

# ICOMOS

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES  
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MONUMENTS ET DES SITES  
CONSEJO INTERNACIONAL DE MONUMENTOS Y SITIOS  
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ СОВЕТ ПО ВОПРОСАМ ПАМЯТНИКОВ И ДОСТОПРИМЕЧАТЕЛЬНЫХ МЕСТ

Our Ref. GB/AS/1495/IR

Charenton-le-Pont, 22 December 2017

H. Exc. Mr Takio Yamada  
Permanent Delegation of Japan to UNESCO  
100, avenue de Suffren  
75015 Paris

World Heritage List 2018

## **Hidden Christian Sites in Nagasaki Region (Japan) – Interim report and additional information request**

Dear Sir,

As prescribed by the revised Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention and its Annex 6, the Advisory Bodies have been requested to submit a short interim report for each nomination by 31 January 2018. We are therefore pleased to provide you with the relevant information outlining issues related to the evaluation process.

The ICOMOS technical evaluation mission to "Hidden Christian Sites in Nagasaki Region" was carried out by Richard Mackay (Australia) from 03 to 14 September 2017. The mission expert highly appreciated the availabilities and support provided by the experts in your country for the organization and implementation of the mission.

Please convey our thanks to all the officials and experts for the additional information you provided 30 August 2017 and for their continued cooperation in this process.

At the end of November 2017, the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel evaluated the cultural and mixed properties nominated for inscription on the World Heritage List in 2018. The additional information provided by the State Party, together with mission and desk review reports were carefully examined by the Panel members. This process will conclude in March 2018.

The ICOMOS Panel acknowledges the work done by the State Party to reconfigure this nomination and welcomes this new nomination dossier with great interest.

We thank you for the availability of your Delegation to the meeting held on Thursday 23 November 2017 with some representatives of the ICOMOS Panel. The exchanges during this meeting were of great help for the third part of the ICOMOS Panel meeting. During its last part meeting, the Panel has identified areas where it considers that further information is needed. Therefore, we would be pleased if the State Party could consider the following points:

### **Boundaries**

The ICOMOS technical evaluation mission noticed that at the remains of Hara Castle (component 01), a small section of lower ground at the southwestern corner includes industrial buildings and a large junior high school. These elements jeopardise the 'intactness' of this component. Could the State Party redefine the boundaries

of the small area in the southwestern corner of the remains of Hara Castle by removing it from the core nominated area but maintaining it within the buffer zone?

### **Buffer Zone**

The ICOMOS technical evaluation mission to the Egami Village (component 11) also revealed that, in addition to the fishing port and other sea areas included within the buffer zone, there is a small promontory to the west, which forms part of the visual setting of the proposed component and which is visible from the Egami Church. Could the State Party consider amending the buffer zone of the Egami Village to incorporate a highly-visible promontory area as a substantial development in this location would have potential to impact on Egami Village adversely?

The ICOMOS Panel would be pleased if the State Party could provide a clear and practical justification for the delineation of buffer zones wherever these are marked in the sea.

In order to provide the State Party with clear guidance regarding the proposed amendments to the boundaries of Hara Castle (component 01) and to the buffer zone of the Egami Village (component 11), please find enclosed Annex 1 which contains two maps illustrating the ICOMOS Panel's proposals.

### **Protection**

The ICOMOS Panel would be grateful if the State Party could provide the timeframe for the designation of Ono Village (component 06) as an 'Important Cultural Landscape' under the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties.

### **Conservation**

The ICOMOS Panel understood that the property already benefits from a well-structured arrangement under which conservation projects or private structures can be heavily subsidised by local, prefectural and national governments. In this regard, the ICOMOS Panel would appreciate further information concerning:

- a) The possibilities and mechanisms for extending the financial assistance available to both individual property owners and community groups to cover other aspects of heritage value such as vegetation/landscape management and interpretation.
- b) Comprehensive archival record of the fabric of abandoned villages, churches and cemeteries (such as those on Hisaka and Nozaki Islands) within the property using photogrammetry, Lidar and/or other similar techniques.
- c) The inventory, physical assessment and development of long-term conservation strategy for the venerated artefacts within the property which remain in private ownership, if and when is no longer possible for these items to be retained and conserved in private ownership, and in their current locations.

### **Management**

In the light of potential risks and threats from climate change and rising sea levels, could the State Party consider the preparation of Seashore Management Plan, particularly for those site components where the relationship between the nominated property or associated community and the sea coast is most vulnerable?

### **Visitor management and presentation**

The ICOMOS Panel would welcome additional information regarding the State Party's tourism approach and strategy to allow visitors access to the site as well as an understanding of all elements and places within the components of the property that are part of the story of the Hidden Christians.

The ICOMOS Panel would also be pleased with further information regarding consideration of the 'carrying capacity' and management of potential tourism at the components of the property having particular regard to the physical and social circumstances of each component and potential limitations imposed by factors such as parking areas, boat transport and availability of local guides.

### **Involvement of local communities**

The ICOMOS Panel understood that the population in some villages is declining and many of the values associated with the Hidden Christian narrative are related to intangible attributes and association with places such as the Shinto shrines which were used to Christian worship, the sites of houses of Hidden Christian community leaders, natural features and relics which were carefully hidden and venerated over generations. With the changing demographics of residents and an increasingly older population, some of the rituals and memories which create these associations are no longer passing from generation to generation.

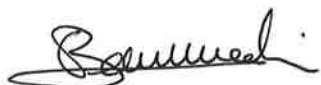
Therefore, the ICOMOS Panel would appreciate further information regarding State Party's strategies to mitigate the potential loss of memory amongst the custodians of the nominated property.

We look forward to your responses to these points, which will be of great help in our evaluation process.

We would be grateful if you could provide ICOMOS and the World Heritage Centre with the above information by **28 February 2018 at the latest**, the deadline set out in paragraph 148 of the Operational Guidelines for supplementary information on nominations to be received. Please note that any information submitted after this date will not be considered by ICOMOS in its evaluation for the World Heritage Committee. It should be noted, however, that while ICOMOS will carefully consider any supplementary information submitted, it cannot properly evaluate a completely revised nomination or large amounts of new information submitted at the last minute. So, we would be grateful if the State Party could keep its response concise and respond only to the above requests.

We thank you for your support of the World Heritage Convention and the evaluation process.

Yours faithfully,



Gwenaëlle Bourdin  
Director  
ICOMOS Evaluation Unit

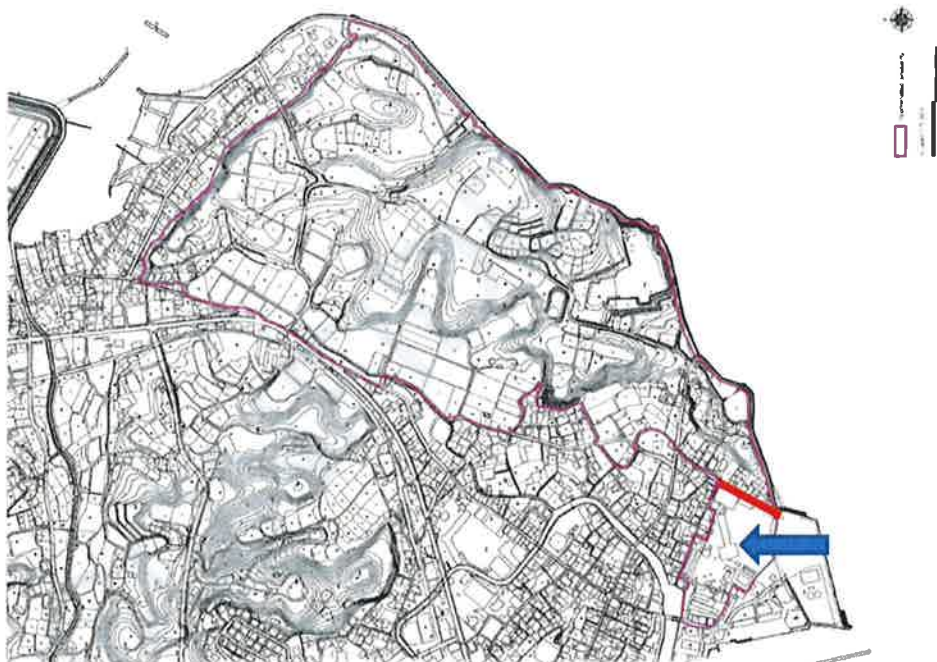
Copy to      Agency for Cultural Affairs Cultural Properties Department, Monuments and Sites Division  
UNESCO World Heritage Centre

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**Hidden Christian Sites in Nagasaki Region (Japan) –  
Interim report and additional information request – Annex 1**

**Boundaries**

Potential revision to the 'core' component boundary for the Remains of Hara Castle (01); the arrow shows the junior high school. The bright red line the proposed amendment to the boundary.



**Buffer zone**

Potential revision to the buffer zone boundary for the Egami Village on Naru Island (011); the bright red line shows the proposed amendment to the buffer zone.

