



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Annual Meeting of the Gorham's Cave Complex UNESCO World Heritage Site International Research and Conservation Committee**

The annual meeting of the International Research and Conservation Committee (IRCC) was held on Thursday 23rd January 2020 at the Gibraltar National Museum. The meeting was chaired by Professor Minja Yang, former Deputy Director of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre in Paris. Other members present were Professor Geoff Bailey (University of York), Professor Mina Weisntein Evron (Haifa University) and Dr Juan Jose Negro (Estacion Biologica Doñana).

The role of the IRCC is to examine and evaluate the research and conservation aspects of the work at the Gorham's Cave Complex and to advise the Minister for Heritage on matters related to research and conservation at this site. The IRCC was created as part of the nomination for World Heritage Status and was the initiative of Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar. With the enactment of the Heritage and Antiquities Act (2018) and the Gorham's Cave Complex Regulations (2019) the IRCC now has formal statutory status.

The six-hour meeting covered a wide range of subjects, including a revision of the 2015-19 research and conservation strategy, the 2016-2020 archaeological excavation plan and a roadmap for potential networking to aid human evolution sites in developing countries. The committee was also appraised of recent activities. The committee was pleased with the progress made to date and with plans for the 2020-2024 period.

Commenting on the meeting, Minister for Heritage Professor John Cortes said that having an independent committee of internationally-renowned experts, something which had been done at the initiative of HM Government of Gibraltar, ensured that the work being done in our World Heritage Site was of the highest possible standard. The IRCC was there to advise him as Minister under current heritage legislation and he was delighted that the meeting had been extremely positive. He thanked the members of the IRCC for their commitment and support to Gibraltar and its special World Heritage Site.