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## Chiribiquete National Park (Colombia) No. 1174

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### Official name as proposed by the State Party

Chiribiquete National Park – “The Maloca of the Jaguar”

### Location

Townships of Cartagena del Chairá, San Vicente del  
Caguán and Solano  
Department of Caquetá  
Township of Calamar  
Department of Guaviare  
Colombia

### Brief description

Located in the north-western Colombian Amazon, Chiribiquete National Park is the largest protected zone in Colombia. Dating from 20,000 BCE to the present day, 75,234 paintings have been identified on the walls of 60 rock shelters at the foot of *tepui*s. Linked to a purported jaguar cult, scenes of hunting, battles, dances and ceremonies involving shamans are painted. The indigenous communities, although not directly present on the site, consider the region as sacred. Chiribiquete is today visited by voluntarily isolated indigenous groups who probably still paint the shelter walls.

### Category of property

In terms of categories of cultural property, as defined in Article One of the World Heritage Convention of 1972, this is a *site*.

[Note: The property is nominated as a mixed site (cultural and natural). IUCN will assess the importance of the natural values, and ICOMOS the importance of the cultural values.]

## 1 Basic data

### Included in the Tentative List

27 September 2012

### International Assistance from the World Heritage Fund for preparing the Nomination

None

### Date received by the World Heritage Centre

31 January 2017

### Background

The property had been submitted for examination by the 29th session of the World Heritage Committee (Durban, 2005), under the name “Serranía de Chiribiquete Natural National Park”, on the basis of criteria (i), (iii), (vi), (vii), (viii) and (x).

The State Party had withdrawn its nomination before examination by the World Heritage Committee (29 COM 8B.3).

### Consultations

ICOMOS consulted its International Scientific Committee on Rock Art and several independent experts.

### Technical Evaluation Mission

A joint ICOMOS / IUCN technical evaluation mission visited the property from 8 to 16 October 2017.

### Additional information requested and received by ICOMOS

A letter was sent by ICOMOS on 22 September 2017 to the State Party, requesting additional information on the description of the property, the conditions of authenticity and the comparative analysis. A reply was received on 1 November 2017 and the information provided has been included in this report.

An intermediate joint ICOMOS / IUCN report was sent to the State Party on 20 December 2017, requesting additional information on the justification of Outstanding Universal Value, the comparative analysis, documentation and maps, the involvement of local communities and the rights of indigenous populations, financial resources and safety measures for the site. The State Party replied to these requests on 27 February 2018. The information provided has been included in the appropriate sections of this evaluation report.

### Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

14 March 2018

## 2 The property

### Description

Chiribiquete National Park is located in the central part of the Colombian Amazon, straddling the departments of Caquetá and Guaviare. It covers a surface area of 2,782,354 hectares, to which the State Party added in 2013 a buffer zone of 3,989,682.82 hectares, giving a total surface area designated for nomination of more than 6 million hectares (6,772,036.82 ha to be precise).

The region is, however, sparsely populated. The department of Caquetá is mainly occupied by indigenous communities of Andaquíes, Coreguajes, Karijonas, Macaguales and Uitotos. The groups present speak languages from some twenty different linguistic families.

The natural environment of Chiribiquete National Park is typically Amazonian, and is extremely rich in terms of biodiversity. But one of the most significant characteristics of Chiribiquete National Park, perhaps more than its fauna and flora, is the presence of *tepui*s. Tepuis (“tepui” is a word of indigenous American origin signifying “mountain”) are limestone table-top mountains with vertical or sharply-sloping faces, which dominate

the Amazonian forest. At Chiribiquete, there are more than 75,234 pictographs identified today on the walls of 60 rock shelters of different sizes, around the feet of the *tepui*s.

The largest concentration of documented shelters is in the northern part of the park, especially in the zone near the River Ajáju and its tributary, the River Negro. Rock art sites have also been identified, though fewer in number, in the centre and south of the national park. Most of the rock shelters studied have a north-south orientation. Some have apparently been painted to face the rising sun, and others the setting sun, which is interpreted in the nomination dossier as having cosmogonic value. Most of the shelters are situated in the middle part of the rocky scarp slopes at an altitude of 500 to 700 metres.

Although red mineral colorant provides the dominant colour, ochre, white and black also appear in some figures. There are also several rock engravings. They include geometric figures (some of which are interpreted as representations of the sun, the moon, and the constellations, including the Milky Way), zoomorphic representations (in order of importance: jaguar, deer, tapir and capybaras), and in some cases therianthrope representations (mythical beings that are part-human and part-animal, and are interpreted in the dossier as shamans), as well as objects and plants (which are assumed in the dossier to be psychotropic). It is noticeable that the animal figures are often larger and more detailed than the human ones, who are, in most cases, armed and relatively small. The scenes portrayed are interpreted as hunts, battles, dances and ceremonies, all of which are linked to a purported cult of the jaguar, as a symbol of power and fertility. Other predominant features of the ritual are the figure of the shaman, the psychotropic plants associated with the ceremonies, and cosmogonic figures (the sun and the moon).

Archaeological excavations, described in the dossier as directly associated with the rock paintings, have enabled 49 radiocarbon datings. The datings were used as the basis for the drawing up of a proposed chronological sequence of 20,000 years up to the present day. While the “Abrigo del Arco” site has been dated to 19,500 BCE, the other datings are more recent, mainly covering three periods: 5500-1500 BCE, 2500-1200 BCE, and 700-600 BCE. Only a few archaeological remains have been uncovered, most coming from upper levels and thus from more recent occupations of the sites. They consist of pottery shards and polished stone axes, attributed to the Karijona people, of Karib linguistic affiliation.

In view of the pictorial originality of the property, a specific Chiribiquete stylistic tradition has been defined. It is characterised by three phases (Ajáju, Guaviare and Papamene). During the Ajáju phase, dated at 20,000-10,000 BCE, the zoomorphic and phytomorphic representations are highly realistic and detailed. The

jaguar, of larger dimensions, is said to be the central figure of the compositions, unlike the schematic anthropomorphic representations that are in most cases armed. Circles and spirals on the abdomens of the human figures are interpreted as being a symbol of the sun and of the life force of the jaguar, and referring to Malaké ritual. Representations of psychotropic plants assumed to be associated with the shamanic ritual are also present.

Practices of these types, documented by rock art, are said to reflect a coherent system of millennia-long sacred beliefs, establishing the organisation of and explaining the relations between the cosmos, nature and man. Many specific areas in the region are held to be sacred by several populations. In the oral traditions of the Karijonas, Andoques, Uitotos, Cabiariés, Yukunas, Matapís, Bora-mirañas, Tanimukas, Kubeos, Desanas and Tukanos there are references to Chiribiquete as the “Casa Grande de los Animales” (Great Home of the Animals) and its sacred and mythical nature. The nominated property is surrounded by seven indigenous reserves. In the additional information provided on 1 November 2017, the State Party stresses that there is not necessarily any direct interaction between the nearby indigenous reserves and the nominated property or the rock art sites. The communities in the reserves consider the property and its *tepui*s as sacred places: no-one can interfere with them or visit them, even in their thoughts, without giving rise to serious spiritual consequences.

Furthermore, Chiribiquete is still today visited by indigenous groups who have not yet been contacted. According to the datings, fragments of cave paintings have been found in very recent layers, from the second half of the second millennium AD (although this raises the issue of the limits of carbon 14 dating). The latest scientific expeditions in 2015 and 2016 led to the discovery of very recent cave paintings, ritual burners and human footprints, clearly of indigenous origin. The nomination dossier attributes these traces to indigenous populations who remain voluntarily isolated in the forest. Research suggests that these isolated groups could be Karijona, between the Rivers Ajáju and Macaya; a Karijona or Murui group, between the Rivers Luisa and Yari; an Urumi group in the upper reaches of the Rivers Mirití, Yavilla and Metá; and a Murui group, between the Rivers Cuemaní and Sainí. In the additional information provided on 1 November 2017, the State Party suggests that these communities may live near the nominated property and not inside it, without there being any causal relationship between the recent pictorial activities and the isolated groups.

In response to the ICOMOS request, the State Party says the area of the traditional knowledge of the jaguar shamans of Yuruparí, included in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, extends up to the eastern boundaries of the nominated property. Yuruparí rituals are still today observed in two reserves of indigenous people in the buffer zone (Nonuya de

Villazul and Mirití-Paraná). ICOMOS notes that ethnographic research must be undertaken to determine the relations that exist between the indigenous communities of the nominated property and the buffer zone and the traditional knowledge of the jaguar shamans of Yuruparí (its preservation, its practice and its transmission).

ICOMOS stresses that the problem is the lack of datable organic elements in the paintings, which means they cannot be directly dated. The nomination dossier mentions a painted rock fragment which fell from the wall and was found in the sediments, which has been dated to 20,000 BCE in the “*Abrigo del Arco II*”. ICOMOS considers that doubt may surround this single dating, particularly in view of the risks of disturbance of the archaeological context. ICOMOS notes that the chronological attribution of the paintings and the assertion of a continuous cave art sequence have not been satisfactorily demonstrated. The dating of around 20,000 BCE for the “*Abrigo del Arco II*” paintings still needs to be confirmed by other datings.

In the additional information, the State Party stresses that recent excavations at the foot of painted walls at La Lindosa, near Chiribiquete, have indicated dates of between 12,045 BCE and 320 BCE, although it has not been possible to link the rock art to the archaeological sequence. The State Party says that other dating techniques will be used to confirm this hypothesis, particularly rock art archaeomagnetic dating.

ICOMOS considers that, on the basis of the information currently available, the thesis of a specific local cultural tradition, to which the paintings and the pre-eminent position of the jaguar in the art of Chiribiquete bear witness, needs to be confirmed. In the additional information, the State Party notes that ethnographic surveys will take place in the buffer zone, particularly with Maku-Nukak groups.

### **History and development**

In the nomination dossier, Chiribiquete is described as one of the earliest sites of human settlement in South America, and the greatest concentration of pictographs in the Amazon, and indeed in the Americas, with 75,234 paintings. Dating from 20,000 BCE onwards, the cave art sequence is said to be continuous, and attributable today to Karib communities (Karijona) living in the outskirts of the park. Over the last millennium, the Karijona are said to have migrated from their original Guyanese territory to settle in the northwestern Amazon.

In the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, the area was subject to early colonisation and expeditions motivated by the search for El Dorado. One such expedition was led by Philipp von Hutten, of German origin, who reached the Serranía de Chiribiquete in 1537, where he was repelled by the Karijona at the upper River Itilla. According to reports, hallucinating and sick, he saw in the distance a town with temples and palaces, which he took to be El Dorado. His vision was in fact of Chiribiquete.

In the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a group of Franciscan missionaries recorded their first meetings with members of the Karijona near the River Apaporis. Later, in 1782, Francisco Requena, a Spanish engineer and military official, explored the Rivers Cumaré, Mesai, Amú and Yará, and stated that the number of Karijona in the area was close to 15,000. But the most accurate characterisation of this group was made by the German doctor, naturalist and anthropologist Karl Friedrich Philipp von Martius, who explored the southern section of Chiribiquete (near Araracuara) in 1810. He said that the Karijona lived in the high parts of the *tepui*s.

Rubber extraction marked the beginning of colonisation processes in the townships of Solano, Cartagena del Chairá, San Vicente del Caguán and Calamar, from 1850 to 1890. As production diminished, the colonisers went downriver. In the case of Calamar, the earliest settlers occupied the land on the Unilla and Itilla rivers. These settlements became the colonisation fronts closest to Chiribiquete. At the time, the Karijona lived on the banks of the Cuñaré, Mesai, Amú and Yará rivers. Fleeing the rubber plantations, some groups of Karijona, Yacunas and Uitotos moved upstream on the Yari River and took refuge in the Chiribiquete area. Following rebellions, the Karijona were displaced in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century by Colombian and Peruvian rubber tappers. Theodor Koch-Grünberg, the German ethnologist, described the first struggles that took place in 1903. The members of the indigenous clans were killed or enslaved.

The site of Chiribiquete was discovered relatively recently, only thirty years ago. When flying over the area in 1986, Carlos Castaño-Urbe (Director of the National Park System of Colombia) noticed a mountain range that did not appear on the map. As a result, the “Serranía de Chiribiquete” was declared a national park on 21 September 1989, and then the first expeditions to the territory were organised (eight expeditions from 1991 to 2017). It was then that an inventory of the rock shelters containing art was drawn up. The first shelter, located on the Ajáju River, was named “*Abrigo de los jaguares*” (Shelter of the Jaguars) and other shelters were then studied.

## **3 Outstanding Universal Value, integrity and authenticity**

### **Comparative analysis**

The State Party compares the nominated property to other rock art sites on the World Heritage List, of which 30 are presented in a comparative table. Of the thirty sites, four are briefly presented and compared to Chiribiquete: Kakadu National Park (Australia), Rock Art of the Sierra of San Francisco (Mexico), Cueva de las Manos (Argentina) and the National Park of Serra da Capivara (Brazil). Although not included in the comparative table, the Facatativá Archaeological Park (Colombia) is also briefly described. With the exception of Serra da Capivara, none of these sites is directly

compared with the nominated property.

At the request of ICOMOS, the State Party compares, in the additional information provided in February 2018, the nominated property with Serra da Capivara and Brazilian rock art sites attributable to the Nordeste tradition. The State Party highlights the stylistic, thematic and cultural links with one of its sub-traditions (Seridó), which it considers to be related to the Ajáju phase of Chiribiquete. The distribution of these rock pictographs is said to be linked to the same cultural group.

ICOMOS points out that the number of declared sites for the Serra da Capivara in Brazil is roughly 300, which is considerably more than the number of sites in the Chiribiquete area. Although the creators of the pictographs and the period from which they date are still open to question, ICOMOS notes that this comparison of the rock art sites attributable to the Nordeste tradition does point to stylistic, thematic and cultural links.

ICOMOS notes that it is hard to fully assess the specificity of Chiribiquete in relation to the Brazilian sites, which have been closely studied for decades, because the state of research of the Colombian site is relatively recent.

The importance of a region from the viewpoint of rock art is not only measured by the number of sites it contains, but also by the quality of the information they can give us, by their artistic value, and – in rare cases such as Chiribiquete – by their role in the life of local communities.

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

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#### **Justification of Outstanding Universal Value**

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

- The nominated property and its rock art sites are characteristic of a biodiversity that is specific to the western Amazon basin, the Orinoco Basin and the Guyanese Basin.
- The rock art is of great artistic, technical and cosmogonic value, and bears witness to the indigenous communities that have occupied the Amazon for millennia.
- The rock art is associated with the earliest periods of human settlement in South America, perhaps around 20,000 BCE, with several subsequent periods of use.
- The rock art at Chiribiquete embodies a specific local cultural tradition. It bears witness to ancient shamanic practices closely linked to the regional flora and fauna, and particularly to the jaguar, as a symbol of power, fertility and strength.

- The property is considered to be a sacred ceremonial site and the centre of the world for communities of more than twenty indigenous linguistic families of the western Amazon basin, independently of their linguistic affiliation. References to the property have also been found in the ethnography of extinct ethnic groups.
- The property is a centre of cultural expression, education and dissemination of ecological and cultural knowledge for the western Amazon and perhaps also a site influencing other sites outside Amazonia and in the Guyanese Basin.
- The property represents one of the rare cases in which nomadic indigenous communities still live there today, voluntarily isolated and without contact with the modern world, and make rock paintings of pictographs reflecting ancient rituals with profound cosmogonic implications.

The chronological attribution of the paintings and the assertion of the existence of a sequence of rock art led ICOMOS to request that the State Party should revise its justification of Outstanding Universal Value, avoiding wording such as “the most ancient” and “the only one in the world”, and the State Party has done so. In the additional information provided on 27 February 2018, the State Party has also stated that other dating techniques will be used to confirm this hypothesis.

ICOMOS considers that the justification of Outstanding Universal Value is appropriate.

#### **Integrity and authenticity**

##### **Integrity**

The State Party reports that the property has been maintained in optimum condition in terms of conservation, as a result of its isolated location and the fact that ancestral cultural rules have restricted access and the painting of rock art. The sacred nature of the property has ensured a high level of territorial isolation over a very extended area, and this sacred status has not been disputed by any of the indigenous communities in the areas on the edge of the property. The State Party stresses that as the dynamics of peasant agricultural penetration have been restricted, the rock art sites have remained inaccessible. All the sites documented during the scientific expeditions are intact and untouched, except for present-day pictorial representations, which are probably attributable to indigenous communities living in isolated areas inside the property boundaries. The original rules and laws of the indigenous groups restricting access to the property, combined with the conservation measures devised by the State Party, mean that its integrity will continue to be protected.

In the additional information provided on 27 February 2018, the State Party states that the boundaries of the nominated property include the most significant natural and cultural attributes for the transmission of the proposed Outstanding Universal

Value, while making due allowance for the autonomy of the indigenous groups in the buffer zone and the agreements concluded with them. The State Party indicates that the SPNN (System of National Natural Parks), the ICANH (Colombian Institute of Anthropology and History) and the Colombian armed forces are collaborating with each other to maintain control of the property, and protect its buffer zone from deforestation and invasive production practices.

The strategies implemented include the promotion of eco-tourism in the neighbouring region of La Lindosa, as a way of easing pressure from tourism inside the park; the creation and enlargement of reserves for indigenous groups; and the introduction of sustainable development practices in peasant communities living near the buffer zone.

ICOMOS notes that the total surface area of the nominated property and buffer zone enables satisfactory preservation of its integrity. No infrastructure has been built and none is planned.

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ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity have been met.

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#### Authenticity

The nominated sites are authentic in terms of their design and their materials, their situation and their setting, their function and the associated spiritual traditions, which are still extant today.

ICOMOS considers that the chronological attribution of the paintings, and the assertion that they constitute a continuous rock art sequence, will need to be confirmed in the future, in view of the dating problem described earlier. This does not mean, however, that the rock art itself is not authentic, but only that there are questions about the ways in which the rock art should be interpreted.

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ICOMOS considers that the conditions of authenticity have been met.

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ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met.

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#### Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criterion (iii) and natural criteria (viii), (ix) and (x).

*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 has been revised by the State Party and it is justified by the notion that the nominated property, associated with the first periods of human settlement in South America, bears witness to the creative genius of the first inhabitants of the Amazon. It is one of the rare examples of rock art with *tepuis* in the midst of the

Amazonian forest, and where the same cultural tradition continues to be passed on by communities who have had no contact with modern society, or who voluntarily live in an isolated location. The rock art is of great artistic, technical and cosmogonic value, and bears the traces of ancient shamanic rituals of the north-west Amazon. The iconographic inventory, dominated by the allegorical figure of the jaguar, and its archaeological context, makes the property an illustration of the nomadic lifestyle of Palaeolithic hunter-gatherers, and is particularly focused on the interaction between humankind and its environment.

ICOMOS considers that the first inhabitants of the Amazon practised their art on the rock walls of Chiribiquete. These ancient paintings bear exceptional witness to their world vision. Chiribiquete is today still considered sacred by several groups, and it is designated as the mythical "Home of the Animals".

ICOMOS notes that the site is outstanding because of the rare qualities both of the natural environment and of the human art: the rare *tepuí* rock formation; the large number of painted rock shelters; the diversity of the motifs, which are often realistic; the chronological depth and persistence up to the present day of the purported frequentation and use of the sites by isolated communities.

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ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

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ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets the conditions of integrity and authenticity, and meets criterion (iii).

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#### Description of the attributes

The attributes expressing the Outstanding Universal Value of the property are the rock art sites, their artistic value, their role in the life of local communities and their landscape environment. More than 75,234 rock pictographs have today been identified on the walls of 60 rock shelters of various dimensions at the foot of the *tepuis*. The other archaeological sites in the inventory (particularly the ancient *malocas* or community houses, and the "Amazonian dark earth" sites that are vestiges of a buried occupation surface which is rich in carbon and organic matter, on which a deposit of waste has accumulated) are also associated with the values of the nominated property.

## 4 Factors affecting the property

The development pressures include the sporadic incursion of tourists without the required authorisation around the northern (Cerro Campano) and south-eastern boundaries (Puerto Abeja) of the property, and the presence of settlers near the River Apaporis suspected of looking for new areas for the growing of illicit crops. In the buffer zone, the main areas of deforestation are in the Meta-Guaviare and San José del Guaviare-

Calamar sectors.

The north and south-west sectors (Caguán axis) are affected by illegal activities (conversion of forests into prairies to be sold off, conversion of forested zones into pasture for the extensive rearing of cattle, illegal alluvial mining, coca growing and subsistence crop growing), and by legal activities actively encouraged by the State (exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons, construction of a section of the “Marginal de la Selva” trunk road, and the granting of mining permits). Amongst these concerns, the most critical is the extension of the settlement fronts in the northern sectors (townships of Calamar, El Retorno and San José del Guaviare, in the department of Guaviare), the Caguán axis (township of Guaviare) and the Caguán axis (township of Cartagena del Chairá, in the department of Caquetá).

Landslides on the banks of the rivers in the property are frequent, and are caused by flow dynamics and the sandy soil. From an archaeological viewpoint (rock art), this phenomenon can be considered as a factor of instability and deterioration, given the characteristics of the crystalline and sand subsoil of the *tepuis*, which – in some places – have large accumulations of rocks whose stability could potentially be affected by telluric movements of magnitude.

Tourists occasionally visit the protected area without official authorisation, either by air (aircraft or helicopters rented at Villavicencio and San José del Guaviare) or by river (via the northern sector of Cerro Campana de Calamar or via the south-eastern sector from Araracuara to Solano). Such visits do not include rock art sites in areas that are remote and hard to access. Nevertheless, they constitute a threat for isolated indigenous communities. To lessen this phenomenon, the national natural parks have begun to introduce control and surveillance procedures in the airspace of the property.

ICOMOS considers that the isolation of the property, and its relative inaccessibility, are relative guarantees of its preservation. Although they are not currently taking place, potential exploitation of hydrocarbons and mining, along with other factors, such as intensive deforestation to enable farming or direct colonisation, could affect the property, and should not be underestimated.

ICOMOS notes that the region in which the nominated property lies has traditionally been used for illicit growing of coca. In view of the official disarmament of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC), ICOMOS considers that the region in which the nominated property lies is engaged in a peace process, and that armed conflict no longer limits the protection of the buffer zone. The region has a set of integrated strategies aimed at ensuring the governance of the region and offering socio-productive alternatives for inhabitants so as to combat deforestation and illicit crop growing.

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ICOMOS considers that the main threats to the property are development pressures in or near the buffer zone, and tourism.

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## **5 Protection, conservation and management**

### **Boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone**

The boundaries of the nominated property follow natural topographic features. The property is divided into several management zones, each with distinct conservation objectives, based on the proven presence of isolated indigenous communities, the most restrictive zoning (intangible zones 1, 2 and 3), or based on its archaeological or ecological potential (primitive zones 1, 2, 3 and 4). A final category (high use density or HD zone) is linked to the infrastructure needed for logistical and operational support of research projects developed in the protected area.

The buffer zone includes the immediate environment of the nominated property and contains seven indigenous reserves.

It should be emphasised that, on the map of sites and zones of cultural interest, two archaeological sites (sector 2), and several potential rock art zones (sectors 3, 4 et 5), are located in the buffer zone.

ICOMOS encourages the State Party to subdivide the buffer zone into sectors, as proposed in the management plan and as already done for the nominated property, so as to combat potential pressures and threats linked to the advance of the agricultural frontier, illegal extraction activities, non-authorised tourism and road building.

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ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the nominated property and the buffer zone are adequate.

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### **Ownership**

The nominated property belongs to the Colombian State.

### **Protection**

The property was declared a national park by virtue of Agreement no. 0045 of 21 September 1989 by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (formerlyINDERENA), and then approved by the Ministry of Agriculture (Executive Resolution No. 120). The initially protected area, in the departments of Guaviare and Caquetá, had a surface area of 1,298,955 ha.

The buffer zone consists entirely of indigenous reserves and the Amazonia Forest Reserve. The zones surrounding the protected area are a Type A Forest Reserve in which mining is prohibited (Resolution No. 1518 of 2012, issued by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Mines).

In 2013, the boundaries of the nominated property were extended towards the townships of Cartagena del Chairá, San Vicente del Caguán and Solano in Caquetá, and Calamar in Guaviare, by some 1,483,399 ha, more than doubling the total surface area to 2,782,354 ha (Resolution no. 1038 of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development).

ICOMOS notes that the local communities whose territories lie in the buffer zone still follow the traditional forms of organisation that have ensured the protection and conservation of the property over a long period of time.

ICOMOS considers that a form of combined protection, incorporating both traditional and institutional forms of stewardship, would be a very important advantage in terms of ensuring the involvement of local populations and increasing their awareness and their participation in the safeguarding and management of the nominated property.

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ICOMOS considers that the legal protection in place and that the traditional protection measures for the property are adequate.

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### **Conservation**

The State Party considers that the nominated property has been maintained in a very good state of conservation because of its geographical isolation and the absence of external human intrusion. Apart from non-contacted groups who probably still produce paintings, the indigenous groups of the region stay away from the property because of its sacred status. The sites have not been affected by any anthropogenic alteration, but the international recognition of the site could give rise to a problematic increase in tourism.

The State Party has adopted a non-intervention policy so as not to interfere with the significance of the sites for indigenous communities. Decree Law 4633 of 2011 stipulates that “indigenous peoples in initial contact have the right to live freely and according to their culture in their ancestral territories”. Other legal regulations provide further support for the fundamental rights of indigenous peoples, particularly the self-determination of voluntarily isolated peoples (Decree law 2333 of 2014, National Development Plan 2014-2018, Caquetá Department Development Plan 2016-2019). ICOMOS considers that this approach is adequate, although appropriate monitoring is necessary.

An exhaustive list of conservation priorities has thus been drawn up, setting out the main intrinsic qualities of the property.

ICOMOS notes that few details have been provided about the elements of the property that have been documented, or about where the inventories are kept. In response to a request by ICOMOS, the State Party has stated that the archaeological investigations carried out cover roughly 10% to 15% of the nominated property. It

should be stressed that, in the first nomination dossier (submitted in 2004), an inventory of 43 rock art sites, containing some 20,000 paintings, had been drawn up. The additional information provided by the State Party indicates a new inventory of 60 sites, containing 75,234 pictographs. The 17 rock art sites recently inventoried and updated thus contain some 55,234 previously unseen paintings and engravings (more than double the number of the first inventory), which means these are major sites of the greatest importance.

In the additional information, the State Party indicates that some rock art sites have been studied directly on-site, and that others have only been studied by aerial survey, because of access difficulties. ICOMOS notes that it is necessary to know whether the sites inspected by helicopter have subsequently been studied directly on-site. If this is not the case, the inventory method used to count the rock art pictographs must be stated (particularly in the case of panels bearing several thousand paintings).

The additional information states that high-resolution photographs have been taken to document the rock art sites, and that a georeferenced data-base of Colombian archaeological sites can be consulted online. While welcoming these new initiatives, ICOMOS notes that a more detailed inventory must be drawn up as a basis for monitoring and conservation, in view of the complexity and number of rock art pictographs indicated for some sites (some 8500 for the Los Lagunas site alone).

ICOMOS considers that the photographic documentation, as it stands, is inadequate as a rock art inventory. It is important that the photographs be processed using a computer graphics system so as to create a systematic survey, as an inaccurate or partial inventory may lead to interpretations that are open to question, or to overinterpretation of a pictograph or of an entire site.

ICOMOS notes that the archaeological research has concentrated on the north-western sector, particularly in the *tepui* zones. The forested lowlands have remained totally unexplored. In the additional information, the State Party indicates that archaeological investigations are planned in the central and southern zones of the nominated property, and in its buffer zone. Ethnographic surveys are also planned in the buffer zone.

ICOMOS notes that the research would benefit from a multi-disciplinary and international approach and recommends that the “Strategic Priorities and Guidelines for archaeological and ethnographic research” drawn up by the ICANH (20 May 2016) be used as a basis for the monitoring and conservation of the property, particularly for the preparation of a more detailed inventory of the archaeological sites.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation of the property is satisfactory. ICOMOS recommends that the “Strategic Priorities and Guidelines for archaeological and ethnographic research” drawn up by the ICANH be used as a basis for the monitoring and conservation of the property, particularly for the preparation of a more detailed inventory of the archaeological sites.

## Management

Management structures and processes, including traditional management processes

The property is administered by the SPNN (System of National Natural Parks). The authority in charge of the archaeological sites is ICANH (Colombian Institute of Anthropology and History). To ensure their conservation, their monitoring is based on the principle of minimum intervention and the safeguarding of the transmission of ancestral knowledge.

Policy framework: management plans and arrangements, including visitor management and presentation

A management plan, drawn up by the System of National Natural Parks of Colombia, is in place for the period 2016-2020. Two aspects are prioritised. The first is the overlapping of the Chiribiquete National Park with territories that are not recognised as reserves. The second is the overlapping with territories that are non-contacted or in voluntary isolation. For this purpose, concertation efforts have been undertaken with the seven indigenous reserves situated in the buffer zone of the nominated property. In the additional information, the State Party points out that a unanimous consensus was obtained in July 2017.

As there are no direct pressures inside the property, a large proportion of the management is implemented in the buffer zone by the System of National Natural Parks and ICANH (Colombian Institute of Anthropology and History). The management of the buffer zone is intended in particular to prevent the extension of zones of settlement - south of Meta, north of Guaviare and in the foothills of Caquetá and Putumayo – up to the protected zone, which includes the Amazonian Forest Reserve in the departments of Guaviare and Caquetá. The State Party has recently taken significant legal steps to protect the isolated indigenous communities in the region.

According to the nomination, the management plan strategies are as follows: the implementation of an inter-institutional coordination strategy at national, regional and local level for the objectives of conservation of the property and the definition of its role in land management and public policy in the Colombian Amazon; the implementation of an environmental management strategy for the Amazonian Forest Reserve in the property's buffer zone; the implementation of a joint strategy between the System of National Natural Parks (SPNN) and the indigenous authorities to

coordinate the conservation of the southern sector of the property; the prevention of possible contact between the local non-indigenous communities and other external agents, on one hand, and members of isolated communities, on the other; the implementation of an inter-institutional coordination strategy concerning the possible negative impacts on the property of illegal activities in the buffer zone; the continuation of archaeological research as a key factor for amplifying the management and zoning measures.

ICOMOS notes that the management of the protected area has to deal with transformations linked to the advance of the agricultural frontier towards the property, the development of illegal extraction activities, unauthorised tourism, and road building on the edge of the buffer zone. Actions to put an end to these activities are carried out in conjunction with the competent authorities, under the supervision of the Ministry of the Environment, as part of the Visión Amazonia strategy, an initiative conducted by the Colombian government with international cooperation organisations to reduce deforestation in Amazonia by 2020, and encourage a model of sustainable development, with low carbon emissions, for the region.

Tourism, including eco-tourism, is not currently authorised inside the property. The activities that are authorised are primarily protection, research and monitoring. As part of its tourism strategy, the State Party has proposed the site of La Lindosa in the north, in an effort to prevent visitors from entering Chiribiquete and its buffer zone. Covered by the global management process of the nominated property, the site of La Lindosa has similar characteristics and similar natural and cultural values.

ICOMOS considers that, if the inscription of the nominated property gave rise to an increase in tourist numbers, negative collateral effects would be possible for non-contacted indigenous groups. ICOMOS recommends that the preventive measures in place should be strictly applied.

The State Party indicates that the total budget allocated to property management was US\$157,480 in 2016. The State Party stresses that it would be able to grant additional funds, doubling this budget. The nomination dossier states that the main focus of the Visión Amazonia project is Chiribiquete National Park. This project, which is funded with a subsidy of US\$10.4 million, has the support of the Global Environment Facility and international donors.

## Involvement of the local communities

The property continues to be revered and frequented today by indigenous groups, both in the buffer zone (inside and outside the indigenous reserves) and, according to the nomination dossier, probably inside the property boundaries. The indigenous communities in the environs have identified several hills, mountains and



rivers as sacred places that must be preserved. Furthermore, non-contacted groups are believed to occasionally visit the rock shelters to paint motifs. The property thus embodies a living indigenous American world.

ICOMOS notes that the involvement and participation of the communities in the buffer zone who are concerned by the nomination process are essential. The management of the property includes respect for customary practices with regard to access to the property, and indicates in detail the actions under way and recent actions to safeguard this knowledge and the sacred status of the property, as defined by the Amazon Area Directorate in the management scenarios for the protected areas of the national natural parks (DTAM, 2011).

In the additional information, the State Party emphasises that the indigenous reserves in the buffer zone have been directly involved by means of a collective process of analysis and reflection, and have expressed strong support for the nomination process.

ICOMOS considers that the indigenous communities play an important role in the protection of Chiribiquete. In a territory as huge as that covered by the nominated property and its buffer zone, it is hard to arrive at a consensus, particularly because of the guerrilla activity that took place in the region until just a few years ago.

ICOMOS emphasises that in this process, it is necessary to support the indigenous and non-indigenous communities who live in the region. Local populations need economic alternatives to illicit crops and to other practices that are a threat to forest conservation. ICOMOS considers that a basic socio-economic study is necessary to evaluate the needs of the local communities situated in the buffer zone.

ICOMOS notes that the peace process must be consolidated, for it will be impossible to develop eco-tourism and cultural tourism in a region which is not secure.

ICOMOS considers that the management system for the property is adequate, but that measures are necessary to consolidate and reinforce research and the development of projects to enhance the natural and cultural heritage in the buffer zone, as proposed in the management plan. ICOMOS notes that a socio-economic study will have to be undertaken to evaluate the needs of local communities situated in the buffer zone. The preventive measures in place to prevent possible contact between local non-indigenous communities and other external agents, on the one hand, and members of isolated communities on the other, must be strictly applied.

## 6 Monitoring

The State Party has drawn up a protocol for monitoring and evaluating the state of conservation of the rock art in the national park, based on the study of some thirty rock shelters between 2015 and 2017. The structure of the protocol is currently being established, and the protocol is being experimentally applied to the rock shelters examined over the last 20 months. It evaluates the possible effects of natural threats (referring to hydrological, climatic, geochemical, geomorphological, geophysical and biological components), anthropogenic threats (tourism, mining, construction, agriculture and livestock), and can provide an estimation of the degree of impact (current and potential) on a scale from 1 (lowest magnitude) to 5 (highest magnitude). For example, the monitoring of the deterioration of rock art by insects provides a key indicator for the measurement of the state of conservation of the rock art at microscopic level. This type of surveillance supplements the large-scale surveillance of the conservation of the property.

In the additional information, the State Party indicates that a minimum intervention strategy has been adopted, in view of the state of conservation of the rock art pictographs and the fact that Chiribiquete is reportedly still visited today by non-contacted indigenous groups.

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ICOMOS considers that the monitoring system is adequate.

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## 7 Conclusions

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets the conditions of integrity and authenticity, and meets cultural criterion (iii). ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

International recognition of the property could have a profound impact on the nature of the property and above all on the well-being of the non-contacted groups living in the surrounding areas. Although the State Party is aware of the dangers that pose a particular threat to isolated indigenous groups, ICOMOS notes that the preventive measures in place need to be implemented with great rigour.

## 8 Recommendations

ICOMOS recommends that the World Heritage Committee adopt the following draft decision, given that it will be appropriately harmonised with the IUCN recommendations relating to the evaluation of this mixed site on the basis of natural criteria, and will be included in the working document WHC/18/42.COM/8B.

### Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that Chiribiquete National Park – “The Maloca of the Jaguar”, Colombia, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of **cultural criterion (iii)**.

### Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

#### Brief synthesis

Chiribiquete National Park, situated in the north-west of the Colombian Amazon, is Colombia's largest protected zone. Some 75,000 rock pictographs have been listed on the walls of 60 rock shelters at the foot of *tepui*s. The portrayals are interpreted as scenes of hunting, battles, dances and ceremonies, all of which are linked to a purported cult of the jaguar, seen as a symbol of power and fertility. The practices are thought to reflect a coherent system of ancient sacred beliefs, forming the basis and explanation of relations between the cosmos, nature and man. Chiribiquete is believed to be visited even today by indigenous groups that have no contact with the outside world.

**Criterion (iii):** The rock art sites of Chiribiquete hold an exceptional testimony, by the large number of painted rock shelters around the foot of rare *tepu*i rock formations, by the diversity of motifs, which are often realistic, and by the chronological depth and persistence up to the present-day of the purported frequentation of the sites by isolated communities. The first inhabitants of Amazonia practised their art on the rock walls of Chiribiquete, and these paintings constitute an exceptional testimony of their vision of the world. Chiribiquete is even today considered to be of mythical importance by several groups and is designated the “Home of the Animals”.

#### Integrity

Chiribiquete National Park contains all the elements necessary for the expression of its Outstanding Universal Value, and is of an appropriate size for the satisfactory preservation of the conditions of integrity. No infrastructure has been built and none is planned. The isolated location of these sites, which are hard to access, and the cultural restrictions on access and the making of paintings ensure the comprehensive representation of the characteristics and processes that express the importance of the property. The System of National Natural Parks (SPNN), the Colombian Institute of Anthropology and History (ICANH) and the Colombian armed forces collaborate with each other to maintain control of the property and preserve its buffer zone from

deforestation and invasive production practices.

#### Authenticity

The rock art sites are authentic in terms of situation and setting, intangible culture, spirit and impression, materials, form and conception. The chronological attribution of the paintings, and the assertion of a continuous sequence of rock art will need to be confirmed, but this does not mean that the rock art itself lacks authenticity, but merely that there are questions about its interpretation.

#### Management and protection requirements

Chiribiquete National Park is legally protected by the Colombian government, as a national park that was listed in 1989. The property is administered by the System of National Natural Parks (SPNN). The authority responsible for the management of the archaeological sites is the Colombian Institute of Anthropology and History (ICANH). The buffer zone is made up entirely of reserves for indigenous groups and the Amazonia Forest Reserve. The zones surrounding the protected area are Type A Forest Reserve Zones inside which mining is prohibited.

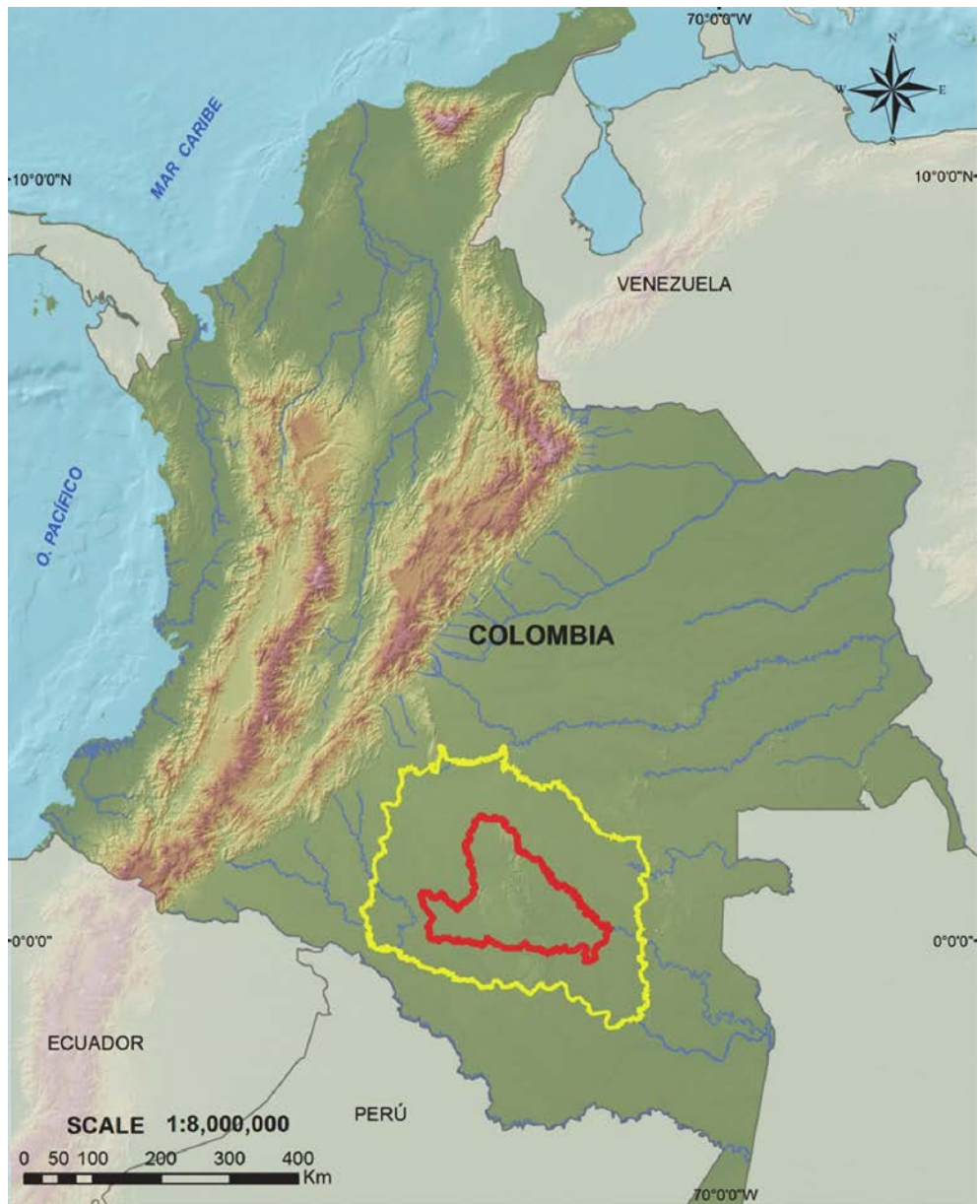
The local communities whose territories lie in the buffer zone are still based on the traditional forms of organisation that have ensured the protection and conservation of the property over a long period of time. To guarantee the conservation of the archaeological sites, their monitoring is based on minimum intervention parameters and the safeguarding of the transmission of ancestral knowledge. Major legal measures have been taken to protect the isolated indigenous communities in the region. The management of the property includes respect for customary practices with regards to access to the property, as defined by the Amazon Area Directorate in the management scenarios for protected areas in national natural parks (DTAM, 2011).

A management plan, drawn up by Colombia's System of National Natural Parks, is in place for the period 2016-2020. Two aspects are prioritised: the first is the overlapping of Chiribiquete National Park with territories that are not recognised reserves; the second is overlapping with territories that have not been contacted or are in a situation of voluntary isolation. Given that there are no direct pressures inside the property, a significant proportion of the management is implemented in the buffer zone by the System of National Natural Parks (SPNN) and by the Colombian Institute of Anthropology and History (ICANH). Tourism, including eco-tourism, is not authorised inside the property boundaries.

**Additional recommendations**

ICOMOS recommends that the State Party should give consideration to the following points:

- a) Continuing the archaeological investigations, the inventorying and the documentation of the rock art sites inside the boundaries of the property and the buffer zone,
- b) Using the “Strategic Priorities and Guidelines for archaeological and ethnographic research” drawn up by the Columbian Institute of Anthropology and History (20 May 2016) as the basis for the monitoring and conservation of the property, particularly in preparing a more detailed inventory of the archaeological sites,
- c) Keeping the state of conservation of the rock art sites under surveillance, and take the necessary measures to ensure appropriate conservation, while taking account of their importance for the communities living inside the property boundaries,
- d) Supporting the development of projects to enhance the natural and cultural heritage in the buffer zone, as proposed in the management plan,
- e) Undertaking a basic socio-economic study to assess the needs of local communities situated in the buffer zone,
- f) Strictly applying the preventive measures in place so as to prevent possible contact between non-indigenous local communities or other external agents and the members of isolated communities who have no contact with the outside world;



Map showing the boundaries of the nominated property





Panoramic view of an archaeological site with rock art



Rock art