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## **Cultural Landscape of Hawraman/ Uramanat (Islamic Republic of Iran) No 1647**

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**Official name as proposed by the State Party**  
Cultural Landscape of Hawraman/Uramanat

### **Location**

Provinces of Kurdistan and Kermanshah  
Islamic Republic of Iran

### **Brief description**

The remote and mountainous landscape of Hawraman/Uramanat provides testimony to the traditional culture of the Hawrami people, an agropastoral Kurdish tribe that has inhabited the region since about 3000 BCE.

The nominated serial property is located at the heart of the Zagros Mountains in the provinces of Kurdistan and Kermanshah along the western border of Iran. It is comprised of two components: the Central-Eastern Valley (Zhaverud and Takht, in Kurdistan Province); and the Western Valley (Lahun, in Kermanshah Province). The mode of human habitation in these two valleys has been adapted over millennia to the rough mountainous environment. Tiered steep-slope planning and architecture, gardening on dry-stone terraces, livestock breeding, and seasonal vertical migration are among the distinctive features of local culture and life.

The Hawrami people are a semi-nomadic society, dwelling in lowlands and highlands during different seasons of each year. This migration pattern is dated to the early Neolithic period. The evidence of the Hawraman/Uramanat cultural landscape – stone tools, caves and rock shelters, mounds, remnants of permanent and temporary settlement sites, and workshops, cemeteries, roads, villages, castles, etc. – confirms an uninterrupted habitation of the territory since the Middle Paleolithic period.

The area is also associated with customs, rituals, handicrafts, and folklore related to the dialects, religion and local belief systems, and natural environment, which is exceptional from the point of view of biodiversity and endemism.

### **Category of property**

In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a serial property of two *sites*.

In terms of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (2019) paragraph 47, it has also been nominated as a *cultural landscape*.

## **1 Basic data**

**Included in the Tentative List**  
9 August 2007

### **Background**

This is a new nomination.

### **Consultations and Technical Evaluation Mission**

ICOMOS has consulted its International Scientific Committees members, and several independent experts.

Comments on the natural features of this property and their conservation and management were received from IUCN in November 2020 and have been incorporated into relevant sections of this report.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the property from 21 September to 1 October 2020.

### **Additional information received by ICOMOS**

A letter was sent by ICOMOS to the State Party on 29 September 2020 requesting additional information on the comparative analysis, boundaries, management, and legal protection. A response was sent by the State Party on 13 November 2020 containing clarifications on the requested subjects.

On 17 December 2020, ICOMOS sent an Interim Report to the State Party, which requested further clarification and elaboration by the State Party concerning the agropastoral social system of the Hawrami people, the boundaries of the nominated property, and management arrangements. The State Party responded on 28 February 2021. All responses received throughout the evaluation process are incorporated into the relevant sections below.

**Date of ICOMOS approval of this report**  
18 March 2021

## **2 Description of the property**

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report only provides a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

### **Description and history**

The Cultural Landscape of Hawraman/Uramanat speaks to the Kurdish culture of the Hawrami people, the majority of whom reside in the remote and mountainous landscape of western Iran, and in particular the Zagros Mountains in the provinces of Kurdistan and Kermanshah. The

development of this culture over thousands of years is reflected in cave dwellings and fortress-cities, steep-slope mountain villages, dry-stone terraced agricultural landscapes, and seasonal dwellings for livestock farming and other transhumance infrastructure – attributes of a mixed sedentary-nomadic way of life that continues to the present day. It is also reflected in rich local cultural traditions, including traditional music, clothing, handicrafts, harvest rituals, religious rituals, land use, habitation and vertical migration, water management, dry-stone building, and architectural patterns.

There are four subsistence and migration patterns in the Hawraman/Uramanat region: livestock breeding based on multi-staged migration; livestock farming based on single-staged migration; concentrated gardening and farming; and deconcentrated gardening and farming.

The nominated property is characterized by carefully cultivated hillsides following ancient land divisions and punctuated with rural buildings, hilltop and hillside villages, farms, and settlements. Its tangible features include caves, archaeological sites, mounds, citadels, historic cemeteries, rock carvings and petroglyphs, historic roads, villages, and *Havars* (dry-stone seasonal migration places in the mountain heights where fresh forage for livestock is collected). The principles of the agrarian and semi-nomadic Hawrami life are manifested in the dwelling, building, water, and land management techniques that underpin the villages, *Havars*, agricultural terraces, and local architecture.

Thirteen villages are included within the boundaries of the two serial components: Nav, Sharakan, Najar, Palangan, Abbas Abad, Shian, Zhan, Doulab, Halvan, and Bezlane in the Central-Eastern Valley; and Shalagi, Kelash Lolem, and Qalaji in the Western Valley. They illustrate the diversity and complexity of the Hawrami people's evolutive responses to the scarcity of productive land and soil in their mountainous environment.

The nominated property also boasts a wide range of habitats, resulting in high biodiversity and endemism. The Zagros Mountains form an important part of the Irano-Anatolian biodiversity hotspot, which was identified as a gap in the World Heritage List in the IUCN's 2013 study on terrestrial biodiversity.

Historically, there were three major periods in the development of the Hawraman/Uramanat region: the Neolithic, when troglodytes left their caves and began to build settlements on the nearby plains; the late Chalcolithic and early Bronze Age (approximately 5500 to 1450 BCE), when internal tensions and the needs of stock raising led people to build permanent settlements in the mountainous parts of Hawraman/Uramanat; and the Islamic age (from 651 to the end of the Qajar rule in 1925 CE), when population growth led to a shift toward lower grounds, especially the rugged terrain of the northeast, resulting in the establishment of new villages in these areas. The Hawrami people, among the Kurdish

tribes, are believed to have lived in the region since about 3000 BCE.

The discovery of stone tools suggests this region has been inhabited since the Middle Paleolithic (about 40,000 years ago), and a cave site in the Perdi Mala valley has been cited as evidence for Late Paleolithic occupation. The region was evidently occupied by the Assyrians during their military campaigns into the Zagros Mountains, about the 8th century BCE. The Parchments of Hawraman/Uramanat, a set of 3 documents from the Seleucid and Parthian eras (324 BCE to 224 CE), document the sale of land here. Thirty-five mounds, most located outside the mountainous area of the Hawraman/Uramanat region and inside adjacent intermountain plains, date from the Neolithic to the Islamic era. There was a dramatic growth in population by the middle of the Islamic era, which led to the development of infrastructure and settlements in the region. The rich diversity of historic sites, including roads, bridges, cemeteries, mosques, castles, and villages, illustrate the historical events and development of the territory up to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Due to its geographical isolation, Hawraman/Uramanat has been less exposed to modernization pressures, maintaining its rich tangible and intangible heritage and semi-nomadic agropastoral character until the present day.

The ancient agropastoral social system of the Hawrami people has been the key driver for shaping this landscape. The geographic, morphological, climatic, and environmental characteristics have conditioned the formation of the three patterns of seasonal vertical migration: garden-based (eastern Hawraman), livestock-based (western Hawraman), and a garden and livestock-based hybrid (central Hawraman). Over the millennia, these patterns have resulted in distinct spatial and architectural characteristics. The vertical migration pattern in Hawraman/Uramanat is among the oldest types of migration, dating to the early Neolithic. This pattern and the seasonal *Havar* dwellings appear to be different from the horizontal migration of other nomadic tribes such as the Bakhtyārī, who also reside in western Iran. The property is therefore said to present important evidence in the context of the history of pastoral migration.

In response to the ICOMOS Interim Report, the State Party clarified that *Havars* and the underlying philosophy of temporary settlements constitute important signs of adaptation to the climate and natural environment. The semi-nomadic way of life, which still exists today, is said to be linked to the way in which sedentism was established in this rough mountain setting. The cultural traditions related to transhumance, such as celebrations at the beginning and end of the *Havar* season, also continue to be practiced.

### Boundaries

The nominated property is a vast cultural landscape stretching across mountain ridges and valleys. This serial cultural landscape is comprised of 2 components: the Central-Eastern Valley (Zhaverud and Takht, totaling

77,905 hectares in the Kurdistan Province); and the Western Valley (Lahun, totaling 28,402 hectares in the Kermanshah Province). These 2 components are situated within a single 303,623 hectares buffer zone.

The rationale for the boundaries of the nominated property was clarified by the State Party in the additional information it sent to ICOMOS on 13 November 2020, which explains that the boundaries are based on the geographical characteristics of the territory. The boundaries follow the mountain ridges and other natural and geographical features so as to incorporate the most relevant elements of the nominated property and its setting within the landscape.

ICOMOS also requested the State Party to further clarify the spatial relationships between the character-defining features presented in the nomination dossier, including ancient settlements, cave shelters, castles, historic routes, mounds, cemeteries, and inscriptions within the surrounding landscape, as well as the connections of these relationships to the Hawrami people. The rationale for including some of these features inside the proposed buffer zone and some outside the buffer zone also needed further explanation in the context of their contribution to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the serial cultural landscape.

The additional information provided by the State Party in February 2021 emphasizes that the historical and ancient sites presented in the nomination dossier have paved the way and accompanied the formation and development of the key features of Hawraman/Uramanat; that is, the villages and agropastoral way of life of the Hawrami people. These sites play an important role in manifesting the evolution of human habitation and interaction with nature. Given their geographical setting, the vast majority of these character-defining features are included in the property and its buffer zone. ICOMOS considers the rationale and the boundaries of the nominated property and its buffer zone as clarified by the State Party to be adequate.

ICOMOS concludes that these boundaries are sufficient to reflect the extent of the tangible and intangible attributes that convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. The buffer zone coincides with the boundaries of the culturally and socially distinct portion of Hawraman/Uramanat that lies within Iran.

#### **State of conservation**

The nomination dossier provides an account of the state of conservation of the nominated property. The key mechanism for ensuring the long-term conservation of the cultural landscape is to support and continue the long-held traditions and agropastoral social system that have been handed down from generation to generation. Conservation depends partly on the remoteness of the territory, the rough topography, and the conservative approaches of the Hawrami people, and partly on the conservation efforts and approaches adopted by the state authorities. The Cultural Landscape of Hawraman/

Uramanat (CLH/U) Base, established under the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicraft in 2015, has as its main mission to ensure support, professional expertise, and funding for the research and conservation of the territory.

The CLH/U Base implements its conservation mandate by three types of approaches: direct intervention through the "conservation by example" of existing buildings and through model projects for new constructions; technical and/or financial support (grants and low-interest loans) for conservation as well as for new constructions that comply with the guidelines; and negotiations and agreements with governmental departments to adapt their assets to heritage conservation requirements, so that they conform with the local identity of the place. The CLH/U Base also ensures permanent coordination with the relevant sectoral authorities for regular monitoring.

ICOMOS notes that the built fabric of the villages varies considerably in terms of the concentration of historical buildings. In its Interim Report, ICOMOS requested information on the newer buildings, which in some cases constitute more than half the built fabric, and confirmation that these buildings are built with traditional materials, thereby complying with the traditional planning and architectural practices. The ICOMOS technical evaluation mission confirmed that modern constructions are undertaken with traditional materials and techniques. This observation is supported by the thematic maps for each village included in the additional information provided by the State Party in November 2020, which illustrate the widespread use of traditional materials and compliance with the historical layout of the villages.

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is satisfactory.

#### **Factors affecting the property**

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that there are no major factors currently having a significant negative impact on the nominated property. The remoteness of all the nominated villages underlies the lack of development pressure. Furthermore, guidelines, actions, and incentives by the CLH/U Base are mitigating risks of any inappropriate interventions. Some previous ill-advised interventions have already been reversed under the supervision of the CLH/U Base.

Current tourism statistics reveal low numbers of mostly domestic visitors, with very few international tourists. For the time being, the impact of tourism can be considered negligible, although careful forward planning and management will be required to avoid negative impacts in the future. The CLH/U Base works with local communities to ensure visitors are received in a culturally appropriate and environmentally sensitive manner. A study of the carrying capacity of the territory has been prepared.

Following a request from ICOMOS, the State Party in February 2021 clarified the existence of cross-sectoral tourism coordination and management structures, such as the National Committee for Nature Tourism, which has been established to increase collaboration among different institutions.

An environmental pressure that may affect the nominated property in the long term is climate change and its consequences. Declines in regional rainfall have caused drought and consequent water shortages in the region. This long-term challenge needs careful monitoring and mitigation measures to allow local communities to continue their traditional lifestyle.

Within the context of factors potentially affecting the property, two dams – the Darian Dam and the Jhaveh Dam – as well as a large-scale fish farm must be mentioned.

The Darian Dam, built on the Sirvan River in 2009-2015, is located within the nominated property's boundaries, although none of the nominated villages or other features of the nominated property have been impacted by its construction. Considering the dry climate, the purpose of the dam is to supply water to local communities for agriculture and hydroelectricity and to direct water towards the western plains of the country. An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) conducted in 2008, an English summary of which was provided by the State Party in November 2020, concludes that the project does not have a negative impact on the cultural or natural features of the nominated property and did not involve submerging of any built structures or sites of cultural significance.

The Environmental Impact Assessment for the Darian Dam provides information on the existing biodiversity, afforestation of the banks of the reservoir to compensate for the submerged parts of woodland, preservation of the Bell Spring (reputedly one of the shortest rivers in the world), and compensation measures for the partially affected farmlands of six villages, none of which are included as key features in the nomination. The creation of the water reservoir is mentioned as having greatly assisted in reversing the depopulation of the area and providing opportunities for young people, mainly by boosting recreation and local tourism around the reservoir.

The ICOMOS technical evaluation mission was provided with a summary of an Environmental Impact Assessment for the ongoing construction of the Jhaveh Dam near Doulab Village. This summary concludes that the construction is not negatively affecting any natural or cultural features. None of the villages partially affected by its construction are among the nominated property's key features. The construction is expected to support local agriculture and supply water to the region, and thus have a positive social impact on the cultural landscape.

The ICOMOS technical evaluation mission also reported a large-scale (1,500 tonnes of fish per year) fish farm near Palangan Village. Established in 2002, the farm is a cooperative set up by 54 families from the village. Its location does not have a visual impact on the cultural landscape. Moreover, it has a significantly positive impact on the livelihoods of local residents and has played a role in reversing depopulation in the area.

IUCN observes that mining activities reportedly occur within the nominated property, and draws attention to environmental legislation that provides for exploration and exploitation of minerals in the natural protected areas. Considering these concerns, ICOMOS recommends that, *inter alia* through providing appropriate legal provisions, special attention be paid to preventing any intervention, including mining and extraction of minerals, that could potentially have a direct or indirect impact on the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, authenticity and integrity of the nominated property.

### 3 Proposed justification for inscription

#### Proposed justification

The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- The continuing cultural landscape presents exceptional testimony to the uninterrupted development of human habitat in a recognized Central-Asian “cradle of civilization”, from the natural caves, shelters, and settlements of early humanoids of the Middle Paleolithic through the construction of access routes, citadels, and fortifications to the transhumance structures and the continuing creation of terraced villages, gardens, and orchards reflecting the specific cultural traditions of the Hawrami people.
- The cultural landscape made up of villages of steep-slope vernacular architecture, terraced orchards, and transhumance shelters constructed with dry-stone techniques spans significant stages of human history and illustrates human adaption to a steeply sloped mountainous environment over thousands of years, in villages typically exhibiting vertical rises of up to 1,500 metres on slopes of up to 60 degrees. Particular adaptive architectural elements include solar orientation and the conservation of scarce land through public shared-space rooftops and multi-storey buildings, terraced orchards demonstrating traditional and innovative soil and water management techniques, and, at higher altitudes, dry-stone shelters for humans and animals (*Havars*) that have been adapted to the seasonal requirements of transhumance.
- The property presents the combination of natural and cultural features expressing the sustainable interaction of the Hawrami people with the

mountainous natural environment. The landscape is thus shown to provide an outstanding example of the evolution of a traditional way of life in close interaction with nature, through the continuing significant social, economic, and religious activities of the Hawrami people who have inhabited these valleys since ancient times.

### Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis is presented in two parts: five cultural landscapes in Iran, one of which is inscribed on the World Heritage List and two others on the State Party's Tentative List; and seven cultural landscapes on the World Heritage List located in Europe (Spain, Portugal, Austria, and Italy), Asia (Philippines), and Africa (Ethiopia). Overall, eight cultural landscapes from the World Heritage List are examined in the comparative analysis. In addition, a brief reference is made to steeply sloped agriculture in China, Japan, and Tibet.

Most of the cultural landscapes presented in the comparative analysis represent very different cultures and periods in history. Outside Iran, comparisons are made with Hallstatt-Dachstein / Salzkammergut Cultural Landscape (Austria, 1997, criteria (iii) and (iv)), Cultural Landscape of the Serra de Tramuntana (Spain, 2011, criteria (ii), (iv), and (v)), Portovenere, Cinque Terre, and the Islands (Palmaria, Tino and Tinetto) (Italy, 1997, criteria (ii), (iv), and (v)), Cultural Landscape of Sintra (Portugal, 1995, criteria (ii), (iv), and (v)), Wachau Cultural Landscape (Austria, 2000, criteria (ii) and (iv)), Konso Cultural Landscape (Ethiopia, 2011, criteria (iii) and (v)), and Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras (Philippines, 1995, criteria (iii), (iv), and (v)). These comparisons are made on the basis of their natural environment, architecture, diversity of settlements, historical background, local economy, and modes of life, customs, and cultural traditions. The list of sites outside Iran does not include other comparable cultural landscapes that are not inscribed on the World Heritage List.

While culturally and historically more similar, the compared sites within Iran – Cultural Landscape of Maymand (2015, criterion (v)), Masouleh (Tentative List, 2007), Abyaneh (Tentative List, 2007), Sar Aqa Seyed, and Marin – do not demonstrate the same diversity of landscape, equal scale of steeply sloped settlement patterns, or architectural innovation, nor do they demonstrate an equivalent continuity and complexity of combined agricultural and nomadic livestock practices adapted to the steeply sloped environment. While some landscapes are associated with continuing cultural traditions, the State Party concludes that none of these comparative properties exhibit a comparable combination of all the key aspects listed above.

The State Party asserts that the key aspects that set the Cultural Landscape of Hawraman/Uramanat apart from these other cultural landscapes are: (a) the nominated property's high altitude, steeply sloped mountainous geomorphology, and extreme climate; (b) its traditional

techniques for tiered dry-stone architecture, orientation of village layouts, multi-storey buildings, shared rooftops as public spaces, and dry-stone terraced gardens and orchards; (c) its continuing livestock and agricultural production across different altitudes, traditional techniques of orchard-making, and soil and water management adapted to the steeply sloped environment; (d) its continuity and preservation of unique cultural traditions tied to natural cycles and belief systems; and (e) its evidence of all stages of continuing human history in a single landscape.

In response to a request from ICOMOS, additional information was provided by the State Party in November 2020 to further clarify the place of the nominated property in the context of other historic Kurdish settlement regions in this geo-cultural area. The nominated property was described by the State Party as the best-preserved and the most extensive area of Hawrami culture; other areas across the Iran-Iraq border where the Hawrami people have historically lived have been severely affected by past armed conflicts. Other Kurdish settlement regions differ from the nominated property in natural characteristics, as well as cultural specificities and mode of life. More importantly, no other area has enjoyed an equal degree of preservation of Kurdish culture, dialects, and traditional lifestyle as the nominated property.

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ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

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### Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (iii), (iv) and (v):

Criterion (iii): *bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the nominated property is an outstanding living testimony to a long history of traditions that continue to the present day, bearing witness to an extremely well-organized social, rural, and nomadic realm, and to sustainable economic structures. A significant range of elements and structures representing different stages of evolution are found in a relatively limited area. These include shelters for humans and animals adapted to seasonal requirements, mountain villages, and orchards, all based on a thorough understanding of nature. Archaeological sites and rock art bear unique and exceptional testimony to a mountain culture that can trace its roots back over 3,000 years.

ICOMOS considers that the information presented by the State Party in the nomination dossier and the responses to requests from ICOMOS for clarifications demonstrates that the living cultural landscape of Hawraman/Uramanat bears exceptional testimony to the continuing agropastoral socio-spatial structures and cultural traditions of the Hawrami people, developed around their semi-nomadic way of life, which is manifested in

transhumance routes and *Havars*, steep-slope terraced villages and orchards, and a rich intangible heritage. Hawraman/Uramanat is the exceptionally well-preserved cultural reservoir of the Hawrami people, part of the Kurdish culture, who have occupied this part of the Zagros Mountains for millennia.

The local semi-nomadic migration patterns, transhumance and agricultural practices, specific transhumance routes, *Havars*, and orchards for each of the thirteen villages presented as the key attributes are well researched and documented, as are the spatial interrelationships of different types of historical places to these key attributes of the cultural landscape.

Criterion (iv): *be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates a significant stage in human history;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the nominated property is an outstanding example of a cultural landscape that illustrates significant stages in the development of a human habitat over a long time, from caves and early shelters dating initially to the Paleolithic to terraced villages and later transhumance. The form and structure of *Havars*, traditional orchard-making, and terraced villages with vertical rises of up to 1,500 metres on slopes of up to 60 degrees illustrate the genius and traditional knowledge of utilizing sloped lands for settlements in harmony with the environment. Local communities have creatively constructed an excellent and still-functioning management system of water and soil that skillfully integrates the use of water reservoirs with soil resources.

ICOMOS considers that the information presented by the State Party does not establish the Outstanding Universal Value of the property with regard to criterion (iv). While the landscape includes evidence of the evolution of a human habitat over a long period of time, the key features of the nomination have not been demonstrated to be an outstanding illustration of a significant stage in human history.

Criterion (v): *be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the nominated property constitutes an outstanding example of uninterrupted human interaction with the surrounding environment. Following a long, slow evolution of cultivation and orchard-making skills, the best possible adaptation to this lofty Zagros' mountain environment has been carried out. The nominated landscape also enjoys aesthetic qualities that make it an archetype of mountain villages on very high slopes. The Hawrami people's endeavors, exquisite and skillful agricultural technology, and ecological world-view taken

from ancestral practices have successfully created a smart, efficient, fair, harmonious, and sustainable agricultural system that manages water and irrigation and pinpoints proper dwelling spaces. They have also created under limiting conditions a perfectly harmonious lifestyle adapted to the environment.

The justification also states the cultural landscape is underpinned by a spectacular geology and morphology, unique ecosystems, significant biodiversity, and outstanding valleys. It expresses a distinctive relationship between human beings and nature, which is especially clear in Hawrami rituals and rites.

ICOMOS considers that the Cultural Landscape of Hawraman/Uramanat constitutes an outstanding example of uninterrupted human interaction with a harsh natural environment resulting in a long and slow evolution of land cultivation and orchard making, settlement organization, skills, and knowledge.

In the high Zagros Mountains, a harsh environment where there is little fertile soil, the Hawrami people, through their skillful agricultural and settlement practices, have successfully created an efficient and sustainable agricultural system and a harmonious transhumance mode of life.

ICOMOS considers that the land use illustrated by the nominated property is an outstanding representation of a human interaction with the environment over a long period of time. Criterion (v) has been justified.

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ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (iii) and (v) and that criterion (iv) has not been justified.

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### **Integrity and authenticity**

The remoteness and inaccessibility of the region, along with the legislative protection, have ensured a high level of integrity and authenticity of the nominated property.

#### **Integrity**

The State Party assesses that the nominated property is of adequate size to ensure the complete representation of the features and processes that convey its significance. The important part of the Hawraman/Uramanat Kurdish region's specific cultural and natural characteristics is located in western Iran, with a lesser part located in neighboring eastern Iraq. The additional information provided by the State Party in November 2020 indicates that the Iraqi part of Hawraman/Uramanat differs significantly from the Iranian part in its geomorphology, natural characteristics, and socio-cultural characteristics, as well as its degree of preservation.

ICOMOS considers that the proposed boundaries of the nominated property are adequate for the conservation of the key features as well as their setting. The morphology and architectural fabric of the thirteen villages – which are among the main features of the property – are mostly

intact. The deterioration process is controlled, and in some instances has been reversed due to the efforts of the CLH/U Base. The Base controls interventions, including the use of modern materials and techniques, and negotiates with different government authorities to reduce the visual impact of existing modern government buildings. The overall intent is to preserve to the greatest extent possible the dynamic historic functions and vitality of the villages and the cultural landscape.

The infrastructure and amenities such as electricity and telephone poles and cables, water mains, and gas pipes in some cases have a negative effect on the historic character of the villages. However, their overall visual and functional impacts are not excessive.

As noted above, the Darian Dam, Jhaveh Dam, and cooperative fish farm near Palangan village do not have a significant negative impact on the integrity of the nominated property as related to the attributes that convey its proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

The integrity of the nominated property can thus be considered satisfactory. No incompatible interventions to these protected areas are likely to threaten its integrity in the foreseeable future.

#### Authenticity

The Cultural Landscape of Hawraman/Uramanat retains a high degree of authenticity in terms of materials, forms and designs, uses and functions, locations and setting, and spirit and feeling, as well as traditions, customs, and lifestyle.

The authenticity of the morphology and layout of the built fabric in the nominated thirteen villages is preserved. The characteristic organization of the villages and the public space features, such as public rooftops, continue to be dominant.

Most historic buildings have kept their traditional form and design, and these types of forms and designs are usually followed in the infrequent occasions when new houses are constructed. Most buildings retain authentic materials, including in traditional interiors, although in some cases repairs or extensions have been made using modern materials such as concrete blocks, metal doors and windows, and aluminum sheets for roofing. ICOMOS observes with concern the visual impact of the aluminum roofing, the use of which is widespread.

Traditional dry-stone terracing and water management practices are retained and practiced, as well as seasonal migration to *Havars*, livestock breeding, and traditional agriculture. The local economy continues to produce an important supply of fresh agricultural produce for Iranian markets. This factor, coupled with sensitive and sustainable tourism management, will play a key role in the long-term conservation of the nominated property.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the whole series have been met, and that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the individual component sites that comprise the series have been met.

#### Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription

The mountain agriculture, migratory lifestyle to seasonal habitats, dialects, customs, and other cultural features convey the value of Hawraman/ Uramanat as a cultural landscape that bears exceptional testimony to the cultural traditions of the Hawrami people.

The local community's semi-nomadic lifestyle, and particularly its vertical seasonal migration pattern, is considered an exceptional mode of transhumance that can be dated back to the Neolithic if not earlier.

The comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

The nominated property meets criteria (iii) and (v). Criterion (iv) has not been justified.

ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the whole series have been met, and that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the individual component sites that comprise the series have been met.

#### Attributes

There are three major geographical areas in the two components that comprise the Cultural Landscape of Hawraman/Uramanat: Hawraman Takht (central zone) and Hawraman Zhaverud (eastern zone), which together make up one component; and Hawraman Lahun (western zone), which makes up the second component. The main valleys of each of these three areas have been selected to represent this large cultural landscape. The attributes are classified by the State Party as natural (geology, soil, geomorphology, biodiversity) and cultural (tangible and intangible). However, ICOMOS notes that the property has not been nominated under any of the natural criteria.

Among the key tangible attributes of the nominated property are the thirteen villages: Nav, Sharakan, Najar, Palangan, Abbas Abad, Shian, Zhan, Doulab, Halvan, and Bezlane in the Central-Eastern Valley component; and Shalagi, Kelash Lolem, and Qalaji in the Western Valley component. The villages are characterized by high-density tiered architecture and solar orientation compatible with extreme climatic and topological conditions, with open views from the dwellings. Attributes also include the villages' agricultural systems, *Havars*, steeply sloped terraced orchards, gardens, dry-stone walls, and water canals, including the transport of soils from fertile to less fertile sites.

Other tangible attributes that are presented to support the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the property are prehistoric cave shelters of early humans; archaeological remains of temporary and permanent settlements;

historical burials; rock carvings and petroglyphs; castles, citadels, and fortifications; historical roads; and ancient mounds.

The proposed Outstanding Universal Value is also supported by the living intangible heritage of the local communities, including handicrafts; rituals and ceremonies associated with astronomy, seasons, and harvests; folklore; and dialects.

In response to the ICOMOS Interim Report, the State Party provided additional information specifying the spatial interrelationships of the key features of the nominated property. These include the transhumance routes and the relationship of the *Havars* and orchards to each nominated village, which are also illustrated on maps and schematic relief sections. The spatial interrelationship of the supporting features within the wider landscape was also clarified by integrating these diverse features on a topographic map together with the key features, all placed in the context of the proposed boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone.

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ICOMOS considers that the identified attributes contribute to the justification for inscription.

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## 4 Conservation measures and monitoring

### Conservation measures

The CLH/U Base, under the Ministry of Culture, Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts of Iran, is tasked with providing support, expertise, and funding for the research and conservation of the nominated property. Comprehensive conservation programs aim to preserve the cultural and natural values of the property and to maintain its authenticity and integrity.

Acknowledging the potential impact of modernization on the lifestyle of local communities, the conservation programmes emphasize raising the awareness of residents about the values of their environment and their traditional practices, and assist them in managing future changes to the property within a conservation ethic. The role of local communities is accentuated throughout all the different conservation programs, as the local population historically has undertaken maintenance and restoration in an appropriate manner.

The CLH/U Base implements conservation through model conservation and adaptation projects, as well as technical and/or financial support for conservation projects, offering financial assistance to the owners who implement conservation interventions under professional supervision. Detailed guidelines on standards for architectural construction have been prepared by the CLH/U Base. They are a valuable instrument for communicating conservation principles to the local population.

### Monitoring

The CLH/U Base ensures permanent coordination with relevant sectoral authorities for regular (monthly, seasonal, annual) monitoring of the nominated property based on a comprehensive set of indicators. These indicators are for the most part linked to the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value and to the identified threats.

While acknowledging the comprehensive monitoring system currently in place, ICOMOS nevertheless considers it necessary to broaden its scope to reflect a wider range of natural and human-made risks and pressures. These should include, *inter alia*, the potential impact of modernization on the ancient agropastoral system of Hwaraman/Uramanat as well as the risks associated with climate change and its consequences with regard to the water regime, the vegetation of the area, and the grazing system.

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ICOMOS considers that conservation measures and monitoring are adequate.

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## 5 Protection and management

### Documentation

The nominated property has been adequately inventoried and recorded by 3D scanning and 3D modelling techniques for the villages and the landscape. The data is managed by a geographic information system and is continuously updated by dedicated staff at the CLH/U Base.

### Legal protection

According to the State Party, more than 30 villages in this landscape have been included in the list of Iranian national monuments. All the different attributes presented in the nomination dossier are also registered. The intangible heritage of this cultural landscape is systematically studied and safeguarded by means of inscription on the Intangible Heritage List of Iran.

The nominated property in its entirety is registered in the National Monuments List. The nomination dossier presents a summary of the regulations for interventions within the nominated property and the buffer zone.

The nomination dossier lists several national acts and bylaws as well as strategies to support the long-term conservation of the nominated property. The most important for the purpose of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value is the Land Conservation Act, which strictly controls changes to land use. Furthermore, there is a complex set of planning documents at the provincial and local levels. These include Pilot Plans for ten villages (1990s and 2000s), a Detailed Master Plan and Regional Development Plan for the cultural landscape (2015-2017), and a Revised Hawraman/Uramanat Development Plan (2011-2017).



Apart from protected cultural properties, there are also several protected nature areas within the nominated property, controlled through Master Plans and Special Landscape Protection Plans according to nature conservation standards.

In November 2020, the State Party provided additional clarification of the legislative acts and planning documents, as well as English versions of the geographic information system maps illustrating the comprehensive approach applied to the study of the urban fabric of all the nominated villages on which the guidelines for interventions are based. This clarification confirmed that the elaboration of Pilot Plans for 3 villages (Abbas Abad, Shalaji, and Qalaji) is in progress. It can be concluded that conservation of cultural heritage is duly considered in local planning documents and is under the control of the heritage authorities. Overall, protection of the nominated property is considered to be adequate. Strict control should be maintained over the installation of modern equipment to prevent any negative visual impacts on the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property, and to ensure that any such interventions respect the local character of the place. Any major infrastructure development project or intervention should be subjected to a Heritage Impact Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment, in line with paragraph 118bis of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*.

### Management system

The management of cultural heritage in Iran is the domain of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicraft (IMCHTH). Additionally, it is the legal duty of all executive bodies to contribute part of their budget and human resources to the research and conservation of cultural heritage. The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (MHUD) is responsible for managing development and developing master plans, *inter alia*, for historic urban areas. The Higher Council for Architecture and Urban Planning (HCAUP), composed of different government departments and led by the MHUD, endorses urban plans before their final approval, with the binding opinion of IMCHTH.

In 2015, the IMCHTH established the research and management Base for the Cultural Landscape of Hawraman/Uramanat. All conservation, restoration, and maintenance work for tangible and intangible elements of the nominated property are carried out under the control of the CLH/U Base. The Base manages the area in collaboration with the local communities, provides advice and consent on the major developments, regulates and controls permits for buildings and alterations, and provides financial support for conservation. Decision-making is facilitated by a cross-sectoral steering committee composed of local, regional and national participants and a technical committee established within the CLH/U Base.

The Integrated Management and Conservation Plan of the CLH/U Base is a primary tool for the management and conservation of the area. It was elaborated at the ministerial level with the collaboration of the IMCHTH and the MHUD. Additional information provided by the State Party in November 2020 clarified that the plan is mandatory for all public bodies, and that inter-sectoral coordination is overseen by the HCAUP. The action plans are designed for timeframes of two years (short term), five years (medium term), and ten years (long term).

Local management actions in the villages are carried out through the village councils and the village councils' heads (*Dehyar*), who manage and maintain their villages through consultation with and guidance from the CLH/U Base.

In response to the ICOMOS Interim Report, the State Party provided clarification on the strategies and plans in place to support the sustainability of local economic systems. These include strategies and long-term plans for supporting rural development through entrepreneurship, micro-financing, and empowerment of rural women and youth, as well as promoting handicrafts and ecotourism. These strategies and plans are prepared and implemented in a collaborative and participatory manner.

The State Party also provided information on cross-sectoral institutional, fiscal, and programmatic arrangements, including research, education, and capacity building. Sustainability is inscribed as a goal of the regional management and development plans and sectoral plans for activities such as fish-culturing, handicrafts, ecotourism, and nature tourism, which serve indigenous job-creation and development. Additional information was also presented on the cross-sectoral bodies that have a specific focus on sustainable tourism, notably the National Committee for Nature Tourism whose members include the Environmental Protection Organization, the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, and the Forests and Rangelands Organization.

Entrepreneurship and micro-credit funding are mentioned as key strategies for regional rural development. With their specific focus on rural women and youth, these programmes are identified as already having a positive impact on creating rural self-employment, combatting poverty, and empowering people in this region.

In summary, there is a robust management framework at multiple levels that ensures well-integrated decision-making and control over conservation and development within the nominated property and its buffer zone, as well as a high degree of participation by the local community.

### Visitor management

According to the State Party, the current levels of visitation across the nominated property are modest, and are controlled and guided by a national tourism development plan and a tourism development plan for targeted villages within the Cultural Landscape of

Hawraman/Uramanat. The strategies aim at sustainable tourism and provide for control of the types and numbers of tourist activities according to the carrying capacity of different zones of the property and their heritage values.

The main objective of the tourism plan is the promotion of local products achieved through collective projects, helping small-scale producers gain access to markets. The CLH/U Base also collaborates with local communities in establishing small-scale eco-lodges through the adaptive reuse of historic buildings. The State Party notes the positive effect that cultural entrepreneurship has had on the development of a sustainable tourism industry.

Various regional and local non-governmental, private, and cooperative organizations are active in the interpretation and presentation of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage and natural heritage of the nominated property. Local museums have been established in different villages in collaboration with the CLH/U Base.

While acknowledging the detailed information provided by the State Party on sustainable tourism strategies, ICOMOS notes the negative impact tourism has had worldwide on ancient social and economic systems. ICOMOS therefore considers that the State Party should pay careful attention to preventing tourism or other modern economic activities from overtaking the local traditional economy and disrupting the ancient agropastoral way of life that underpins the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

#### **Community involvement**

The local communities play a major role in protecting the nominated property through day-to-day maintenance and conservation and through traditional ways of semi-nomadic agrarian life. There is a permanent collaboration and communication between local residents and the CLH/U Base. In addition, the CLH/U Base implements regular workshops, conferences, and competitions aimed at identifying the tangible and intangible values of the territory, and trains local residents in making appropriate interventions that are in line with conservation standards and local values.

#### **Evaluation of the effectiveness of the protection and management of nominated property**

The nominated property has been adequately inventoried, recorded, and studied, and at present appears to be free of major threats. It is adequately protected within national legal and institutional frameworks through a collaborative and participatory approach to governance. An Integrated Management and Conservation Plan is being implemented within a robust management system designed specifically for the nominated property, which brings together the wide range of national, regional, and local participants from various sectors.

ICOMOS acknowledges the efforts developed by the State Party to support the traditional agropastoral economic system of the Cultural Landscape of Hawraman/Uramanat. Taking note of modernization

needs, migration, and a potential increase in tourism, however, ICOMOS considers it necessary for the management at the national, regional, and local levels to put special emphasis on preventing tourism or other modern economic activities from overtaking the local traditional economy and disrupting the ancient agropastoral social system, which is a key aspect of the nomination.

With this objective in mind, ICOMOS recommends that the State Party develops a strategy for the management of change in the Cultural Landscape of Hawraman/Uramanat, based on the analysis of all possible natural or human-made risks and pressures in this specific geo-spatial context, and identifies relevant indicators for the long-term monitoring of local development processes. The strategy should pay specific attention to the risks associated with climate change and its consequences with regard to the water regime, the vegetation of the area, and the grazing system.

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ICOMOS considers the protection of the property to be adequate. The management system and existing legal protection is considered to be robust and efficient for the long-term conservation of the property. Plans and strategies are prepared and implemented through a collaborative and participatory approach. ICOMOS recommends that a strategy be developed to manage change in the nominated property.

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## **6 Conclusion**

The mountain agriculture, migratory lifestyle to seasonal habitats, dialects, customs, and other cultural features express the value of Hawraman/Uramanat as a cultural landscape that bears an exceptional testimony to the cultural traditions of the Hawrami people. The local community's semi-nomadic lifestyle, and particularly its vertical seasonal migration pattern, is considered an exceptional mode of transhumance that can be dated back to the Neolithic if not earlier.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List. ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (iii) and (v), and that criterion (iv) is not justified.

ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the whole series have been met, and that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the individual component sites that comprise the series have been met.

ICOMOS considers that the identified attributes contribute to the justification for inscription.

ICOMOS considers that conservation measures and monitoring are adequate, and that the protection of the property is adequate. The management system is robust, and an Integrated Management and Conservation Plan is being implemented through the collaboration of different

stakeholders, including the participation of local communities. A strategy should be developed to manage change in the Cultural Landscape of Hawraman/Uramanat, based on an analysis of all possible natural or human-made risks and pressures in this specific geo-spatial context and with relevant indicators identified to enable the long-term monitoring of local development processes.

## 7 Recommendations

### Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that Cultural Landscape of Hawraman/Uramanat, Islamic Republic of Iran, be inscribed on the World Heritage List as a cultural landscape on the basis of **criteria (iii) and (v)**.

### Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

#### Brief synthesis

The cultural Landscape of Hawraman/Uramanat is located at the heart of the Zagros Mountains in the provinces of Kurdistan and Kermanshah along the western border of Iran. It is comprised of two components: the Central-Eastern Valley (Zhaverud and Takht, in Kurdistan Province); and the Western Valley (Lahun, in Kermanshah Province). The mode of human habitation in these areas has been adapted over millennia to the rough mountainous environment.

Archaeological findings dating back about 40,000 years, caves and rock shelters, ancient paths and ways along the valleys, motifs and inscriptions, cemeteries, mounds, castles, settlements, and other historical evidence attest to the continuity of life in the Hawraman/Uramanat region from the Paleolithic to the present time and to the endurance of the semi-nomadic lifestyle and agropastoral practices of the area's inhabitants.

The cultural Landscape of Hawraman/Uramanat is an exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition of the semi-nomadic agropastoral way of life of the Hawrami people, a Kurdish tribe that has resided in the Zagros Mountains for millennia. This outstanding cultural tradition is manifested in the ancestral practices of transhumance, the mode of seasonal living in *Havars*, steep-slope terraced agriculture, soil and water management, traditional knowledge for planning and constructing steeply terraced villages, and a rich diversity of intangible heritage, all reflecting a harmonious co-existence with nature.

**Criterion (iii):** The cultural Landscape of Hawraman/Uramanat bears exceptional testimony to the evolution over millennia of the traditional semi-nomadic agropastoral way of life of the Hawrami people. This cultural tradition is expressed in tangible and intangible elements of the landscape that have persisted up to the present day and continue to be the foundation of the local

socio-economic system, including steep-slope terraced villages and gardens, transhumance routes, seasonal dwellings, and the traditional knowledge and practices associated with them. The property provides outstanding living testimony to various traditions that bear witness to a well-organized social, rural, semi-nomadic realm.

**Criterion (v):** The Cultural Landscape of Hawraman/Uramanat constitutes an outstanding example of human interaction with, and adaptation to, the surrounding environment. In the high Zagros Mountains, a challenging setting where there is little fertile soil, the Hawrami people, through a skillful application of agricultural technology and an enlightened ecological world view, have developed an extraordinary semi-nomadic agropastoral way of life. They have successfully created an efficient, harmonious, and sustainable socio-economic system.

#### Integrity

The serial property includes all the attributes required to convey its Outstanding Universal Value. Its components exemplify the complexity of the cultural, residential, architectural, environmental, and agropastoral aspects that are evidence of the property's centuries-old traditions. The morphology and architectural fabric of the thirteen villages – which are among the essential attributes of the property – are mostly intact. The historical environment and the natural landscape remain relatively well-preserved, in large part because of the existence of a rural population engaged in farming and animal husbandry activities that have optimal interaction with the challenging environment.

Modern infrastructure, amenities, and building materials in some cases have a negative effect on the historic character of the villages. However, their overall visual and functional impacts are not excessive. The deterioration process is controlled, and in some instances has been reversed. The overall intent is to preserve to the greatest extent possible the dynamic historic functions and vitality of the villages and the cultural landscape.

#### Authenticity

The Cultural Landscape of Hawraman/Uramanat retains a high degree of authenticity in terms of materials, forms and designs, uses and functions, locations and setting, and spirit and feeling, as well as traditions, customs, and lifestyle. A significant body of resources provides documentary and visual evidence of the importance of Hawraman/Uramanat – and of its culture and traditions more generally – in this region from ancient times.

The authenticity of the morphology and layout of the built fabric in the thirteen villages of the property is preserved. The characteristic organization of the villages and the public space features, such as public rooftops, continue to be dominant.

Most historic buildings have kept their traditional form and design, and these types of forms and designs are usually followed in the infrequent occasions when new houses are constructed. Most buildings retain authentic materials, including in traditional interiors, although in some cases repairs or extensions have been made using modern materials such as concrete blocks, metal doors and windows, and aluminum sheets for roofing.

Traditional dry-stone terracing and water management practices are retained and practiced, as well as seasonal migration to *Havars*, livestock breeding, and traditional agriculture. The local economy continues to produce an important supply of fresh agricultural produce for Iranian markets. This factor, coupled with sensitive and sustainable tourism management, will play a key role in the long-term conservation of the property.

#### Management and protection requirements

The cultural Landscape of Hawraman/Uramanat is registered in the National Monuments List of Iran. Several national acts and bylaws, as well as strategies, support the long-term conservation of the property.

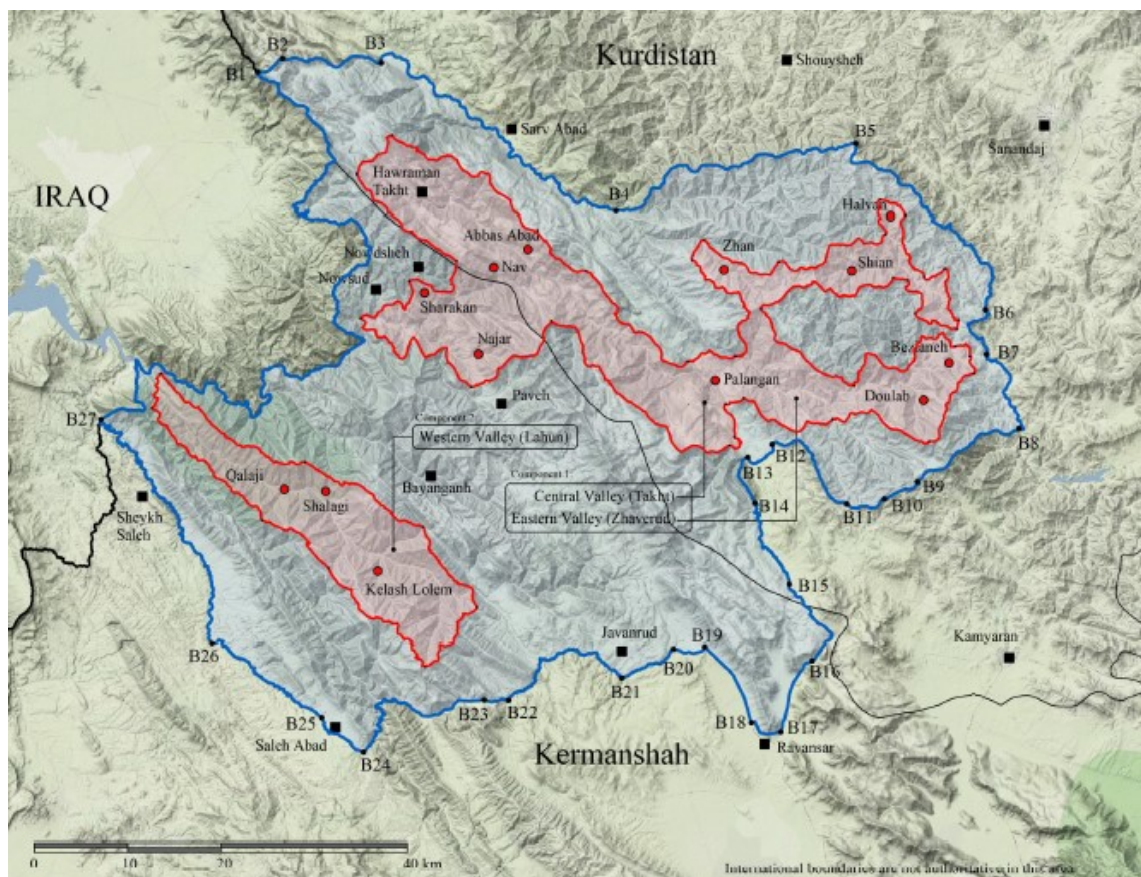
The Cultural Landscape of Hawraman/Uramanat (CLH/U) Base, under the Ministry of Culture, Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts of Iran, is tasked with providing support, expertise, and funding for the research and conservation of the property. The Base manages the area in collaboration with the local communities, provides advice and consent on the major developments, regulates and controls permits for buildings and alterations, and provides financial support for conservation. Decision-making is facilitated by a cross-sectoral steering committee composed of local, regional, and national participants and a technical committee established within the CLH/U Base. All local management actions and programmes in the villages are carried out through village councils and village council heads (*Dehyar*). The Integrated Management and Conservation Plan of the CLH/U Base is a primary tool for the management and conservation of the property.

#### Additional recommendations

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

- a) Strengthening the comprehensive study, *inter alia*, of the spatial characteristics and interrelationships of all the features within the serial property and its buffer zone, including archaeological sites and mounds which are currently outside the buffer zone, in order to assist in the management of the property and broaden its understanding,
- b) Preventing tourism or other modern economic activities from overtaking the local traditional economy and disrupting the ancient agropastoral social system,

- c) Developing a strategy for the management of change in the property, based on the analysis of all possible natural or human-made risks and pressures in this specific geo-spatial context, and identifying relevant indicators for the long-term monitoring of local development processes. A specific focus should be placed on the risks associated with climate change and its consequences with regard to the water regime, the vegetation of the area, and the grazing system,
- d) Ensuring strict control over the installation of modern infrastructure and equipment in order to prevent any negative visual impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, and ensuring that any such interventions respect the local character of the place,
- e) Avoiding any intervention, including mining and the extraction of minerals, which could potentially have a direct or indirect impact on the Outstanding Universal Value, authenticity and integrity of the property, and putting in place appropriate legal provisions to ensure the prevention of such interventions over the long term,
- f) Conducting a Heritage Impact Assessment or Environmental Impact Assessment for any planned development project that may have an impact on the Outstanding Universal Value, authenticity or integrity of the property, in line with paragraph 118bis of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*,
- g) Submitting to the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS by 1st December 2023 a report on the implementation of the recommendations set out above;



Map showing the boundaries of the nominated components and their buffer zone