convention and its Operational Guidelines"*, the evaluation of this nomination did not start.

An open-ended Working Group was established upon decision 44 COM 8 of the World Heritage Committee (2021); the group elaborated *"Guiding Principles for the preparation of nominations concerning sites of memory associated with recent conflicts"* (*Guiding Principles*), which have been adopted by the Committee at its 18th Extraordinary Session (2023). In line with decision 18 EXT.COM 4, the Committee also lifted *"the moratorium on the evaluation of sites of memory associated with recent conflicts"*.

Decision: 18 EXT. COM. 4

The World Heritage Committee, [...]

8. Decides to lift the moratorium on the evaluation of sites of memory associated with recent conflicts and also decides that the nominations of such sites for inscription on the World Heritage List may be evaluated on a case-by-case basis;

9. Further decides that nominations of sites of memory associated with recent conflicts, submitted by 1 February 2022 and considered complete, will be processed under the procedures and criteria applicable at the time of their submission.

The State Party sent a letter to the World Heritage Centre on 24 January 2023 requesting that ICOMOS resume the evaluation of this nomination in view of its presentation at the extended 45th World Heritage Committee session.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission

Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the nominated property from 27 February to 2 March 2023.

Additional information received by ICOMOS

A letter was sent to the State Party on 16 February 2023 requesting further information about the historic development of the nominated property, protection, community involvement and interpretation.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 20 March 2023.

A second letter was sent to the State Party on 17 May 2023 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel.

Further information was requested in the second letter including: buffer zone, and long-term involvement.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 12 June 2023.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

5 May 2023

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report only briefly summarizes the most relevant aspects.

Description and history

The nominated ESMA Museum and Site of Memory – Former Clandestine Centre of Detention, Torture and Extermination is located in the former Officers' Quarters within the complex of the Former Navy School of Mechanics (1928-2004) in Buenos Aires. It is a free-

standing building, with basements, ground, first and second floors and two levels of attics under roofs. It is surrounded by green areas crossed by pedestrian paths and delimited by internal vehicular streets, with principal access on the main façade and service access through the rear courtyards.

During the civil-military dictatorship (1976-1983), the Officers' Quarters building at ESMA (*Escuela Superior de Mecánica de la Armada*) was the Argentine Navy's principal secret detention centre for holding captive disappeared persons who had been abducted in Buenos Aires. As part of a national strategy to destroy the armed and nonviolent opposition to the military regime, suspects were abducted at home, at work or in the street, and taken hooded to the Officers' Quarters of the ESMA. The captives were tortured and interrogated to reveal the whereabouts of their comrades in order to dismantle the guerrilla organisations and the left-leaning opposition groups. Some detainees were eventually released or forced into exile, but most of them were assassinated and their bodies disappeared. The Navy's most notorious killing method consisted of throwing sedated captives from cargo planes during so-called death flights.

The building, however, also maintained its institutional functions: the first and second floors continued to be used as accommodation for high-ranking officers, not only those involved in the clandestine activity, while the rest of the building, basement, ground floor and upper floors, were used for illegal operations.

The distribution of the building and the way in which the spaces of the premises were used both for institutional and clandestine uses turned certain areas of the building used both for illegal and legal activities. In the Hall Room and in the main staircase, military officers living and using the premise walked through these spaces when prisoners were moved from the basement to the imprisonment rooms (known as *Capucha*).

Abducted persons were forced to enter the building from a rear entrance, walked through a staircase, demolished in 1979, or used a lift, also demolished in 1979, and were brought to the basement where they were interrogated and tortured. Then they were brought to the upper mezzanine, where they were kept handcuffed, hooded and obliged to lie down on mattresses in small cubicles (2 m long, 1 m high and 60-70 cm wide). The prisoner's name was replaced by a number. On the fourth floor was another imprisonment space – known as *Capuchita* – where prisoners lived in worsened conditions and where imprisonment and torture areas co-existed. The premise included a room where pregnant women were detained until they gave birth under precarious conditions; newborns were stolen from their mothers, who were assassinated, and handed over to families of members of the repressive forces or their relatives.

Some prisoners were forced to work in a space known as Fishtank Room, where they were obliged to translate and

analyse data, create propaganda material, and essentially forced into a 'recovery process' from their values.

Stolen goods from the prisoners were collected in a storeroom and used for repressive activities or for the benefit of the repressors. The former *Salón Dorado* (Golden Hall Room), used as a ceremonial hall until 1976, was turned into an office where information extorted from prisoners was processed and kidnappings planned.

Methods to dispose of prisoners changed over time; however, the most infamous consisted of drugging the detainees and then throwing them into the Rio de La Plata River or into the ocean from helicopters. This was a purposely devised manner to eliminate opponents without risking judicial processes, as in the absence of a dead body no crime could be claimed. A Transfer Room in the ESMA Museum explains how this happened.

Spaces dedicated to legal activities were essentially located on the ground, first and second floors. The Museum's Historical Context Room once housed a recreational space for officers and continued to be used as such throughout the clandestine use of the building. The Room dedicated to the history of ESMA was once used as a dining hall for the Navy officers.

In the building is preserved also the residence of the Director of the Navy School of Mechanics, the Admiral's Home Room, further proving the coexistence of everyday life with criminal repression of political opponents.

The initial building, which later became the Officers' Quarters and today is the ESMA Site Museum, dates from 1939 and was owned by the Sociedad Cooperativa Ltda. It was built on land adjacent to that occupied at the time by the ESMA; it was designed and built as a Teachers' House, under the canons of the architecture of the modern movement.

In 1946, this building was annexed to the ESMA and remodelled to integrate it with the rest of the ESMA buildings. The façade finishes were changed with the addition of brick facings at the corners of the central volume. The geometry of the access porch, a semi-circular roof supported on cylindrical pillars (*pilotis*), was rectified, giving it its current appearance. Internally, the building was also adapted to the different uses of the Officers' Quarters contemplating hierarchical and representative functions (main access areas, anteroom and ceremonial hall - *Salón Dorado*); internal functions (offices, director's living quarters and officers' bedrooms) as well as service and maintenance functions (kitchen, basements and attics); roofs were added above the level of the upper flat terraces, supported on metal trusses, which generated covered spaces, today known as *Capucha* and *Capuchita*.

The modifications made to adapt the Officers' Casino to a Clandestine Centre were of different types and were carried out throughout the period of illegal repression. The basement was subdivided and compartmentalised to

create torture rooms, forced labour rooms, infirmary and support offices. The same happened to the Golden Hall Room where offices were installed to serve as a base of operations and logistical support, and to the third and fourth levels, to be used as confinement and forced labour rooms, a warehouse for stolen goods, known as the *Pañol*, and a clandestine maternity ward.

Around 1977, the attic of the fourth and last level, created during the remodelling of the 1940s, was also subdivided and compartmentalised in order to house the detention and torture rooms, today known as *Capuchita*.

Prior to the visit made by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, IACHR, between September 6 and 20 1979, the building underwent modifications to eliminate evidence of its use; such modifications affected notable features of the building:

- Elimination of the elevator. The pit was left empty on the first floor and shafts were closed in the basement and upper floors.
- Demolition of the flight of stairs that connected the main hall to the basement; the stairway void was covered with wooden cladding in order to conceal it.
- Elimination of the subdivisions and compartments of the intelligence offices in the Golden Hall Room.
- Enclosure of the north and south galleries.
- Dismantling of the closed-circuit television system.
- Elimination of the telephone booth on the first floor.
- Renovation of the third-floor restrooms.
- Elimination of *Capuchita's* subdivisions and compartments.

Between 1980 and 1982, parallel to the clandestine reforms, a series of formally and legally registered reforms were carried out, covering sanitary services and sanitary installations, fixed furniture, including divisions between cabins and gallery; bathrooms and gallery in the director's quarters; and electrical and thermo-mechanical installations.

Soon after the end of the dictatorship, the National Commission of the Disappearance of Persons (CONADEP) was created, and judging decrees of the military leaders responsible for the criminal repression and of the leaders of the armed revolutionary organisations were issued. An investigation scheme on the Armed Forces and on the armed revolutionary organisations was planned. CONADEP inspected ESMA in 1984.

National Decree No. 09/98 of January 6 1998, signed by then President Carlos Saúl Menem (1930-2021), ordered the relocation of ESMA and its demolition in order to build a green space and erect a "*symbol of national union*" there. On January 23, 1999, the suspension of the decree in question was ordered. On July 1, 2000, by means of Law No. 392, the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires revoked the transfer it had made of the land to the Navy

in 1924 and determined that "*the buildings where the Navy School of Mechanics used to operate would be destined to the installation of the so-called 'Museum of Memory'*".

In 2003, by means of Judicial Resolution Case No. 14,217, the Navy Officers' Quarters was protected as judicial evidence in the so-called "ESMA Mega-Case", related to the events that took place in the Clandestine Detention, Torture and Extermination Centre between 1976 and 1983. Within the framework of this case, measures for the physical protection of the building were taken and an action protocol for the preservation of the building was issued.

On December 28, 2004, the Argentine Navy handed over the Officers' Casino; in 2006, an *ad hoc* commission was created, which unanimously agreed that the Officers' Casino would be a historic site to be preserved.

In 2008, the ESMA Officers' Quarters was declared a National Historic Monument by National Decree No. 1,333/2008.

The roof of the Officers' Quarters was restored in 2012, an inter- and multi-disciplinary team developed a museography proposal, which began to be implemented in 2014, following extensive discussions, to ensure the scrupulous respect of the building as it had been delivered by the Argentine Navy in December 2004. The core principle for creating the museum was guaranteeing the safeguarding of all the constructive strata that are evidence of the building's evolution and transformation and that are material evidence of the events that took place there, which today are judicial evidence.

During 2014 and 2015, works were carried out for the creation of the ESMA Site Museum, inaugurated on May 19, 2015.

The Officers' Quarters building now hosts the ESMA Museum and Site of Memory. The museography arrangements are kept to the minimum and have adopted a documentary character. Visitors learn how the different spaces in the building were used during its clandestine use.

The buffer zone covers the entire complex of the former Navy School of Mechanics, which is made up of free-standing pavilions covered in pitched roofs immersed in a green area. Nowadays, the Space for Memory and for the Promotion and Defence of Human Rights operates there. Although the core of illegal operations was carried out at the former officers' Quarters, the complex was instrumental to the state terrorism apparatus. For this reason, it has been designated as the buffer zone of the nominated property.

The nominated property has an area of 0.907 ha and a buffer zone of 16.77 ha.

The nomination dossier gives an account of the politics in Argentina since the early 20th century and of the role the Army endowed itself as 'protector of the Nation' against possible threats, such as the rise of communist ideas and political forces in the country and Latin America, which were seen as subversive and needed to be contained and suppressed. This developed into the doctrine of National Security on which military cadres from Argentina and other countries from Latin America were trained at the School of the Americas, in Panama, run by the US Army. Whilst unconventional warfare was taught by French Army based on their experience in Indochina and Algeria, the need for fighting an omnipresent Marxist, internal subversive enemy led to justifying constant repression and persecution of real or assumed opponents. The spreading of this doctrine throughout Latin America also explains the dictatorships that followed one another between the 1960s and the early 1990s. These dictatorships, backed up by the US and CIA between 1975-1977, established transboundary and transnational collaborations in sharing intelligence information and in the repression of armed and non-armed opponents through a clandestine transnational plan which came to be known as Operation Condor. Argentina had a leading role in this Plan, and ESMA also worked as an occasional training centre for the military groups from other countries in the region involved in clandestine repression operations.

ICOMOS found that the historic political context of Argentina within its regional and global context was not adequately presented by the nomination dossier, particularly the years immediately preceding the 1976 coup d'état, nor was it explained who the victims of the criminal state repression were. As ICOMOS requested additional information on the above in February 2023, the State Party provided in March 2023 a concise account of the political climate and events that immediately preceded the establishment of the civic-military dictatorship in 1976. In 1966, a coup d'état had taken place by *Revolución Argentina*. The period was fraught with growing instabilities, dire political contrasts among political factions and within the same movements, opposition by sectors of society (workers, students, intellectuals), and violence perpetrated by armed groups of extremists and by State's disproportionate response. Despite great expectations, political turmoil, fueled also by the economic crisis, continued, and even escalated with Juan Peron's return to power in 1973, so that authoritarian repression began during his mandate. Increasing political instability and armed actions by revolutionary extremist organisations, within the global context of the Cold War, instilled in society the idea that Argentina was threatened by Marxism and extreme-left Peronism. Militarisation of the State worsened under Peron's wife's presidency. The State gave a free hand to the Armed Forces to repress guerrillas and soon after the military carried out a coup d'état in March 1976. With the establishment of the civic-military dictatorship, there was a leap in illegal repression the aim of which became not only dismantling armed organisations but also preventing opposition to the regime. Although not explicitly stated, it can be inferred

from the information provided that the first target of the illegal repression system of the dictatorship were the members of the armed organisations of opponents who conducted attacks and armed actions as a form of fight against the State and continued underground their activity during the dictatorship. However, it is also understood that the scope of the dictatorship's clandestine illegal repression system widened to suspected and potential opponents and dissidents.

In Argentina, the clandestine centres of detention, documented through scientific and judicial investigations, were more than 700, spread throughout the country. Their number continues to grow as judicial enquiries proceed and archival documents are progressively declassified.

In Argentina, the first trial against those responsible for the criminal repression machinery implemented during the dictatorship occurred in 1985 and was known as the Trial of the Military Juntas. The process of seeking justice was stopped during the period from 1987 until 1998 when an attempt to have the Officers' Building at ESMA demolished was stopped by the judiciary power, followed in 2001 by the federal declaration that the impunity laws passed under Menem's presidency were unconstitutional, then declared invalid by Congress in 2003. Since then, judicial trials have resumed, with 592 cases conducted as of 2020; the efforts to ascertain facts, responsibility and of justice continue.

State of conservation

According to the nomination dossier, given the status of the nominated property as a historic-heritage building and judicial evidence, four determining factors concur with its current state of conservation: age of the building and natural wear of its construction materials; evidence of historical layers that have left their traces over time, mainly visible in architectural surfaces; judicial evidence status that requires requesting the corresponding authorizations from the judge to remove or add material elements; polysemic readings of the building that prevail over its aesthetic presentation.

These factors may reveal small maladjustments, detachments, missing parts or breakages that are not considered damages and are not considered for repair or replacement; likewise, they do not affect the current use as a Memorial Site Museum and, on the contrary, contribute to its full understanding and authenticity.

Minor deficiencies were identified and assessed between 2017 and 2019; corresponding mitigation work is expected to resume after the COVID-19 pandemic emergency has been overcome.

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the general state of conservation of the nominated property is good and there are active measures and conservation protocols that include preventive conservation actions and programs, as well as maintenance works.

Factors affecting the nominated property

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the nominated property are fire, potential vandalism and possible increase of visitors to unsustainable thresholds.

At present, building development does not seem to be a preeminent affecting factor, thanks to urban planning regulations and arrangements; however, vigilance should be maintained on possible future modifications of the planning provisions to avoid inappropriate development in the immediate setting of the nominated property, particularly on the north-western side, where the buffer zone is rather tight.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is overall good and that factors affecting the nominated property are fire, potential vandalism and excessive tourism. Vigilance is needed on any potential future change in planning provisions that might lead to inappropriate development around the nominated property.

3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification

The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- ESMA Museum and Site of Memory is a testimony and a symbol of state terrorism based on the enforced disappearance of ascertained or alleged political opponents as well as of the value of persuasiveness and social consensus to achieve justice;
- The ESMA building represents a tangible witness of state-led criminal repression, based on kidnapping, torture, rape, stealing of newborns, stealing of properties, forced labour, and assassination. Given the scale, complexity and magnitude of the operations carried out at the premise, and the wider geopolitical context of the fight against communism in the American continent and Southern Cone subcontinent, the nominated property transcends national borders and has become an international symbol illustrating enforced disappearance of persons.

Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis has been developed on the grounds of the following parameters: being a place where state criminal repression secretly took place during oppressive regimes, being places turned into sites of memory, being prominent for the organisation, complexity and scale of the crimes perpetrated, having acquired particular social importance in promoting human rights. It has examined properties within the country, subregion, region or throughout the world inscribed on the World Heritage List, included in the Tentative Lists of States

Parties as well as other properties. For the global comparison, only sites that are members of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience were selected for comparison. Out of more than 700 secret detention, torture and extermination centres in Argentina, only forty-six were transformed into associations called "Spaces for Memory" and registered at the National Directorate of Sites of Memory. From these, only eight have been selected for the comparison, based on the parameters indicated above. The comparison concludes that the ESMA Museum and Site of Memory - Former Clandestine Detention, Torture and Extermination Centre can be seen as the most representative among several other similar centres due to the scale, and magnitude of the crimes committed there, the significance of the events occurred, and the central role played by ESMA to build social consensus that made it possible to seek justice through civil judicial trials. ESMA also complies with the requirements for integrity and authenticity better than other sites in Argentina.

Due to the different ways in which the democratisation process took place in other countries of Latin America, sites commemorating state terrorism perpetrated during post-World War II dictatorships exhibit different characteristics and significantly different degrees of material evidence, according to the comparison proposed in the nomination dossier. Six sites in Latin America are examined and the analysis concludes that ESMA Museum and Site of Memory remains fundamental evidence for judicial investigations and trials against the perpetrators of the crimes committed there. It also embodies a reference space for scientific research and an expression of the active participation of society in seeking truth and justice on what happened during the dictatorship, that came to be fully supported by the State administration. All this sets ESMA Museum apart from other sites of memory in Latin America.

Eight sites have been selected throughout the world for the global comparison, of which three are already on the World Heritage List, whilst the others are either on States Parties' Tentative Lists or Sites of Conscience. The analysis concludes that the nominated property provides different and complementary evidence of the darkest side of humanity as well as of the strength and capacity of societies to overcome these tragedies. ESMA Museum and Site of Memory represents an exceptional testimony of the characteristics and complexity of enforced disappearances as part of a systematic plan of illegal, secret repression of armed political opponents as well as non-violent dissenters to obtain and maintain political power and control over society.

ICOMOS considers that the comparison carried out at the national and subregional levels appears more rigorous than the global analysis. However, the comparative exercise demonstrates that there is room on the World Heritage List for the nominated property as the best illustration of state-led criminal persecution and extermination of political opponents in the Latin American political historical context as a specific reflection of the

Cold War and the fight against communism. The nominated property is also testimony to the consistent and painstaking Argentinian society's effort to seek truth and justice for the perpetrated crimes through national ordinary courts, trials and judicial proceedings which came to be known as the "ESMA Mega-Case" and which is still ongoing.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (iii) and (vi).

Criterion (iii): *bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the ESMA Museum and Site of Memory - Former Clandestine Centre of Detention, Torture and Extermination is a unique testimony of the enforced disappearance of persons and what it entails. The State Party considers this an illustration of a cultural tradition based on violence and the use of force to obtain and retain political power. The structure and the attributes of the building prove that the clandestine operations were carried out in parallel with legal activities and reveal that violence and prevarication were deeply engrained in the Army's attitude.

Although culture is a notion that does not cover only the positive aspects of how human beings stay in the world and relate to each other but is more general in nature, ICOMOS does not consider it possible to celebrate or commemorate organised criminal repression, violence, prevarication as an exceptional testimony of a cultural tradition or a civilisation.

ICOMOS does not consider that the way in which the criterion was phrased in the *Operational Guidelines* for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention accommodates the interpretation of the notion of cultural tradition put forward by the State Party. However, the material and judicial evidence obtained by the examination of the tangible traces of the nominated property represents evidence of the events that occurred in the nominated building and could reinforce the justification of criterion (vi).

Criterion (vi): *be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance. (The Committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria);*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the nominated property is the most prominent symbol of illegal political repression carried out and coordinated by the dictatorships of Latin America and revolving around

the enforced disappearance of persons, which is today considered a crime against humanity. The international scope of the events is represented by the existence of a transnational plan, known as Operation Condor, an agreement for cooperation among dictatorships in Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia and Chile to arrest or assassinate political opponents who escaped from any of these countries and found refuge in one of the countries taking part of the operation. The Plan was supported by the US State Department and the CIA in 1975- 1977. What happened at the ESMA former Officers' Quarters came to be infamous thanks to complaints from survivors and Human Rights organisations and led to the definition at the international level of the crime of enforced disappearance of persons, the creation of a Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances at the United Nations and then to the designation of the systematic enforced disappearance of persons as a crime against humanity.

Based on the "*Guiding Principles*", which suggest how to assess the relevance of criterion (vi) for this type of property, ICOMOS has verified that the events with which the nominated property is associated can be seen of outstanding significance. Although carried out in Argentina, the criminal systematic repression machinery implemented by the military juntas was part of a larger chain of similar events and of a concerted transnational plan that was implemented in Latin America under the influence of the global historic-political setting of the Cold War and the struggle for geopolitical influence between two opposing sets of values and worldviews on the world's order. The events that occurred in Argentina had global resonance and could be seen as exceptionally representative of the events of similar nature that occurred in Latin America in the same period, for their systematicity, complexity, and planning.

The denounces of those who survived the forceful disappearance and torture and of the associations of the victims' families also led to the recognition that the widespread and systematic practice of enforced disappearance of people is a crime against humanity and is enshrined in the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2006.

As it is well explained by the nomination dossier, the nominated property is directly and tangibly associated with those events and is treated as judicial evidence in the trials against those responsible for state-led systematic atrocities to repress violent and non-violent opposition and dissent.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criterion (vi), but that criterion (iii) has not been demonstrated.

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

According to the nomination dossier, the nominated property is physically complete and includes all attributes that reflect the proposed justification for inscription. The building is protected as judicial evidence since 1998. From then on, any kind of modification was prohibited. Despite the building being handed over by the Navy empty, the traces of the passage of time, the overall configuration of the structure, its layout and constructive features sufficed to demonstrate its transformations since it was built and during the period of operations as secret detention, torture and extermination centre. Sufficient attributes of the function played during the dictatorship survive, were used as judicial evidence, and continue to be protected and preserved for this reason. Hence, no changes can be carried out to the building, and the museum arrangements had to be completely reversible and detached from any element of the building. The ESMA Museum and Site of Memory is inseparable from its buffer zone, the complex of the former Navy School of Mechanics, which is today the Space for Memory and for the promotion and Defence of Human Rights.

ICOMOS considers that the integrity of the ESMA Museum and Site of Memory has been demonstrated.

Authenticity

The nomination dossier explains that the attributes supporting the authenticity of the nominated property include the building's structure, its spatial configuration, its coatings, the signs of the alterations and of the uses that all allow an understanding of its history and subsequent modifications. The fact that the tangible features of the building are held as material legal evidence in the trials against the responsible for the crimes committed in the building confirms its authenticity. Conservation measures are today carried out on the basis of guidelines that consider its double nature as judicial and documentary evidence.

ICOMOS considers that the authenticity of the nominated property has been demonstrated. The Officers' Casino, despite some changes carried out during its operation as clandestine detention and torture centre implemented in 1978-79 to conceal its use to international observers, represents the primary source of information for understanding the significance of the place and maintains the status as judicial evidence for ongoing trials against the perpetrators of the crimes committed at ESMA during the 1976-1983 dictatorship. Location, layout, traces of uses, material fabric and even the modifications to the building implemented during the dictatorship represent attributes conveying in a credible manner the proposed justification for inscription. The wealth of documentary evidence that emerged from the trials is also of crucial importance in documenting the authenticity of the nominated property.

ICOMOS, however, notes that indicators should be conceived to make a distinction between the elements in

the building that pertain to museography arrangements and the authentic fabric related to the history of the building and its use as a clandestine detention centre, for the visitors (i.e., through colour code for museum-related additions).

Boundaries

The boundaries of the nominated property are clearly set. The proposed boundaries include the immediate configuration of the nominated property. The nominated area includes important views, both internal and external. All attributes that can express the proposed Outstanding Universal Value are included within the boundaries of the nominated property and encompasses all areas that, in light of future research possibilities, have the potential to contribute to and enhance the holistic understanding of the nominated property.

The nominated area coincides with the existing protected areas; in 2003, by means of Judicial Resolution Case No. 14,217, the Navy Officers' Quarters was protected as judicial evidence in the ESMA Mega-Case, related to the events that took place in the Clandestine Detention, Torture and Extermination Centre between 1976 and 1983.

The buffer zone covers the entirety of the ESMA ensemble which is protected as National Historic Site.

In May 2023, ICOMOS shared its views to the State Party as regards the area adjacent to the north-western side of the nominated property, comprised of the Raggio Technical School and its Sports field, considering that it should be included in the buffer zone to strengthen the protection of the nominated property, because, on that side, the buffer zone boundary is very close to the nominated property boundary. ICOMOS also suggested the inclusion within the buffer zone of sections of Del Libertador Avenue and Commodore Martin Rivadavia Avenue.

The State Party replied in June 2023 that there is no need to enlarge the buffer zone because protection provisions in place for the areas suggested for inclusion in the buffer zone guarantee an adequate layer of protection to the nominated property's attributes.

ICOMOS still considers that expanding the buffer zone on the north-western side of the nominated property would be necessary, even though ICOMOS does not consider that the protection measures to be put in place should be the same as those established for the ESMA ensemble. The protection measures for the plots of land located on the north-western side of the nominated property should guarantee that the immediate setting of the Officers' Casino maintains features that support the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. For instance, no high-rise building should be erected there, and the current density and overall layout should be retained.

Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription

The ESMA Museum and Site of Memory - Former Clandestine Centre of Detention, Torture and Extermination has been nominated for inscription on the

World Heritage List as a symbol of state-led terrorism based on the enforced disappearance of armed and non-violent opponents and, at the same time, of the value of seeking justice for these crimes. The scale, complexities and transnational and coordinated nature of the events that took place in the nominated property, the influence of the global historic and geopolitical setting on events happening in countries of the American Southern Cone along with the resonance of these events globally make those events of outstanding universal significance, according to the nominating State Party.

The comparative analysis, despite some weaknesses and difficulties to carry out a comparison with other properties that appear difficult to compare, has succeeded in demonstrating that there is room on the World Heritage List for the nominated property.

Two criteria have been used to justify the consideration of the ESMA Museum and Site of Memory for the World Heritage List: criteria (iii) and (vi). ICOMOS considers the way in which criterion (iii) has been argued – the nominated property would be an outstanding witness of a cultural tradition based on systematic violence and prevarication to seize and maintain power – does not fit the wording and the spirit of the World Heritage Convention when such criterion was proposed. ICOMOS does not consider that systematic cruelty, abjection, and physical and psychological violence, although indeed part of human nature, can be seen as an expression of a cultural tradition or civilisation and can be celebrated or commemorated as such. On the other hand, ICOMOS has found criterion (vi) relevant to the nominated property and justified: the nominated property is strongly tangibly and directly associated with events of outstanding universal significance, for their direct connection and integration in a transnational plan operating at the sub-continent level – the Condor Plan – and deeply influenced by the global tensions of opposing world views and struggle to prevail in the world's order.

Furthermore, the nominated property is also an exceptional example of the systematic and painstaking search for justice and truth through the rule of law and judicial trials as the necessary basis for reconciliation. These trials have been and are being carried out nationally but received a strong international echo. Although this process cannot be seen as part of the justification for inscription, it offers a crucially important message and lesson in coherence with the peace-building mission of UNESCO and with the aim of the World Heritage Convention.

The conditions of integrity and authenticity of the attributes supporting the proposed justification for inscription are met, although an expansion of the buffer zone towards the north-western side of the nominated property through a minor boundary modification request or, at least, through the establishment of ad-hoc protection mechanisms, would be needed to guarantee adequate protection from potential inappropriate development, such as high rise buildings too close to the nominated property. The state of conservation of the nominated property is good and conservation measures are in place following protocols that guarantee that judicial evidence is not altered. Factors potentially affecting the

property include fire, vandalism, increase in visitor numbers. Whilst building development is currently under control through planning provisions, vigilance on possible future changes in the regulations is highly advisable to prevent potential inappropriate urban development.

4 Conservation measures and monitoring

Documentation

The nominated property and its buffer zone are extensively documented and inventoried, particularly by virtue of their protection as judicial evidence since 2003 and then as a National Historic Monument since 2008. Documentation and inventories began to take place from the moment the Navy vacated the building in 2004; the process has been conducted in a meticulous and rigorous manner, it continues today and will continue in the following years.

Whilst ICOMOS acknowledges the careful documentation work done so far, it recommends that copies of the related documents be safely stored in multiple locations to avoid the loss of such documentation in case of disasters hitting the premises where originals are preserved.

Conservation measures

Based on the nomination dossier and the outcomes of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that conservation measures are appropriate to preserve the value, authenticity and integrity of the nominated property and fit with the established approach to safeguard the judicial evidence. A monthly fund is allocated by the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights for maintenance and preventive conservation, which is determined through the Budget Law, approved by the Congress. Ordinary interventions are defined and carried out by professionals with an adequate level of competence and skills, included within the team of the ESMA Museum and Site of Memory.

Cleaning, maintenance and ordinary conservation measures must comply with the guidelines contained in the Museographic Protocol Handbook in order to guarantee that judicial evidence in the building is not altered or erased by interventions.

Monitoring

The monitoring system revolves around five main objectives and related actions aiming to guarantee the persistence and good conditions of the attributes supporting the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. Monitoring activity is coordinated by the Executive Directorate. The nomination dossier provides information on the outcomes of previous monitoring exercises.

ICOMOS considers that documentation and conservation measures are systematic, coherent and regularly implemented. ICOMOS also considers that the monitoring system is functional and clear; outcomes of previous cycles of monitoring attest to the effectiveness of the monitoring system.

ICOMOS considers that it would be advisable that copies of the documents produced in the documentation process be stored at different locations to avoid inadvertent losses in case of disasters.

5 Protection and management

Legal protection

The nominated property is protected by multiple layers of different protection designations: by a sentence (13 February 2001) of the Supreme Court of Justice, by a decision of the National Court on the Federal Criminal and Correctional (2003) as judicial evidence, as well as a National Historic Monument since 2008. It is further protected by Law n. 26.691/2011 on the Preservation, signage and promotion of Sites of Memory on State Terrorism. Decree 1.133/2015 also protects the nominated property and its use as a Museum and Site of Memory. Protection is also granted to both the nominated property and the buffer zone – the entire ESMA premise – by Law 6.099/18 Urban Planning Code of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires (CABA), which establishes that the property located in the plots covering the nominated property and its buffer zone are earmarked for Special Equipment EE2 – Space for memory and for the promotion and Defence of Human Rights.

The archives related to events that occurred in Argentina and ESMA in 1976-1983 have been included on the Register of the World's Memory in 2007.

In 2016, the nominated property has also been put under the protection of the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict.

Management system

The ESMA Museum and Site of Memory is a decentralised body of the Secretariat of Human Rights of the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, created by Decree n. 1.133 in 2015. An Executive Directorate and two Area Directorates (in International Relations and Museographic Projects and Audiovisual Content) act as the management structure. A Steering Committee made up of five internal and external members meets quarterly to assess compliance with the plan, identifies potential issues, and recommends adjustments. An Advisory Council supports the Executive and Area Directorates and is formed by members of the Public Entity Space for Memory and Promotion and Defence of Human Rights. Decisions by the Advisory Council are not binding. Management policies and activities are grounded on the vision and mission of the museum. Yearly management documents are produced – the Annual Report and the Annual Planning – which form the Strategic Management Plan, in existence since 2015. The Strategic Management Plan for this period is valid from 2020 through 2025. This is articulated in programmes, subprogrammes and projects.

Not much is explained with regard to risk management apart from mentioning an evacuation plan in case of fire,

explosion, risk of explosion, and periodical monitoring of the detention installations. Risks related to civil unrest and other risks are said to be the responsibility of the Entity Space for Memory and Human Rights.

Visitor management and interpretation

The maximum capacity of the number of visitors has been established in 2015 in order to avoid risks of damage to the building as judicial evidence. Visitors only access rooms that are part of the circuit. A set of rules and recommendations for visitors applies to ensure that visits occur in respect for the memorial nature of the place.

A plan for the expansion of the Museum and Site of Memory to the entire Officers' Casino building exists and is mentioned in the management plan.

ICOMOS observes that the current overlapping of functions and flows of people within the nominated property does not seem appropriate for the nature of the place and these are likely to increase in case of inscription on the World Heritage List. The Officers' Casino building, being the site where imprisonment and torture were carried out, should be kept only as a place for education, remembrance and reflection.

Community involvement

The nomination dossier reports that the project for the museum was prepared and presented to a range of actors, namely survivors and family members of the disappeared, human rights organisations, state representatives from the executive, legislative and judiciary branches, educators and academics and the general public. Feedback was gathered and this influenced the final museography arrangements. The nomination process was also presented in different occasions to inform the communities built around the nominated property.

Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property

In summary, ICOMOS considers that legal protection, protection measures and management arrangements and plans are overall adequate to guarantee that the nominated property continues to convey its value and sustain its attributes. However, ICOMOS has identified areas where improvement in terms of protection policy, management and interpretation should be sought.

With regard to protection, ICOMOS recommends that an assessment be made for all buildings and structures located in the buffer zone, on the basis of a detailed and systematic documentation exercise, about the level of protection and conservation policy which would be adequate for each of them in relation to their ability to support the proposed justification for inscription.

In ICOMOS' view, a systematic review of all risk management measures in place should be carried out to ascertain whether there are gaps and needs for establishing or strengthening communication and coordination for response. The Strategic Management Plan should be completed with a chapter on risk management arrangements and responsible actors to address and respond to specific risks. ICOMOS also

considers that, when the concept of the expansion of the museum will be more developed, it should be sent to the World Heritage Centre as per paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*. ICOMOS further recommends that the visitor-related services should be moved out of the ESMA Museum premise, as the building is a place of memory and should remain a place for education, reflection and recollection.

ICOMOS further considers that the interpretation at the ESMA Museum and Site of Memory must include expanded information on the Argentinian historic-political context that prepared the advent of the civic-military dictatorship in 1976-1983 and on the background of those imprisoned and tortured at ESMA. Only by fully understanding the history of the country and analysing events in all their historical, political and social complexity will it be possible to achieve a broad awareness of society and its capacity for resilience to ensure that the motto “*Nunca Mas*” remains a reality.

In this regard, engaging all sectors of Argentinian society in the process of understanding, presenting and interpreting the events that occurred at the building now housing the ESMA Museum and Site of Memory, the complex factors that led to dictatorship and the responsibilities of different parties, should continue and be strengthened so as memory is nurtured by history and can become a shared inheritance for all Argentinians first, and then for all people of the world.

6 Conclusion

The ESMA Museum and Site of Memory - Former Clandestine Centre of Detention, Torture and Extermination has been nominated for inclusion in the World Heritage List as the most prominent symbol of state-led terrorism based on the enforced disappearance of armed and non-violent opponents and, at the same time, of the value of ascertaining the facts and seeking justice for these crimes as a basis to build a shared understanding of the abyss reached during the dictatorships in Argentina and the Southern Cone of America and a memory of the victims.

The State Party of Argentina should be praised for bringing forward this nomination but much more for the exceptional and painstaking process of ascertaining the truth of the facts, and the responsibilities and seeking justice for crimes committed during the dictatorship against armed and non-armed opponents and dissidents, a process which continues today.

The nomination dossier has proved that, for the scale, complexity, and transnational and coordinated nature of the events that took place at the nominated property, the influence of the global historic and geopolitical setting on the events happening in Argentina and in the American Southern Cone along with the global resonance of these events make them of outstanding universal significance and that the nominated property is directly and tangibly associated with these events, to the point that it is protected as judicial evidence in the trials against the crimes

committed there. Out of the two criteria proposed – (iii) and (vi) – only criterion (vi) is relevant and justified for the nominated property.

The nominated property is also an exceptional example of the systematic and painstaking search for justice and truth through the rule of law and judicial trials as the necessary basis for reconciliation. These trials have been and are being carried out nationally but received a strong international echo. Although this process cannot be seen as part of the justification for inscription, it offers a crucially important message and lesson in coherence with the peace-building mission of UNESCO and with the aim of the World Heritage Convention.

The conditions of integrity and authenticity of the attributes supporting the proposed justification for inscription are met, although an expansion of the buffer zone towards the north-western side of the nominated property or, at least the establishment of ad-hoc protection mechanisms, would be needed to guarantee adequate protection from potential inappropriate development.

The state of conservation of the nominated property is good and conservation measures are in place following protocols that guarantee that judicial evidence is not altered.

The legal protection system and management arrangements and plans are overall adequate to guarantee that the nominated property continues to convey its value and sustain its attributes. However, ICOMOS has identified areas where improvement in terms of protection policy, management and interpretation should be sought.

In particular, ICOMOS considers that the interpretation at the ESMA Museum and Site of Memory must include expanded information on the Argentinian historic-political context that prepared the advent of the civic-military dictatorship in 1976-1983 and on the background of those imprisoned and tortured at ESMA. Only by fully understanding the history of the country and analysing events in all their historical, political and social complexity will it be possible to achieve a broad awareness of society and its capacity for resilience to ensure that the motto “*Nunca Mas*” remains a reality.

In this regard, engaging all sectors of Argentinian society in the process of understanding, presenting and interpreting the events that occurred at the building now housing the ESMA Museum and Site of Memory, the complex factors that led to dictatorship, should continue and be strengthened so as memory is nurtured by history and can become a shared inheritance for all Argentinians first, and then for all people of the world.

7 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the ESMA Museum and Site of Memory - Former Clandestine Centre of Detention, Torture and Extermination, Argentina, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of **criterion (vi)**.

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

ESMA Museum and Site of Memory - Former Clandestine Centre of Detention, Torture and Extermination is located on the grounds of what was once the Officers' Quarters of the Navy School of Mechanics (ESMA), in the city of Buenos Aires, Argentina.

In the Clandestine Centre installed at the ESMA Officers' Quarters, officers and subordinates belonging to the Argentine Navy kidnapped, tortured, and murdered more than 5,000 people, carried forward a plan to steal babies born in captivity, exercised sexual and gender violence, subjected groups of detained-disappeared persons to forced labour of various kinds, and organised the spoliation of movable and immovable assets of the victims. The systematic and organised exercise of secretly carried out violence by the dictatorship took place as part of a transnational plan of cooperation among dictatorships in the American Southern Cone to fight political left- and communist-oriented armed and non-armed opposition. Due to the transnational implications of these events, in a context of global geo-political tensions between opposing worldviews and socio-political values, the building and operational magnitude, its location in the heart of the city, the coexistence of naval officers and detained-disappeared persons and the variety and complexity of the crimes committed, ESMA Clandestine Centre transcended its political and geographical borders to turn into an international and emblematic symbol representing the characteristics of the enforced disappearance of persons, considered today as a crime against humanity by the United Nations.

Criterion (vi): The ESMA Museum and Site of Memory - Former Clandestine Centre of Detention, Torture and Extermination is closely and tangibly associated with, and highly representative of, the illegal repression of armed and non-armed opponents and dissenters carried out and coordinated by the dictatorships of Latin America in the 1970s-1980s on the grounds of the enforced disappearance of persons, in a climate of global geopolitical tensions between opposing worldviews about the world's socio-political order.

Integrity

The property contains all the strata which clearly explain its historical-constructive evolution, necessary to understand its Outstanding Universal Value. The building has been protected as judicial evidence since 1998 owing to the crimes against humanity committed there during the

operations of the Former Clandestine Centre of Detention, Torture and Extermination. From then on, any kind of modification was prohibited. The Argentine Navy vacated and handed down the building in 2004. Until 2014, only maintenance and deterioration arrest works were performed. From 2014 to 2015, the works to create and open the ESMA Museum and Site of Memory were carried out with scrupulous respect for the preservation of the state of the building, as it was at the time of its decommissioning, and its status as judicial evidence. At present, different marks and vestiges denoting the stay of the detained-disappeared at the place are preserved. The building today displays the inalterability conditions necessary to continue with studies which may allow access to new judicial evidence. Furthermore, it represents a documentary source for the historical reconstruction of the events which took place there.

Authenticity

The property's structure, spatial configuration, coatings, and marks of the various constructive alterations and uses over time allow to understand its own history and evolution and convey in a credible manner the Outstanding Universal Value of the property. The validation of the building as judicial evidence in the trials for crimes against humanity committed there is based upon the recognition of the authenticity of the facilities and the veracity of the testimonies referring to such events and confirms the property's tangible and close association with those events. The conservation and restoration protocols applied for the installation of ESMA Museum and Site of Memory were jointly endorsed by experts in such matters, by an Advisory Council made up of representatives of Human Rights organisations and by the judicial body. Nowadays, all the conservation and restoration measures of the building are based upon scientific studies carried forward in order to preserve it by virtue of its dual nature of judicial evidence and documentary source.

The tangible attributes of the property which reflect its Outstanding Universal Value are complemented and reinforced by the painstaking and early activated process to ascertain facts and seek justice in relation to the criminal events that took place during the dictatorships at the hands of the military led to the first Trial of the Military Juntas in 1985 by a civil court. This trial and the following mega-cases have produced overwhelming evidence of what happened at ESMA. The Officers' Quarter was protected as judicial evidence for the trials. The process of seeking truth and justice is still ongoing and shall form the basis of a robust reconciliation process.

Protection and management requirements

Various legal and institutional protection measures cover the property and its buffer zone for the preservation of its Outstanding Universal Value. Legally speaking, the building has been protected since 1998 under an injunction to maintain the status quo in its capacity as judicial evidence. Additionally, the Court continuously issues specific provisions on the topics concerning the entire building preservation. At the heritage level, in 2008, the

nominated property was listed as a National Historic Monument and its buffer zone, made up of the premises destined for the Space for Memory and for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (former ESMA), as a National Historic Site. From the institutional point of view, the national decree for the creation of the ESMA Museum and Site of Memory - Former Clandestine Centre of Detention, Torture and Extermination sets its administrative role as a decentralised body of the National Secretariat for Human Rights, whose mission is to inform and convey the events which took place in the Clandestine Centre, its precedents and its consequences.

The ESMA Museum and Site of Memory is managed by an executive directorate and has an Advisory Council composed of the same members coming from the Directory of Human Rights organisations belonging to the Space for Memory and for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights. The Museum and Site of Memory is located within the boundaries of the premises destined for the Space for Memory and for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (former ESMA), which nowadays houses public institutions and civil society associations with a local, national and regional reach. The Space for Memory and for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (former ESMA) is administered by an Executive Body made up of representatives from the National Government, the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires and a Directory integrated by Human Rights organisations.

The long-term sustenance of the Outstanding Universal Value and of the mission of the ESMA Museum and Site of Memory to accompany Argentina to fulfil its aspiration that these events will not happen again need the continued commitment of all relevant institutions in presenting what happened during the dictatorship in all its complex precedents and consequences and guaranteeing that the property continues to be the inheritance of all Argentinians so as to become that of the world.

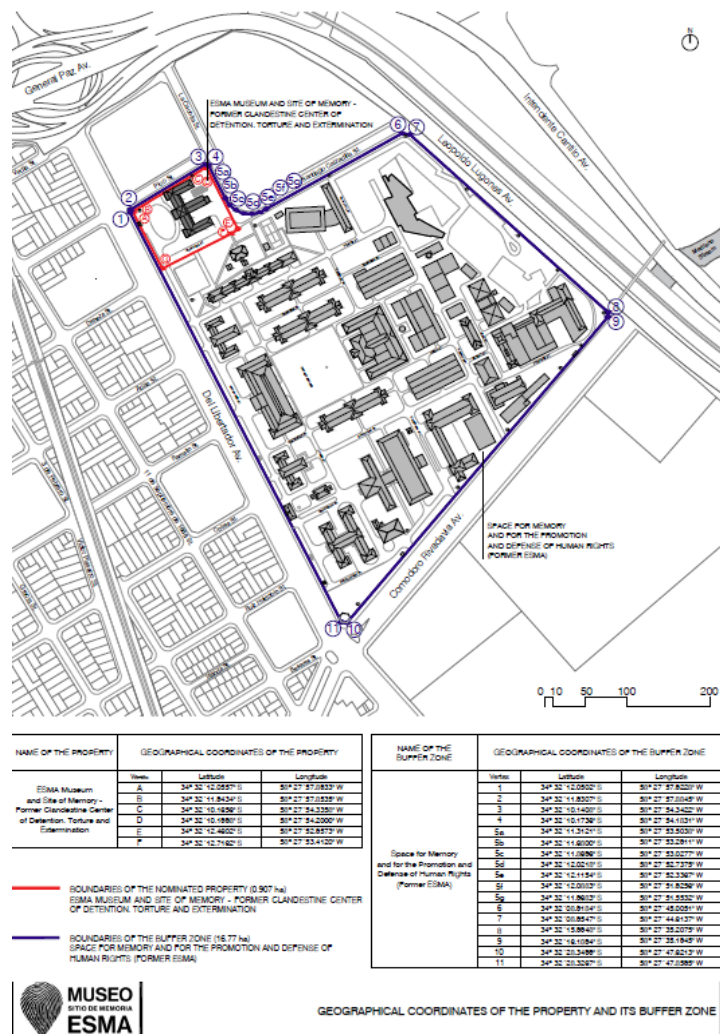
Additional Recommendations

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

- a) Expanding the buffer zone through a minor boundary modification request or establishing robust protection mechanisms for the plots corresponding to the Raggio Technical School and its Sports field,
- b) Exercising close vigilance on any change to planning provisions in the immediate and wider setting of the property that may lead to development incompatible with the sustenance of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property,
- c) Carrying out an assessment of all buildings and structures located in the buffer zone about the level of protection and conservation policy which would be adequate for each of them in relation to

their ability to support the Outstanding Universal Value,

- d) Carrying out a systematic review of all risk management measures in place to verify whether inter-agency communication and coordination need strengthening to tackle effectively disaster response,
- e) Completing the Strategic Management Plan with a chapter on risk management arrangements and responsible actors to address and respond to specific risks,
- f) Submitting for review by the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS the concept and the project for the expansion of the ESMA Museum and Site of Memory in line with paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*,
- g) Ensuring that the interpretation at the Museum and Site of Memory includes expanded information on the Argentinian historic-political context that prepared the advent of the civic-military dictatorship in 1976 and on the background of those imprisoned and tortured at ESMA to ensure that full understanding is achieved that the repression methods used during the dictatorship were unjustifiable, abhorrent state-led crimes,
- h) Relocating all visitors-related services of the museum outside the Officers' Casino building at a different premise and keeping the property only as a place for education, remembrance and recollection;



Map showing the boundaries of the nominated property