

RUSSIAN ROCK TOWERS ADDED TO UNESCO'S HERITAGE LIST



list.

Russia's Lena Pillars have recently been added to UNESCO's World Heritage List. The natural rock formation located in the north of the Sakha Republic, were formed over thousands of years by extreme temperatures. These rock towers were created by the freezing winters and boiling hot summers, and has led to the sparsely populated region being the location for several diamond mines. The decision has ended long discussions on potential sites added to the

Indeed, the rock formation had been nominated back in 2007 by the Russians, and its eventual inclusion means that it becomes the twenty fifth Russian site to be added to the World Heritage List.

However, despite its inclusion, UNESCO have been criticized by environmental group, Greenpeace because there are no less than five Russian sites already on the List which are currently in danger, but UNESCO have not approved proposals for their restoration.

Some of the sites in danger include Lake Baikal which is polluted by a cellulose plant, the Virgin Komi Forests that are being invaded by gold prospectors and the Western Caucasus has a ski resort being developed very close to it. However, according to Greenpeace, UNESCO have in their defence stated that these sites would be declared as being under threat from 2013 if the Russian government did not initiate some form of control in preservation.

At the United Nation's AGM in St Petersburg, its cultural body added to its already exhaustive list of the world's most precious manmade and natural sites. No less than 26 natural and cultural sites were added to this list at the meeting, with a highly controversial choice being the inclusion of the believed birthplace of Jesus Christ, the Church of the Nativity and Pilgrimage Route to Bethlehem.

Also included on this list was the Israeli occupied West Bank, due to its extensive water damage, although this was greatly opposed by Israel. The previous year, funding had been cut to UNESCO by the United States, due to the recognition of Palestine as being a full member state.

Other additions to the site included Liverpool's famous docklands area, which is to undergo a large scale redevelopment.

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