

# **Dances inscribed in the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity**

*A working document prepared by Alkis Raftis*

The International Dance Council CID, being the official organization for dance, presents a list of dances recognized by UNESCO as part of the Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Dances are part of many customs or rituals included either in the Representative List or the Urgent Safeguarding List. We have listed below **only cultural manifestations where dance is the central part**.

Each item includes:

- Name of dance or dance related custom
- Year recognition was granted by UNESCO
- Countries concerned, in alphabetical order

For information of the dances below contact the CID Secretariat or CID Sections in the respective countries.

## **Representative List**

### **2017**

Zaouli, popular music and dance of the Guro communities in Côte d'Ivoire (2017) Côte d'Ivoire

Kushtdepdi rite of singing and dancing (2017) Turkmenistan

Kolo, traditional folk dance (2017) Serbia

Kochari, traditional group dance (2017) Armenia

### **2016**

Almezzmar, drumming and dancing with sticks (2016) Saudi Arabia

Momoeria, New Year's celebration in eight villages of Kozani area, West Macedonia, Greece (2016) Greece

Music and dance of the merengue in the Dominican Republic (2016) Dominican Republic

Rumba in Cuba, a festive combination of music and dances and all the practices associated (2016) Cuba

### **2015**

Alardah Alnajdiyah, dance, drumming and poetry in Saudi Arabia (2015) Saudi Arabia

Lad's dances in Romania (2015) Romania

Marimba music, traditional chants and dances from the Colombia South Pacific region and Esmeraldas Province of Ecuador (2015) Colombia & Ecuador

Three genres of traditional dance in Bali (2015) Indonesia  
Wititi dance of the Colca Valley (2015) Peru

#### **2014**

Baile Chino (2014) Chile  
Capoeira circle (2014) Brazil  
Gwoka: music, song, dance and cultural practice representative of Guadeloupean identity (2014) France  
Kopachkata, a social dance from the village of Dramche, Pijanec (2014) The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia  
Nongak, community band music, dance and rituals in the Republic of Korea (2014) Republic of Korea  
Pujllay and Ayarichi, music and dances of the Yampara culture (2014) Bolivia (Plurinational State of)  
Ritual dance of the royal drum (2014) Burundi  
Tchopa, sacrificial dance of the Lhomwe people of southern Malawi (2014) Malawi  
Traditional Mauritian Sega (2014) Mauritius

#### **2013**

Sankirtana, ritual singing, drumming and dancing of Manipur (2013) India

#### **2012**

Fest-Noz, festive gathering based on the collective practice of traditional dances of Brittany (2012) France  
Venezuela's Dancing Devils of Corpus Christi (2012) Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

#### **2011**

Nijemo Kolo, silent circle dance of the Dalmatian hinterland (2011) Croatia  
Sada Shin Noh, sacred dancing at Sada shrine, Shimane (2011) Japan

#### **2010**

Al-Bar'ah, music and dance of Oman Dhofari valleys (2010) Oman  
Chhau dance (2010) India  
Flamenco (2010) Spain  
Huaconada, ritual dance of Mito (2010) Peru  
Kalbelia folk songs and dances of Rajasthan (2010) India  
Mudiyettu, ritual theatre and dance drama of Kerala (2010) India  
Scissors dance (2010) Peru  
Semah, Alevi-Bektaşî ritual (2010) Turkey

#### **2009**

Akiu no Taue Odori (2009) Japan  
Farmers' dance of China's Korean ethnic group (2009) China  
Nestinarstvo, messages from the past: the Panagyry of Saints Constantine and Helena in the village of Bulgari (2009) Bulgaria  
Tango (2009) Argentina & Uruguay  
Traditional Ainu dance (2009) Japan

#### **2008**

Baltic song and dance celebrations (2008) Estonia & Latvia & Lithuania  
Bistritsa Babi, archaic polyphony, dances and rituals from the Shoplounk region (2008) Bulgaria  
Cocolo dance drama tradition (2008) Dominican Republic  
Lakalaka, dances and sung speeches of Tonga (2008) Tonga  
Language, Dance and Music of the Garifuna (2008) Belize & Guatemala & Honduras & Nicaragua  
The Mask Dance of the Drums from Drametse (2008) Bhutan  
Mbende Jerusarema dance (2008) Zimbabwe  
The Mevlevi Sema Ceremony (2008) Turkey  
Rabinal Achí dance drama tradition (2008) Guatemala  
Royal Ballet of Cambodia (2008) Cambodia  
Samba de Roda of the Recôncavo of Bahia (2008) Brazil  
Slovácko Verbuňk, Recruit Dances (2008) Czech Republic  
Vimbuza Healing Dance (2008) Malawi

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Urgent Safeguarding List**

Taskiwin, martial dance of the western High Atlas (2017) Morocco  
Ma'di bowl lyre music and dance (2016) Uganda  
Isukuti dance of Isukha and Idakho communities of Western Kenya (2014) Kenya  
Bigwala, gourd trumpet music and dance of the Busoga Kingdom in Uganda (2012) Uganda  
Saman dance (2011) Indonesia  
Mongol Biyelgee: Mongolian traditional folk dance (2009) Mongolia

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*

## **What is Intangible Cultural Heritage?**

In the text of the Convention

[Article 2](#) – Definitions

Meetings

[14/17-03-2001, Turin](#): Round table of experts on "Intangible Cultural Heritage – Working Definitions"

[20/23-10-2004, Nara](#): International Conference on « The Safeguarding of Tangible and Intangible Cultural...

According to the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, the intangible cultural heritage (ICH) – or living heritage – is the mainspring of our cultural diversity and its maintenance a guarantee for continuing creativity.

The Convention states that the ICH is manifested, among others, in the following [domains](#):

[Oral traditions and expressions](#) including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage;

[Performing arts](#) (such as traditional music, dance and theatre);

[Social practices, rituals and festive events](#);

[Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe](#);

[Traditional craftsmanship](#).

The 2003 Convention defines ICH as the practices, representations, expressions, as well as the knowledge and skills that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage.

The definition also indicates that the ICH to be safeguarded by this Convention:

- is transmitted from generation to generation;
- is constantly recreated by communities and groups, in response to their environment, their interaction with nature, and their history;
- provides communities and groups with a sense of identity and continuity;
- promotes respect for cultural diversity and human creativity;
- is compatible with international human rights instruments;
- complies with the requirements of mutual respect among communities, and of sustainable development.

The ICH is traditional and living at the same time. It is constantly recreated and mainly transmitted orally. It is difficult to use the term authentic in relation to ICH; some experts advise against its use in relation to living heritage (see the **Yamato Declaration**: [English](#)|[French](#)).

The depository of this heritage is the human mind, the human body being the main instrument for its enactment, or – literally – embodiment. The knowledge and skills are often shared within a community, and manifestations of ICH often are performed collectively.

Many elements of the ICH are endangered, due to effects of globalization, uniformization policies, and lack of means, appreciation and understanding which – taken together – may lead to the erosion of functions and values of such elements and to lack of interest among the younger generations.

The Convention speaks about communities and groups of tradition bearers, without specifying them. Time and again it was stressed by the governmental experts who prepared

the draft of the Convention that such communities have an open character, that they can be dominant or non dominant, that they are not necessarily linked to specific territories and that one person can very well belong to different communities and switch communities.

The Convention introduces, by establishing the Representative List, the idea of “representativeness”. “Representative” might mean, at the same time, representative for the creativity of humanity, for the cultural heritage of States, as well as for the cultural heritage of communities who are the bearers of the traditions in question.

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*

*<https://ich.unesco.org/en/lists#2016>*

*<http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?pg=00002>*

See also the Preamble of the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The present document was compiled for the International Dance Council CID to be posted at its portals: [www.cid-portal.org](http://www.cid-portal.org) and [www.cid-world.org](http://www.cid-world.org)

Prof. Dr. Alkis Raftis  
President