

**CALL FOR PAPERS  
5<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL GARIFUNA CONFERENCE**

**“The Island of Balliceaux: Sacred Lands or Economic Opportunity?”**

March 12<sup>th</sup>- 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
Kingstown, St. Vincent and the Grenadines

The island of St. Vincent, known by the Garifuna as Yurumein, is part of a wider Caribbean living Legacy of Indigenous People’s presence, existence and resistance to colonial imperatives within the Americas. It is on this island, now part of the multi-island state of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, that the Garifuna nation, a nation of hybrid indigenous people created from the intermarriage between African and Kalinago peoples was born.

As the conflict between the British Colonial powers and the indigenous Kalinago and Garifuna intensified over control of lands in Yurumein, the Kalinago and Garifuna people resisted, through fierce guerilla warfare, the might of the British military machinery for over a century. Nonetheless, in 1795 the Garifuna surrendered and in 1797 were expelled by force first to the island of Balliceaux , which is now part of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and subsequently to the remote island of Roatan off the coast of Honduras in Central America. The British remained in control of Yurumein, attempting to establish a sugar based economy. This was not very successful. However, the British did manage to develop the island along traditional colonial lines, imposing their language, culture, way of life and institutions . The island became politically independent in 1979 and these social and economic institutions have since been maintained.

The descendants of those 2248 Garifuna persons who were expelled to Central America now number over 300,000 and they have never forgotten the brutal impact of that expulsion . The memory of the loss of their homeland still remains vivid and painful even after more than 200 years. Those Garifuna descendants who mainly reside in Honduras, Belize, Guatemala and Nicaragua and the United States still consider Yurumein their “Spiritual Homeland”, a place to which a pilgrimage must be made at any available opportunity. Yurumein still resonates in songs and mournful laments in ceremonies practiced within the Garifuna culture, especially in relation to the celebrations honoring the ancestors. The central focus of this pain is the island of Balliceaux. Balliceaux is specially revered as a Sacred place as it was here that approximately 2500 of the 4,776 Garifuna who were held in captivity died within a period of six months subsequent to their surrender to the British in 1795.

In 2002 UNESCO proclaimed the Garifuna Heritage and Culture as one of the Intangible Masterpieces of the Heritage of Mankind. In 2007 the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP ) was ratified by the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. In 2016 the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People was concluded by the Organization of American States (OAS). These documents seek to promote the rights of Indigenous People to all aspects of their Heritage and Culture, including protection of Sacred Sites and may provide some new international impetus for implementing and designing cultural preservation programmes. However the National Development priorities of Governments or the domestic legal context and the legal rights of private citizens may impact the exercise of the rights granted under International Conventions. In addition, there needs to be properly documented information on the history, archaeological research and other baseline information required to ground a substantial project for cultural preservation.

For this Conference we are inviting papers by scholars, researchers, practitioners and cultural activists engaged in regional and international development that explore, strategise and/or theorise the relationship between cultural heritage preservation , sacred sites and economic development in the Caribbean. Papers with particular reference to Balliceaux are especially welcome . Papers may include those presented at previous Conferences, Seminars or workshops.

## ***The Garifuna Heritage Foundation***

Subjects may include but are not limited to the following :

- The issue of Yurumein as an Ancestral Homeland and its significance to Garifuna people internationally;
- Exploring the place of Balliceaux within the context of the Vincentian component of the Garifuna Heritage and Culture;
- **Best Practices** for negotiating the use of Heritage Sites or Sacred Sites in the context of National Economic Development objectives ;
- Preservation of land rights and rights to Sacred Places - Land Issues in relation to the Island of Balliceaux ;
- Public Policy and practice in relation to Education or National Development in St. Vincent and the Grenadines in relation to the Garifuna Heritage and culture generally and the significance of the Island of Balliceaux specifically ;
- Opportunities and Challenges for the involvement of the Garifuna diaspora in the development and implementation of sustainable institutional platforms for viable strategies for cultural preservation or economic development on the island of Balliceaux :
- Opportunities and Challenges presented by International Conventions such as the UNDRIP and the OAS Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People for defining strategies in relation to the preservation of the Island of Balliceaux as a Sacred Site;
- Theories and research in relation to the History, Geography and Archaeology of St. Vincent and the Grenadines with special reference to the Island of Balliceaux;
- Proposals/ Strategies for the merging of Cultural Preservation and Development objectives for the Island of Balliceaux.

**Papers:** Participants interested in submitting Papers are asked to submit an Abstract of no more than 300 words and a one-page biography , including Mailing address, Presentation Format, Email address(es) Telephone contacts/phone, and fax number(s) and skype addresses by email to Sherise Browne, IGRC Conference Secretariat, at [yurumeiconference@gmail.com](mailto:yurumeiconference@gmail.com) by **January 15th, 2018** . Papers must keep to a reading time of 15 - 20 minutes (approximately 7 – 8 pages). Participants can submit Papers which have a Practice focus , which describes exemplary practices or programs in the community and which may take the form of a case study, demonstration or technical report. Presentations may also be based on the reporting of original research or on the general application of any theoretical framework.

For more information , call 784-45-62124 or send an email to the above address.