

Who owns remains of new human species Homo naledi discovered in South Africa?

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis.

After the stunning announcement about a new species of human relative found in South Africa, some readers wanted to know: Who owns those bones? Two amateur South African spelunkers found them; an American who lives and works in South Africa led the excavation; and the expedition was underwritten in part by the South African government and the National Geographic Society, headquarters of which are in Washington.

The short answer is: The people of South Africa own the bones, according to the scientists from the expedition into the Rising Star Cave, 30 miles northwest of Johannesburg. The University of the Witwatersrand curates the fossils on behalf of the people of South Africa.

The Cradle of Humankind, the nickname given to the area of South Africa that yielded many hominin fossils during the 20th century, is also a UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) World Heritage Site and as such is governed by its rules.

In July 1998, at a meeting of the Permanent Council of the UNESCO-affiliated International Association for the Study of Human Paleontology in Sun City, South Africa, the issue of taking hominid fossils from their country of origin was discussed. The resolution strongly recommended that fossils remain in the country in which they were discovered, “unless there are compelling scientific reasons which must include the demonstration that the proposed investigations cannot proceed in the foreseeable future in the country of origin.”

Read full, original post: [Scientists shocked the world with a brand new species of man – but who owns the bones?](#)