

Hazarmerd (IQ037)

Sulaimani – 35.4975°N 45.311663°E

IBA Criteria: **A1**

Area: **607 ha** - Altitude: **912-1260 m**
 Ecoregion: **Zagros Mountains Forest**
Steppe (PA0446)
 Status: **Unprotected**



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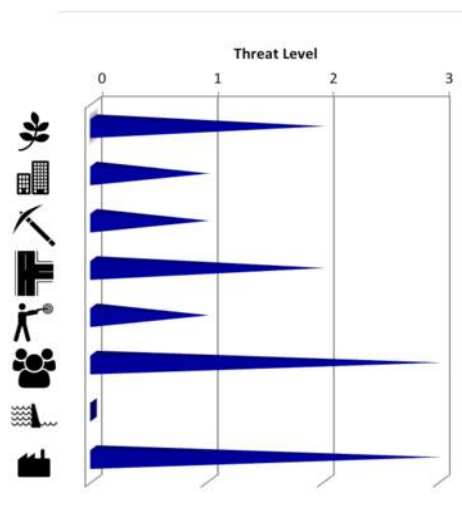
Site Description: This is an agricultural area dominated by foothills and Baranan Mountain ridge that runs roughly east-west and includes the Hazarmerd Cave archaeological site. Close by are the villages of Hazarmerd and Qorkhu, and a stream that is polluted with sewage and garbage from the

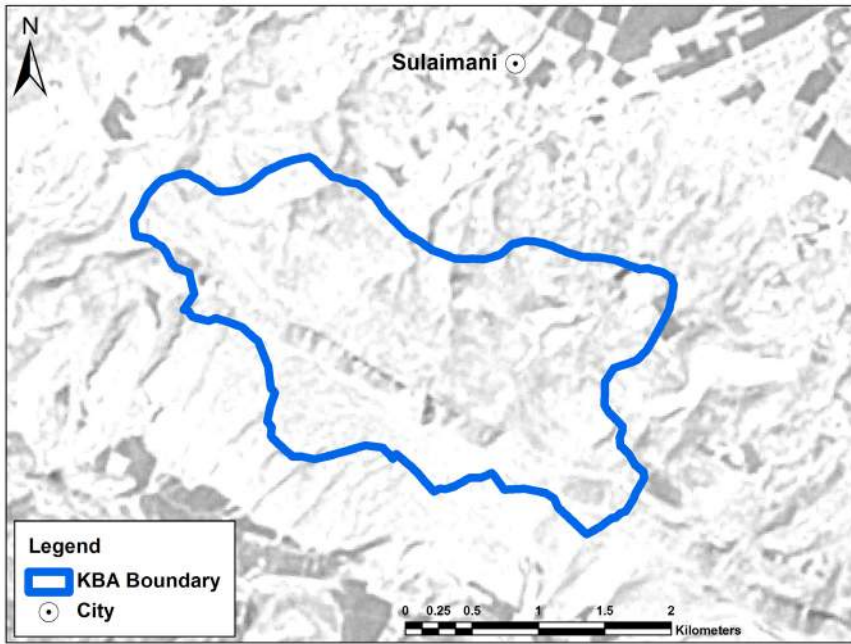
local communities. A rough gravel road switchbacks up close to the cave, which overlooks the city of Sulaimani. This site, with its captivating scenery is used as a hiking and picnic area by many people due to its close proximity to the city.

Important Bird Area Criteria	Observations made in 2010.	
A2. Globally threatened species	Breeding	Wintering/ Passage
Egyptian Vulture <i>Neophron percnopterus</i> (Summer visitor)	5 pairs	

Additional Important Bird Observations: During the surveys 34 species were recorded. Additionally there were four breeding Irano-Turanian and two breeding Mediterranean biome-restricted species but these did not trigger inclusion under criterion A3. European Roller *Coracias garrulous* (Near Threatened) was also breeding.

Conservation Issues: This site is given a very high threat rating due to its popularity as a tourist area especially after the fall of Saddam in 2003. This is causing pollution and disturbance to breeding birds. Agriculture and grazing are practised in the fields below the cliffs. There is a paved road leading partially up the mountain and it is expected that there will be more road construction if the site continues to be of interest to visitors. Housing development is undertaken near the base of the mountain and even close to the cliff. Hunting and energy production are moderately impacting the area.





Recommendations: Recognizing the popularity of this site, education and awareness programmes are the priority actions recommended to regulate the use and the protection of this site.