

Historic Italian cave may collapse

Archaeologists are warning a signature Stone Age cavern in southern Italy, called the Paglicci Cave, is in imminent danger of collapse.

A section of the cave's exterior wall collapsed Tuesday, ANSA reported Wednesday. Vincenzo Paziienza, president of the Paglicci Study Centre, urged incoming Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi and Puglia region President Nichi Vendola for money to secure the cave, the Italian news agency said.

"It's extremely important to safeguard the cave for research to proceed; if the wall collapses completely it will obstruct the entrance to the grotto," Paziienza said.

The cave contains wall paintings from the Paleolithic period and is believed to have been continually inhabited by humans between 200,000 and 11,000 years ago, ANSA said. Archaeologists have found 45,000 objects in the cave, including Cro-Magnon human skeletons, tools and animal bones.

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