

Dra. Gabriela Molina Aguilar
Secretary for Culture of the State of Michoacan

We are contacting you in relation to the latest *Periodic Report of the Pirekua as an element of the Representative List* sent to the Intangible Cultural Heritage section of the UNESCO. As the Periodic Report is the most important means by which the UNESCO can follow up those elements on the Intangible Cultural Heritage lists, we wish to express the following:

FIRST. As on other occasions, institutions of different levels have failed to inform us, or consult us, or allow us to participate in the elaboration of said report. Consequently, this report does not have our consent, or that of our communities.

SECOND. We should remember that institutions at state and federal level have not carried out the consultation with pirericha and Purepecha musicians for the inclusion of the pirekua on the Representative List, as previously promised.

THIRD. As a consequence of the above, there is no Safeguarding Plan (as established in the 2003 Convention). The plan sent to the UNESCO in the File 00398 does not represent our opinions as it was elaborated without our participation and consent.

FOURTH. According to the point above, the actions reported in the Report, are not part of a safeguarding plan where key aspects are defined (for example who the declaration should serve, or which kind of pirekua are to be safeguarded), actions, processes, goals and indicators which would allow us to evaluate these actions in the short and long term. Above all we should underline that the actions carried out were done without the participation of the pirericha.

FIFTH. It is of concern that the Report fails to mention the serious problems confronted by those of us who are dedicated to this lyrical-musical tradition such as: the decrease in the use of Purepecha in our communities, the lack of economic resources to carry out fundamental activities like musical training or cultural events in our own communities, and in our own language, tourist exploitation and the spectacularization of our music and culture frequently promoted by the institutions themselves. We face other problems related to our health and the lack of economic support to deal with the effects of road accidents which occur when we travel to other communities to present our music. Our families, especially our wives, receive no economic or institutional support when we die.

SIXTH. It is important to point out that the different initiatives to support this song such as recordings, the organization of pirekua events in communities and the education of new musicians and pirericha are the result of our own efforts and are generally done through our own resources.

As a consequence of the above and in order to advance towards a true recognition of heritage and the safeguarding of our song we propose the following:

1. The creation of a *Group of Community Action in Benefit of Pirericha*, made up of pirericha and Purepecha musicians from communities, chosen from those communities which maintain the Purepecha language, these being where the song retains its community social meanings.
2. This group should direct and articulate the actions carried out for the elaboration of the Safeguarding Plan. It should be able to count on economic resources given by public institutions to carry out its work, which will be focused on achieving the active participation of pirericha in the elaboration of safeguarding strategies. The Culture Secretaries (at the federal and state level), the National Institute of Indigenous Peoples and the National Institute of Anthropology and History, amongst others, should consult this group before carrying out safeguarding actions.
3. It is important that public officials from institutions consult and take into account researchers, academics and specialists who have carried out studies on this lyrical-musical tradition and who have knowledge of the cultural policies relating to intangible cultural heritage.
4. Pirericha and musicians should be kept informed about actions carried out for the safeguarding of the pirekua. To this end the media should be used, as well as visits to the communities as well as a web page where all information relating to the inclusion of the pirekua on the Representative List should be published. This page should be in Purepecha and Spanish, and should inform about solicitations, actions carried out, dates and places relating to these events, public economic resources invested, etc.
5. We insist on the free, previous and informed consultation of pirericha and musicians about the inclusion of the pirekua on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of the UNESCO, as a sign of respect for our collective rights by the federal and state government.

Purepecha Territory, Mexico, 20th of March, 2022.

Copies sent to:

Alejandra Fraustro, Culture Secretary

Diego Prieto, General Director of the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH)

Celerino Felipe Cruz, Representative of the National Institute for Indigenous Peoples in the State of Michoacan (INPI)

Frédéric Vacheron, Representative for the UNESCO in Mexico

Mirva Aranda Escalante, General Director of the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Heritage for Latin America (CRESPIAL)