

ASOR Cultural Heritage Initiatives (CHI): Planning for Safeguarding Heritage Sites in Syria and Iraq¹

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Weekly Report 209-212 — October 1–31, 2018

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¹ This report is based on research conducted by the “Cultural Preservation Initiative: Planning for Safeguarding Heritage Sites in Syria and Iraq.” Weekly reports reflect reporting from a variety of sources and may contain unverified material. As such, they should be treated as preliminary and subject to change.

Other Key Points

- **Aleppo Governorate**
 - Cleaning efforts have begun at the National Museum of Aleppo in Aleppo, Aleppo Governorate. **ASOR CHI Heritage Response Report SHI 18-0130**
 - Illegal excavations were reported at Shash Hamdan, a Roman tomb in Manbij, Aleppo Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0124**
 - Illegal excavation continues at the archaeological site of Cyrrhus in Aleppo Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0090 UPDATE**
- **Deir ez-Zor Governorate**
 - Artillery bombardment damaged al-Sayyidat Aisha Mosque in Hajin, Deir ez-Zor Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0118**
 - Artillery bombardment damaged al-Sultan Mosque in Hajin, Deir ez-Zor Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0119**
 - A US-led Coalition airstrike destroyed Ammar bin Yasser Mosque in Albu-Badran Neighborhood, al-Susah, Deir ez-Zor Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0121**
 - A US-led Coalition airstrike damaged al-Aziz Mosque in al-Susah, Deir ez-Zor Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0122**
 - A US-led Coalition airstrike damaged al-Ghannam Mosque in al-Susah, Deir ez-Zor Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0123**
 - A US-led Coalition airstrike damaged al-Zawiyah Mosque in Hajin, Deir ez-Zor Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0125**
 - A US-led Coalition airstrike damaged an unnamed mosque in al-Susah, Deir ez-Zor Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0126**
- **Hama Governorate**
 - Local volunteers are cleaning the al-Kabir and Abu Bakr al-Sidiq Mosques in al-Lataminah, Hama Governorate. **ASOR CHI Heritage Response Report SHI 18-0129**
- **Idlib Governorate**
 - Illegal excavation exposed a Late Roman Mausoleum in Kafr Aleen, Idlib Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0128**
- **Rif Dimashq Governorate**
 - The Syrian regime reportedly demolished al-Rahma, Gazwet Badr, al-Taqwa, Harmala ibn al-Waleed and al-Qbani Mosques in the suburbs of Eastern Ghouta, Jobar, Damascus, Damascus Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0120**
 - The Syrian regime reportedly demolished the Ammar bin Yasser, Khaled bin al-Walid, and al-Afandi Mosque in the city of Harasta al-Bas, Rif Dimashq Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0127**

Military and Political Context

The main theaters of military operations during the reporting period in Syria were:

1. Deir ez-Zor Governorate:
 - On October 1, the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) launched an attack against ISIS positions in the town of Hajin. The attack included six missiles and seven drone strikes.²
 - On October 3, a car bombing struck a checkpoint controlled by the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) near the town of Gharanij. ISIS later claimed responsibility for the attack.³
 - On October 5, Russian forces reportedly deployed to the town of al-Bukamal, coming close to positions held by Iranian-backed Iraqi and Afghan Shia militias.⁴
 - On October 13, ISIS militants abducted as many as 130 families (700 persons) after storming a refugee settlement in an area controlled by the SDF.⁵
 - On October 28, an SDF commander confirmed that ISIS counterattacks had forced their retreat from areas around Hajin.⁶
 - On October 30, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan vowed to “crush” Kurdish forces stationed “east of the Euphrates river,” referencing locations where the US-backed SDF is engaged in operations to force ISIS from some of its final territories in Syria.⁷
2. Idlib Governorate:
 - On September 23–October 5, unidentified militants carried out a series of assassinations of members of Al-Qaeda-affiliated Salafi-Jihadist groups Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), Huras al-Din, and the Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP) in Idlib and Aleppo Governorates, killing at least seven fighters.⁸
 - On October 3–5, HTS temporarily captured the town of Kafr Halab following clashes with the Turkish-backed Syrian opposition group National Liberation Front (NLF).⁹
 - On October 6, the NLF announced the initial withdrawal of heavy weapons from the frontlines around Idlib Governorate in compliance with the new demilitarized zone negotiated by Russia and Turkey—scheduled to take effect on October 15. According to an NLF commander, the group “will extract heavy weaponry - such as rocket launchers and artillery vehicles - and bring it to 20 km (12 miles) from the contact line” between other opposition groups in Idlib Governorate, including Islamist group, and SARG forces.¹⁰

² <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/10/syria-situation-report-september-23.html>

³ *ibid.*

⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-putin-capture/putin-says-islamic-state-has-seized-700-hostages-in-syria-idUSKCN1MS215>

⁶ <https://www.yahoo.com/news/repels-us-backed-forces-east-syria-holdout-monitor-105220955.html>; <http://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/syria/271020182>

⁷ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-turkey/erdogan-vows-to-crush-u-s-backed-kurdish-fighters-east-of-euphrates-in-syria-idUSKCN1N4195>

⁸ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/10/syria-situation-report-september-23.html>

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria/syrian-rebels-start-to-withdraw-heavy-weapons-from-idlib-buffer-zone-idUSKCN1MG0HB> ; <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-45783491>

- On October 26, SARG shelling in Idlib Governorate killed at least seven civilians in the village of Rafa—the largest loss of life in 24 hours since Russia ceased aerial bombardment in mid-August 2018.¹¹
- 3. Aleppo Governorate:
 - On October 6, a car bombing struck the center of the town of Azaz, killing at least four people. No group claimed responsibility for the attack.¹²
 - On October 31, Turkish forces shelled the Kurdish YPG-held town of Kobani (aka Ain al-Arab), killing four members of the YPG. Following the event, the SDF released a statement announcing that their positions along the Syrian-Turkish border were under attack forcing a “temporary halt” of the group’s US-backed campaign to recapture ISIS’s final territory in Deir ez Zor.¹³

Other Key Points:

- On October 8, Russia reportedly transferred three S-300PM surface-to-air missile systems in Syria, including at least two to the Tiyas (T-4) Airbase in Homs Governorate and the Baniyanis Refinery.¹⁴
- On October 15, Syria reopened the country’s main border crossings with Jordan and the Israel-occupied Golan Heights. On October 13, Iraqi Foreign Minister Ibrahim al-Jafari visited Damascus for talks on opening the border between Syria and Iraq.¹⁵
- On October 17, UN Special Envoy to Syria, Staffan de Mistura, announced that he would step down from his post at the end of 2017 citing personal reasons. Staffan de Mistura was appointed to the position in July 2014.¹⁶

¹¹ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-idlib/shelling-in-syrias-idlib-kills-seven-largest-death-toll-since-mid-august-idUSKCN1N02DZ>

¹² <https://www.yahoo.com/news/car-blast-kills-four-turkey-backed-syrian-town-214446619.html> ; <http://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/syria/061020183>

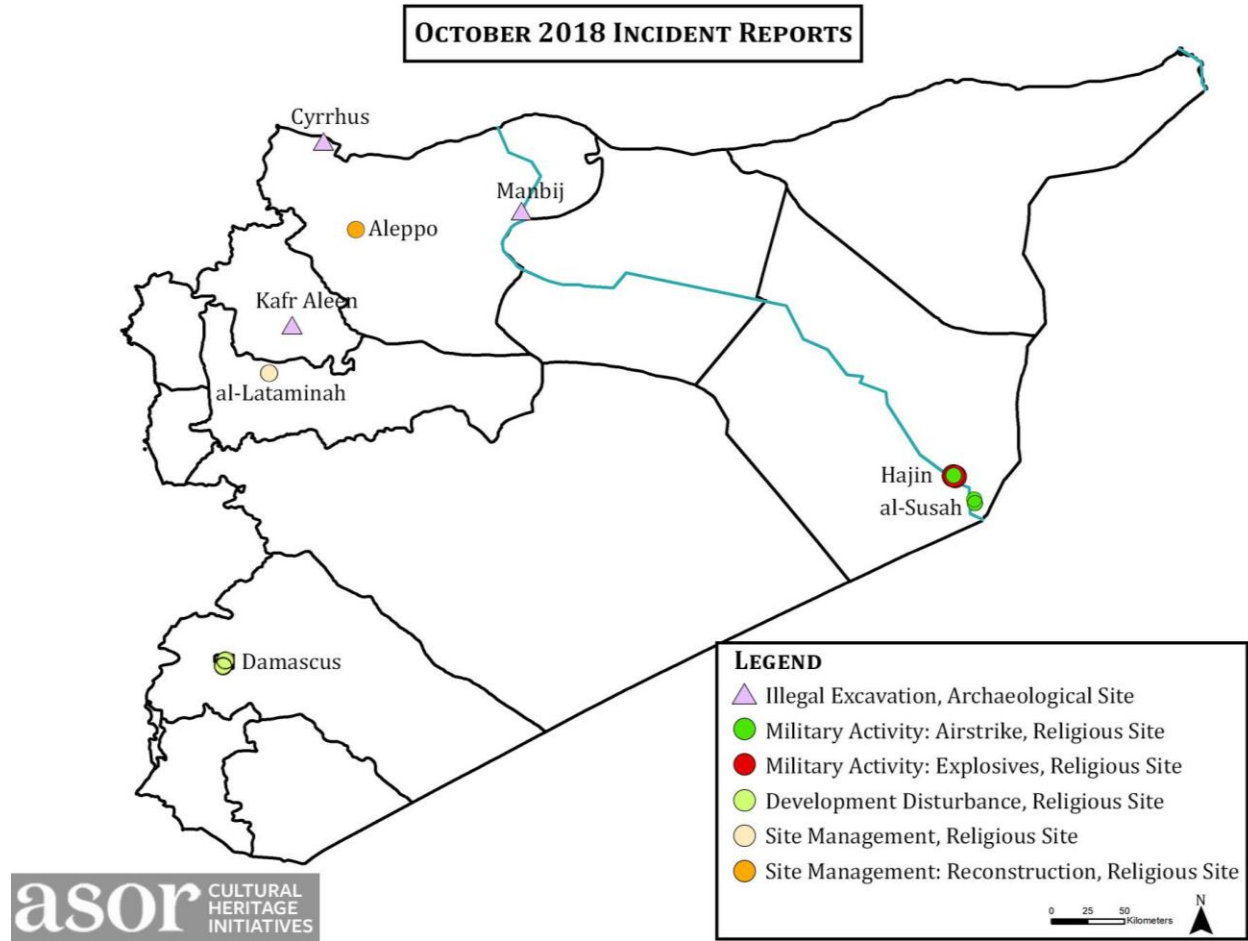
¹³ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-turkey/turkish-forces-shell-northern-syria-kurdish-led-force-responds-idUSKCN1N51KQ> ; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-sdf/turkish-attacks-in-syria-prompt-halt-to-fight-against-islamic-state-sdf-idUSKCN1N5294>

¹⁴ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/10/syria-situation-report-september-23.html>

¹⁵ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-45862528> ; https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/syrias-militants-give-tepid-support-to-demilitarized-zone-in-final-opposition-stronghold/2018/10/15/7bd78694-d054-11e8-a275-81c671a50422_story.html

¹⁶ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-45893986>

Incident Reports: Syria



Incident Reports from October 2018 (ASOR CHI)

SHI 18-0090 UPDATE

Report Date: October 31, 2018

Site Name: Cyrrhus (Nebi Hourî; نبي حوري)

Date of Incident: April 15, 2018-August 12, 2018

Location: Aleppo Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Cyrrhus was founded ca. 330 BCE by the Hellenistic general Seleucus Nicator. The city remained in Seleucid hands until the 1st century BCE, when it was captured by Armenia during the reign of Tigranes II. Tigranes II was later defeated and Cyrrhus, along with much of Syria, was annexed to Rome. Cyrrhus was captured at least twice by the Sasanians in the 3rd century CE, causing the city to fall into decline. It was captured by the Arabs in 637. By the 13th century, Cyrrhus appears to have been largely deserted.¹⁷ Visible remains include a large theater (built ca. 150 CE), a Byzantine-era citadel, two Roman-era bridges, a hexagonal mausoleum, a church, a basilica, and several gateways.¹⁸

Site Date: ca. 330 BCE–1050 CE

Incident Summary: Illegal excavation continues at the archaeological site of Cyrrhus.

Incident Source and Description: On October 2, 2018 the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) posted a video that shows the use of an earth mover in illegal excavations located southeast of the Roman Theater at Cyrrhus.¹⁹ SOHR attributed this activity to members of the First Legion of the Syrian National Army, under the control of Colonel Moataz Raslan (On October 5, 2018, معتمر رسلان).²⁰ The Center for Documenting Violations in Northern Syria (CDVNS) posted photographs of looting in Afrin that likely show some of these illegal excavations.²¹

ASOR CHI first reported on looting at Cyrrhus in April 2018 based on DigitalGlobe satellite imagery. Since that report, the scale of the looting has escalated and been corroborated by reports from on the ground sources. The looting and bulldozing is located to the south and east of the Roman Theater. In order to understand the spread of looting across the site, ASOR CHI analyzed DigitalGlobe satellite imagery from April 15, 2018 through August 12, 2018—the most recent available image. The periods of greatest expansion were between April 24 and May 15, 2018 and between June 23, 2018 and August 12, 2018. The looting at Cyrrhus is part of a larger pattern of looting at archaeological sites in the Afrin.²²

¹⁷ <https://www.wmf.org/project/cyrrhus-nebi-houri>

¹⁸ Ball 2016: 187.

¹⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/syriahro/videos/812578219133809>

²⁰ <http://www.syriahr.com/?p=286413>

²¹ <https://vdcnsy.com/2018/10/05/صور-جديدة-تكشف-حفر-يات-في-عفرين-بحثا-عن-المدني/>; CDVNS did not explicitly identify the site in the photographs as Cyrrhus. However, most or all were likely taken there on the basis of the architecture and their location in an orchard, which corresponds with evidence in satellite imagery.

²² <https://vdcnsy.com/2018/10/13/مدينة-عفرين-جثة-سوريا-على-الأرض-التي-دمر-المدني/>;
<https://vdcnsy.com/2018/10/18/انتهاكات-المسلحين-بين-خطف-ونهب-المدني/>



Video still of an earth mover working on the area southeast of the Roman Theater at Cyrrhus (SOHR; October 2, 2018)



Video still of an earth mover working on the archaeological site of Cyrrhus (SOHR; October 2, 2018)



Architecture exposed by illegal excavation, probably at Cyrrhus (CDVNS; October 5, 2018)



Illegal excavation, probably at Cyrrhus (CDVNS; October 5, 2018)



Illegal excavation, probably at Cyrrhus (CDVNS; October 5, 2018)



Illegal excavation, probably at Cyrrhus (CDVNS; October 5, 2018)



Illegal excavation, probably at Cyrrhus (CDVNS; October 5, 2018)



Illegal excavation, probably at Cyrrhus (CDVNS; October 5, 2018)



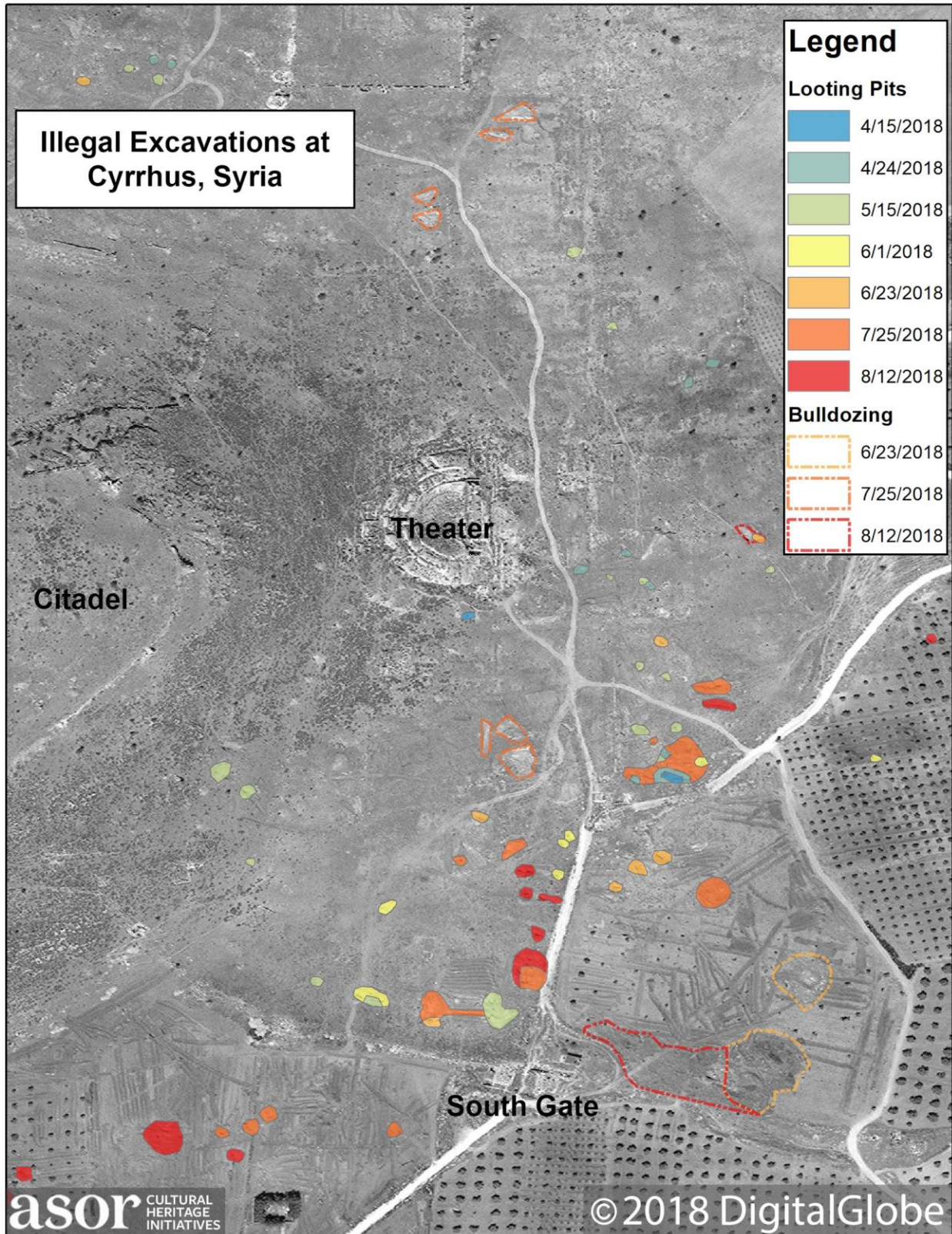
Illegal excavation, probably at Cyrrhus (CDVNS; October 5, 2018)



Illegal excavation, probably at Cyrrhus (CDVNS; October 5, 2018)



Architecture exposed by illegal excavation, probably at Cyrrhus (CDVNS; October 5, 2018)



Identified looting pits and bulldozing marks between April 15, 2018 and August 12, 2018 (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; August 12, 2018)

SHI 18-0118

Report Date: October 8, 2018

Site Name: al-Sayyidat Aisha Mosque (جامع السيدة عائشة)

Date of Incident: October 3, 2018

Location: Hajin, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: Artillery bombardment damaged a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On October 6, the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) bombarded the area around al-Sayyidat Aisha Mosque with artillery on October 3, partially damaging the building.²³ No photographs or video of the reported damage were available at the time of publication. DigitalGlobe satellite imagery from October 30, 2018 was unable to corroborate the damage to the mosque.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Deir ez-Zor Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0119, SHI 18-0121, SHI 18-0122, SHI 18-0123, SHI 18-0125 and SHI 18-0126.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of al-Sayyidat Aisha Mosque, as well as the condition of other cultural heritage sites located in regions subject to military activity.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Syrian Network for Human Rights: <http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/10/06/syrian-democratic-forces-shelled-mosque-hajin-city-deir-ez-zour-suburbs-october-3/>

²³ <http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/10/06/syrian-democratic-forces-shelled-mosque-hajin-city-deir-ez-zour-suburbs-october-3/>

SHI 18-0119

Report Date: October 8, 2018

Site Name: al-Sultan Mosque (Khalid bin al-Walid Mosque; جامع السلطان)

Date of Incident: October 4, 2018

Location: Hajin, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: Artillery bombardment damaged a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On October 6, the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) artillery bombardment damaged the al-Sultan Mosque on October 4, 2018.²⁴ SNHR asserted that the bombardment severely damaged the mosque, “rendering it inoperable.” No photographs or video of the reported damage were available at the time of publication.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Deir ez-Zor Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0118, SHI 18-0121, SHI 18-0122, SHI 18-0123, SHI 18-0125 and SHI 18-0126.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of the Sultan Mosque, as well as the condition of other cultural heritage sites located in regions subject to military activity.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Syrian Network for Human Rights: <http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/10/06/syrian-democratic-forces-shelled-mosque-hajin-city-deir-ez-zour-suburbs-october-4/>

²⁴ <http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/10/06/syrian-democratic-forces-shelled-mosque-hajin-city-deir-ez-zour-suburbs-october-4/>

SHI 18-0120

Report Date: October 14, 2018

Site Name:

- al-Rahma Mosque (جامع الرحمة)
- Gazwet Badr Mosque (جامع غزوة بدر)
- al-Taqwa Mosque (جامع التقوى)
- Harmala ibn al-Waleed Mosque (جامع حرملة ابن الوليد)
- al-Qbani Mosque (جامع القباني)

Date of Incident: Between March 2018–October 2018

Location: Jobar, Damascus, Damascus Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosques in Jobar and Zamalka.

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: The Syrian regime reportedly demolished five mosques in the suburbs of Eastern Ghouta.

Incident Source and Description: On October 14, 2018 Horrya Press reported that the Syrian regime had demolished five mosques in the suburb of Jobar in Eastern Ghouta: al-Rahma Mosque (located in the Zamalka neighborhood), Gazwet Badr Mosque, al-Taqwa Mosque, Harmala ibn al-Waleed Mosque, and al-Qbani Mosque.²⁵ Residential buildings were also reportedly demolished in these areas. At least one source pointed to the Syrian regime's use of Law 10 in the demolishing of mosques in Jobar.²⁶

According to Horrya Press, the official explanation by the Syrian regime is that these mosques are being taken down due to the presence of tunnels underneath the mosques.²⁷ In addition, the mosques have been heavily damaged by military operations, including aerial bombardment in the area. However, reported local sources accused pro-regime militias of digging underneath the mosques to search for gold and antiquities with the assistance of excavation experts. ASOR CHI can not independently verify either of these claims.

Based on DigitalGlobe satellite imagery:

- The al-Rahma Mosque was destroyed between July 29, 2018 and August 8, 2018 and its remains were bulldozed between August 27 and September 11, 2018.
- The previously still-standing building and minaret of al-Taqwa Mosque was bulldozed between August 27 and September 11, 2018.
- Harmala ibn al-Waleed Mosque was severely damaged November 6, 2012 and October 26, 2013. The remains were bulldozed between July 15 and July 18, 2018.
- As of October 31, 2018, the structures of Gazwet Badr Mosque and al-Qbani Mosque were still standing although both had been previously damaged.

²⁵ <https://horrya.net/archives/78260>

²⁶ https://www.baladinews.com/ar/news/details/35910/النظام_يهدم_مسجدا_في_جوير_وعشرات_الأبنية_في_حرسنا

²⁷ <https://horrya.net/archives/78260>

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Rif Dimashq Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0127**

Pattern: Development disturbances.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of cultural heritage sites in Jobar, as well as the condition of other cultural heritage sites located in regions subject to military activity.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Baladi News:

<https://www.baladinews.com/ar/news/details/35910> النظام يهدم مسجدا في جويز وعشرات الأبنية في حرستا

Horrya Press: <https://horrya.net/archives/78260>

Smart News Agency:

<https://smartnews-agency.com/ar/wires/331895> النظام يهدم جامعا في حي جويز ويفجر أبنية سكنية بمدينة

al-Rahma Mosque (جامع الرحمة)



Al-Rahma mosque with prior visible damage from heavy shelling visible on all sides of the mosque, as well as to the dome (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; August 29, 2018)



Al-Rahma mosque is almost entirely destroyed, likely the result of an airstrike based on the extensive damage to the main portion of the structure (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; August 8, 2018)



The remains of al-Rahma mosque, shown within the red square, are bulldozed, along with other destroyed buildings in the area (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; September 11, 2018)

Gazwet Badr Mosque (جامع غزوة بدر)



Gazwet Badr Mosque, as of October 28, 2018, is still standing, although has been damaged as a result of heavy shelling (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; October 28, 2018)

al-Taqwa Mosque (جامع التقوى)



Al-Taqwa mosque prior to destruction; bulldozer scars are clearly visible east and southeast of the mosque (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; August 27, 2018)



Al-Taqwa mosque is destroyed, although the means by which are unclear in satellite imagery (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; September 11, 2018)

Harmala ibn al-Waleed Mosque (جامع حرملة ابن الوليد)



Harmala ibn al-Waleed Mosque was initially damaged by explosives between November 6, 2012 and December 23, 2014. The result of this severe damage is shown within the red square (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; December 23, 2014)



The area surrounding Harmala ibn al-Waleed was bulldozed between July 15, 2018 and July 18, 2018, and again between August 5, 2018 and August 8, 2018. The results of this demolition are visible within the red square (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; August 8, 2018)

al-Qbani Mosque (جامع القباني)



Approximately half of the al-Qbani Mosque initially collapsed between September 13, 2018 and October 8, 2017. The mosque appears to be in the same condition in the most recently available imagery, shown within the red square (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; October 31, 2018)

SHI 18-0121

Report Date: October 26, 2018

Site Name: Ammar bin Yasser Mosque (مسجد عمار بن ياسر; Formerly al-Mustafa Mosque; also known as Ali al-Dagher Mosque)

Date of Incident: October 18, 2018

Location: Albu-Badran Neighborhood, al-Susah, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: A US-led Coalition airstrike destroyed a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On October 18, 2018 the US-led Coalition conducted an airstrike on Ammar bin Yasser Mosque.²⁸ The strike caused most of the mosque to collapse; only an annex on the western side of the building remains standing. DigitalGlobe satellite imagery from October 30, 2018 confirms this damage.

The airstrike was one of a number that occurred in and around al-Susah between Thursday, October 18 and Friday, October 19 which reportedly caused tens of civilian casualties.²⁹ The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) attributed at least 16 deaths, including 5 children, to the attack on the mosque, which it says occurred on October 19.³⁰ The spokesperson for Operation Inherent Resolve asserted that the strike killed 12 members of ISIS who were using the mosque as a command and control center.³¹ Video footage originally posted by the ISIS-affiliated Amaq News Agency, and subsequently circulated by other sources, shows multiple casualties from the bombing.³²

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Deir ez-Zor Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0118, SHI 18-0119, SHI 18-0122, SHI 18-0123, SHI 18-0125 and SHI 18-0126.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives - airstrike.

²⁸ <https://twitter.com/OIRSpox/status/1054316842825736193>

²⁹ <http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=105007>; https://www.orient-news.net/en/news_show/155242/Toll-caus-ed-US-led-coalition-raids-in-Deir-ez-Zoor-reached-70; <https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1434376/Syria-number-sousa-massacre-victims-rises>; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-usa/u-s-coalition-says-it-struck-islamic-state-fighters-in-syria-mosque-idUSKCN1MW2FL>

³⁰ <http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/10/21/international-coalition-forces-committed-massacre-al-sousa-town-deir-ez-zour-suburbs-second-day-row-october-19/>

³¹ <https://twitter.com/OIRSpox/status/1054316842825736193>

³² https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NKBBI_8BgPk; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wI0yzQg20K0>

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of Ammar bin Yasser Mosque, as well as the condition of other cultural heritage sites located in regions subject to military activity.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Ahmad Abu al-Kheir (Youtube Account): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wI0yzQg20K0>

Al-Sousah Village: <https://www.facebook.com/alsuosahVillage/videos/162596328019617/>

Asharq al-Awsat: <https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1434376/syria-number-sousa-massacre-victims-rises>

Mete Sohtaoglu: <https://twitter.com/metesohtaoglu/status/1054301681297641473>

Monitor for Studies: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NKBBI_8BgPk

OIR Spokesman: <https://twitter.com/OIRSpox/status/1054316842825736193>

Orient News: https://www.orient-news.net/en/news_show/155242/Toll-caused-US-led-coalition-raids-in-Deir-ez-Zoor-reached-70

Reuters: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-usa/u-s-coalition-says-it-struck-islamic-state-fighters-in-syria-mosque-idUSKCN1MW2FL>

Syrian Observatory for Human Rights: <http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=105007>

Syrian Network for Human Rights:

October 21, 2018: <http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/10/21/international-coalition-forces-committed-massacre-al-sousa-town-deir-ez-zour-suburbs-second-day-row-october-19/>; <http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/10/21/international-coalition-forces-bombed-mosque-al-sousa-town-deir-ez-zour-suburbs-october-19/>



A view of the collapsed Ammar bin Yasser Mosque with the dome present in the background (SNHR; October 21, 2018)



Video still of Ammar bin Yasser Mosque, seen from the southeast (Ahmad Abu al-Kheir; October 20, 2018)



Ammar bin Yasser Mosque prior to damage (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; September 10, 2018)



The western side of Ammar bin Yasser Mosque has collapsed (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; October 30, 2018)

SHI 18-0123

Report Date: October 23, 2018

Site Name: al-Ghannam Mosque (مسجد الغنام)

Date of Incident: October 22, 2018

Location: al-Susah, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: A US-led Coalition airstrike damaged a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On October 22, 2018 a US-led Coalition airstrike damaged al-Ghannam Mosque in al-Susah.³³ No photographs or video were available at the time of publication that showed the extent of the damage caused to the mosque.

This strike occurred as part of an ongoing offensive against ISIS in the Hajin Pocket that has resulted in damage to at least four mosques.³⁴ This mosque may correspond to one targeted by the US-led Coalition on October 22 that was reportedly used by ISIS as a command center and defensive fighting position.³⁵

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Deir ez-Zor Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0118, SHI 18-0119, SHI 18-0121, SHI 18-0122, SHI 18-0125** and **SHI 18-0126**.

Pattern: Military activity: explosives - airstrike.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of al-Ghannam Mosque, as well as the condition of other cultural heritage sites located in regions subject to military activity.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Operation Inherent Resolve: <http://www.inherentresolve.mil/News/News-Releases/Article/1668055/coalition-strikes-facilities-used-by-daesh/>

³³ <http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/10/24/international-coalition-forces-bombed-mosque-al-sousa-town-deir-ez-zour-suburbs-october-22/>; [https://www.stripes.com/news/us-led-coalition-strikes-isis-held-mosque](https://www.stripes.com/news/us-led-coalition-strikes-isis-held-mosque-in-syria-for-second-time-in-a-week-1.553090)

³⁴ <http://www.syriahr.com/?p=288302>

³⁵ <http://www.inherentresolve.mil/News/News-Releases/Article/1668055/coalition-strikes-facilities-used-by-daesh/>

Stars and Stripes: <https://www.stripes.com/news/us-led-coalition-strikes-isis-held-mosque-in-syria-for-second-time-in-a-week-1.553090>

Syrian Network for Human Rights: <http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/10/24/international-coalition-forces-bombed-mosque-al-sousa-town-deir-ez-zour-suburbs-october-22/>

Syrian Observatory for Human Rights: <http://www.syriahr.com/?p=288302>

SHI 18-0124

Report Date: October 23, 2018

Site Name: Shash Hamdan Tomb

Date of Incident: Unknown

Location: Manbij, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

Site Description: According to Monuments of Syria, the “Shash Hamdan Tomb is a Roman tomb probably of the Severan Era and possibly dedicated to a cult celebrated by priestesses.”³⁶

Site Date: Roman Era

Incident Summary: Illegal excavations were reported at a Roman tomb.

Incident Source and Description: On October 17, 2018 the Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) reported illegal excavation and theft occurring in and around Manbij, and at the Roman tomb of Shash Hamdan.³⁷ The article accused the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) as being responsible for the looting. Mahmoud Hammoud, head of the DGAM, stated that the directorate has information on the widespread illegal excavations and trade in antiquities from around Manbij. According to Hammoud, local citizens confirmed foreign experts and Turkish-backed groups illegally excavated sites in Afrin and Nabi Hourri in Aleppo. Hammoud also stated that the DGAM is coordinating with ‘external agencies’ to report on these activities and take appropriate measures to stop the illegal activity. On October 18, 2018 AhlulBayt News Agency (ABNA) picked up the story.³⁸ The story presented by SANA mirrors a story reported by Baladi News earlier this year.

On May 16, 2018 Baladi News reported that SDF and American forces were looting in and around Manbij. The article stated that these artifacts were transferred to the city of Ain al-Arab (aka Kubani or Kobani) to be exported out of the country.³⁹ This story was picked up by Fars News on May 19, 2016. Ain al-Arab remains under the control of the Kurdish People’s Protection Units (YPG). The article further reported that SDF forces discovered “several historical statues and golden artifacts belonging to the Roman Era” as well as artifacts from a Byzantine graveyard in front of the al-Sana’ah district, al-Hal market, historical Najm castle, Hirbole temple, and several other graveyards.⁴⁰

An ASOR CHI in-country source reported that most of the damage to the Roman tomb occurred prior to 2015. The photographs shared by the various news outlets that picked up on the story matched those from previous reports including an assessment report by ASOR CHI-partner The Day After-Heritage Protection Initiative (TDA-HPI), France 24, and the DGAM.⁴¹

³⁶ <http://monumentsofsyria.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/Shash-Hamdan-PDF-20141.pdf>

³⁷ <https://www.sana.sy/?p=830359>

³⁸ http://en.abna24.com/news/middle-east/syrias-manbij-bears-witness-to-terrorists%E2%80%99-subversive-activities_913321.html

³⁹ https://www.baladi-news.com/ar/news/details/30820/عناصر_أمريكان_ينهبون_الأثار_الرومانية_في_منبج

⁴⁰ <http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13970229000551>

⁴¹ <http://monumentsofsyria.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/Shash-Hamdan-PDF-20141.pdf>; <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1107>

In 2014, Patrick Coburn reported in *The Independent* that ISIS had vandalized the Shash Hamdan tomb.⁴² In a report to UNESCO in 2014, the DGAM claimed that the carved reliefs at Shash Hamdan were deliberately targeted by gunfire and smashed into fragments.⁴³ The DGAM yearly report for 2013, published in January 2014, detailed the condition of Shash Hamdan as damage being present to a statue of a bull carved on the northern wall and two deer on the western side, destruction of the altar, digging in the northeastern corner, and theft of the metal gate.⁴⁴

For previous damage to Shash Hamdan, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0162 in Weekly Report 71-72.**

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Aleppo Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0090 UPDATE.**

Pattern: Illegal excavation.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of Manbij, as well as the condition of other sites located in regions subject to illegal excavation.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

AhlulBayt News Agency (ABNA):

http://en.abna24.com/news/middle-east/syrias-manbij-bears-witness-to-terrorists%E2%80%99-subversive-activities_913321.html

Baladi News:

https://www.baladi-news.com/ar/news/details/30820/عناصر_أمريكان_ينهبون_الأثار_الرومانية_في_منبج

DGAM: <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1107>

Fars News: <http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13970229000551>

Gates of Nineveh:

<https://gatesofnineveh.wordpress.com/2014/06/12/mosul-cultural-heritage-under-threat-news-roundup/>

The Independent:

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/archaeology/news/the-destruction-of-the-idols-syria-s-patrimony-at-risk-from-extremists-9122275.html>

⁴² <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/archaeology/news/the-destruction-of-the-idols-syria-s-patrimony-at-risk-from-extremists-9122275.html>; <https://gatesofnineveh.wordpress.com/2014/06/12/mosul-cultural-heritage-under-threat-news-roundup/>

⁴³ <https://whc.unesco.org/en/soc/3186>

⁴⁴ https://uscbs.org/assets/dgam_report_2013_-en_2.pdf

Monuments of Syria: <http://monumentsofsyria.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/Shash-Hamdan-PDF-20141.pdf>

Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA): <https://www.sana.sy/?p=830359>

UNESCO: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/soc/3186>

US Committee of the Blue Shield: https://uscbs.org/assets/dgam_report_2013_-en_2.pdf



Photograph that claims to show evidence of illegal excavation occurring by US-backed SDF Forces in 2018 (ABNA; October 18, 2018)



The first instance of the same photograph from 2013 (DGAM; November 17, 2013)



Photograph that claims to show evidence of illegal excavation occurring by US-backed SDF Forces in 2018 (ABNA; October 18, 2018)



The first instance of the same photograph from 2013 (DGAM; November 17, 2013)



Close-up of a possible looting pit in Shash Hamdan tomb (ABNA; October 18, 2018)



The first instance of the same photograph from 2013 (DGAM; November 17, 2013)



Close-up of a possible looting pit in Shash Hamdan tomb (ABNA; October 18, 2018)



The first instance of the same photograph from 2013 (DGAM; November 17, 2013)



Photograph that shows damage to the bull relief (ABNA; October 18, 2018)



The first instance of the same photograph from 2013 (DGAM; November 17, 2013)



Close-up of the damage to the bull (DGAM; November 17, 2013)



The entrance to the tomb (DGAM; November 17, 2013)

SHI 18-0125

Report Date: October 26, 2018

Site Name: al-Zawiyah Mosque (مسجد الزاوية)

Date of Incident: October 24, 2018

Location: Hajin, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: A US-led Coalition airstrike damaged a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On October 24, the US-led Coalition conducted an airstrike on al-Zawiyah Mosque in Hajin.⁴⁵ The strike reportedly caused civilian casualties.⁴⁶ No photographs or video were available at the time of publication that showed the extent of the damage caused to the mosque. It is unclear whether this mosque is the same as the unnamed mosque that the OIR spokesman acknowledged was targeted around the same time in al-Susah.⁴⁷

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Deir ez-Zor Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0118, SHI 18-0119, SHI 18-0121, SHI 18-0122, SHI 18-0123 and SHI 18-0126.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives - airstrike.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of al-Zawiyah Mosque, as well as the condition of other cultural heritage sites located in regions subject to military activity.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Deir ez Zor 24: <https://twitter.com/DeirEzzor24/status/1055257638672449537>

Operation Inherent Resolve Spokesman:

<https://twitter.com/OIRSpox/status/1055157514436857856>

Orient News: https://orient-news.net/en/news_show/155438/0/US-led-coalition-hits-mosque-in-Deir-ez-Zor-countryside

⁴⁵ https://orient-news.net/en/news_show/155438/0/US-led-coalition-hits-mosque-in-Deir-ez-Zor-countryside; <https://twitter.com/DeirEzzor24/status/1055257638672449537>

⁴⁶ <https://twitter.com/DeirEzzor24/status/1055257638672449537>; https://twitter.com/Step_Agency/status/1055426123688042496

⁴⁷ <https://twitter.com/OIRSpox/status/1055157514436857856>

Sound and Pic: <https://twitter.com/soundandpic/status/1055427049010196482>

Step News Agency: https://twitter.com/Step_Agency/status/1055426123688042496

SHI 18-0126

Report Date: October 26, 2018

Site Name: Unnamed Mosque

Date of Incident: October 24, 2018

Location: al-Susah, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: A US-led Coalition airstrike damaged a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On October 24, 2018 the spokesman for Operation Inherent Resolve reported that the US-led Coalition conducted an airstrike on an unnamed mosque in al-Susah.⁴⁸ The spokesman stated that ISIS was using the building as a defensive position at the time of the strike. No photographs or video were available at the time of publication that showed the extent of the damage caused to the mosque. It is unclear whether this mosque is the same as al-Zawiyah Mosque, which was reportedly hit around the same time in Hajin.⁴⁹

See the associated incident report in this monthly report for other damaged cultural sites in Deir ez-Zor Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0118, SHI 18-0119, SHI 18-0121, SHI 18-0122, SHI 18-0123** and **SHI 18-0125**.

Pattern: Military activity: explosives - airstrike.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of the Unnamed Mosque, as well as the condition of other cultural heritage sites located in regions subject to military activity.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Operation Inherent Resolve Spokesman (Twitter Account):

<https://twitter.com/OIRSpox/status/1055157514436857856>

Orient News:

https://orient-news.net/en/news_show/155438/0/US-led-coalition-hits-mosque-in-Deir-ez-Zor-countryside

⁴⁸ <https://twitter.com/OIRSpox/status/1055157514436857856>

⁴⁹ https://orient-news.net/en/news_show/155438/0/US-led-coalition-hits-mosque-in-Deir-ez-Zor-countryside

SHI 18-0127

Report Date: October 25, 2018

Site Name:

- Ammar bin Yasser Mosque (جامع عمار بن ياسر)
- Khaled bin al-Walid Mosque
- al-Afandi Mosque

Date of Incident: Between March 2018–October 2018

Location: Harasta al-Bas, Rif Dimashq Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosques in Harasta.

Site Date: Unknown.

Incident Summary: The Syrian regime demolished three mosques in the city of Harasta.

Incident Source and Description: On October 24, 2018 several Arabic news networks reported that the Syrian regime had demolished three mosques in the city of Harasta after first demolishing five mosques in the neighborhood of Jobar.⁵⁰ Baladi News named the mosques as Ammar bin Yasser Mosque, Khaled bin al-Walid Mosque, and al-Afandi Mosque. Residential buildings were also reportedly demolished in these areas.

According to Baladi News, the demolition of the mosques may be connected with the expansion of the international highway that runs through the city. In addition, this area of Harasta may be included in a future planned water park. According to a Facebook page that follows updates in Harasta, the building of a water park was announced in July 2018.⁵¹ The same page has posted dozens of photographs and video of clearing operations in the area, including clearing of residential buildings by heavy machinery and clean up by locals of buildings including mosques.

DigitalGlobe satellite imagery shows Ammar bin Yasser Mosque was severely damaged between November 6, 2012 and October 26, 2013, with over 50% of the structure destroyed. The remains of the mosque have not been bulldozed or changed in any way since that time based on imagery through October 31, 2018. However, either Khalid bin al-Walid or al-Afandi Mosque did not appear severely damaged in imagery through September 11, 2018 and the structure was still standing. Between September 11 and September 29, 2018 the entire building and surrounding area was bulldozed.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Rif Dimashq Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0120**

Pattern: Development disturbances.

⁵⁰ <https://www.baladi-news.com/ar/news/details/36876> بعد جوبر النظام يهدم مساجد حرستا

⁵¹ <https://www.facebook.com/HarastaAa.City/posts/997937610392892/> حرستا وقت-حكينا-انو-في-مدينة-مائية-ما-حدا-صدقنا-مدينة-مائية-في-دمشق-قر-بياشنشهد-مد

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of cultural heritage sites in Harasta, as well as the condition of other cultural heritage sites located in regions subject to military activity.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Baladi News:

September 29, 2018: <https://www.baladinews.com/ar/news/details/35910/>

[النظام يهدم مسجدا في جوبر وعشرات الأبنية في حرستا](https://www.baladinews.com/ar/news/details/35910/)

October 24, 2018: <https://www.baladi->

[news.com/ar/news/details/36876/](https://www.baladi-news.com/ar/news/details/36876/) [بعد جوبر النظام يهدم مساجد حرستا](https://www.baladi-news.com/ar/news/details/36876/)

El Dorar: <https://eldorar.com/node/127280>

Harasta City/Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/HarastaAa.City/posts/-مدينة-مانية-ما-حدا-صدقنا-مدينة-مانية-حرساوقت-حكينا-انو-في-مدينة-مانية-ما-حدا-صدقنا-مدينة-مانية-مد>

[في-دمشق-قربااشتشهد-مد](https://www.facebook.com/HarastaAa.City/posts/-مدينة-مانية-ما-حدا-صدقنا-مدينة-مانية-حرساوقت-حكينا-انو-في-مدينة-مانية-ما-حدا-صدقنا-مدينة-مانية-مد)

Orient News: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pfQxLBgP5LA>



The remains of Ammar bin Yasser Mosque still standing (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; October 31, 2018)



Khalid bin al-Walid or al-Afandi Mosque within minimal damage visible (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; September 11, 2018)



Khalid bin al-Walid or al-Afandi Mosque after the area had been bulldozed (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; September 29, 2018)

SHI 18-0128

Report Date: October 29, 2018

Site Name: Late-Roman Mausoleum

Date of Incident: October 2018

Location: Kafr Aleen (كفر علين), Idlib Governorate, Syria

Site Description: This mausoleum consists of a single burial chamber with five lobes that each house a sarcophagus. The chamber is accessed from the south via a stairway. Other parts of the mausoleum may remain unexcavated.

Site Date: Late Roman

Incident Summary: Illegal excavation exposed a Roman mausoleum.

Incident Source and Description: During October 2018, the Idlib Antiquities Center excavated and documented a mausoleum in the middle of an orchard near Kafr Aleen, a village near Jarjanaz.⁵² The mausoleum was originally exposed by unknown looters, who used heavy machinery to clear part of the site. These illegal excavations damaged part of the mortuary architecture.

The contents of the mausoleum were disturbed. Local antiquities authorities recovered pottery and glass as well as bones. The contents, architectural elements, and lack of Christian iconography in the tomb suggest a Late Roman date, possibly in the early 3rd century CE.⁵³

DigitalGlobe satellite imagery confirms that the mausoleum was disturbed by illegal excavation between September 26, 2018 and October 7, 2018. There are large earth piles surrounding the mausoleum, as well as several looting pits along the northeastern and eastern edge of the site.

Pattern: Illegal excavation.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of the Late Roman Mausoleum, as well as the condition of other sites located in regions subject to illegal excavation.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Idlib Antiquities Center:

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=2202114716473445&id=1070868956264699

Idlib Plus: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ywB8AjxUsQ>

⁵² https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=2202114716473445&id=1070868956264699; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=owgsjkiWQz8>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vWuOLNjAW68>

⁵³ ASOR CHI Academic Sources (Prof. Brian Rose and Prof. Robert Ousterhout, University of Pennsylvania)

MMC: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1HkCSb3y600>

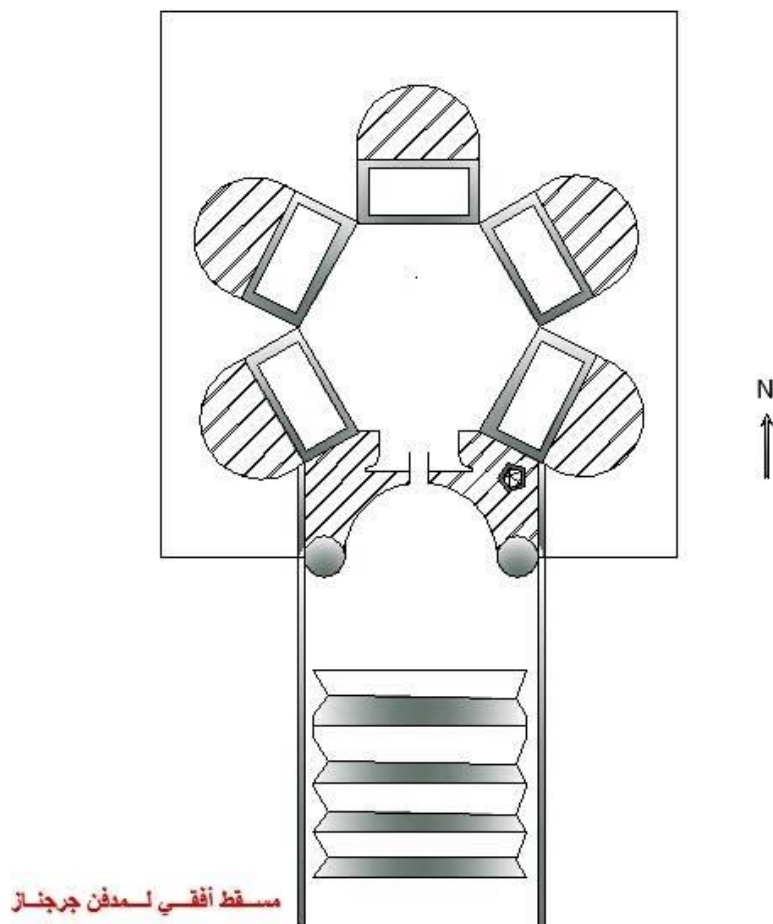
Orient News:

October 28, 2018: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=owgsJkiWQz8>

October 29, 2018: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Glw-qAFQILE>

SMART News Agency: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vWuOLNjAW68>

STEP News Agency: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JrRYO-Rw8ko>



A plan of the mausoleum (Idlib Antiquities Center; October 28, 2018)



The stairway down into the mausoleum (Idlib Antiquities Center; October 28, 2018)



A sarcophagus in one of the lobes of the burial chamber (Idlib Antiquities Center; October 28, 2018)



The doorway into the burial chamber (Idlib Antiquities Center; October 28, 2018)



The burial chamber, seen from the south (Idlib Antiquities Center; October 28, 2018)

TSR Watermark Image - Unregistered version - This line is removed when registered.



The burial chamber, seen from the north (Idlib Antiquities Center; October 28, 2018)



The late Roman Mausoleum is visible within the red square on satellite imagery (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; September 26, 2018)



Earth piles from illicit digging are visible surrounding the mausoleum, as well as several looting pits along the northeastern and eastern edge of the mausoleum (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; October 7, 2018)

SHI 18-0129 Heritage Response Report

Report Date: October 30, 2018

Site Name: al-Kabir Mosque (المسجد الكبير); Abu Bakr al-Sidiq Mosque (مسجد ابو بكر الصديق)

Location: al-Lataminah, Hama Governorate, Syria

Site Description: al-Kabir Mosque: Sunni Mosque; Abu Bakr al-Sidiq Mosque: Sunni Mosque

Site Date: Unknown.

Heritage Response Summary: Local volunteers are cleaning mosques in al-Lataminah.

Heritage Response Source (organization) and Description of Work: On October 6, 2018 STEP News Agency published a video showing local volunteers cleaning the al-Kabir Mosque and the Abu Bakr al-Sidiq Mosque in al-Lataminah.⁵⁴ Inside the al-Kabir Mosque, the prayer rugs were removed and the building was swept to remove the debris. Inside the Abu Bakr al-Sidiq Mosque, the floors were swept, mopped, walls were washed, and prayer rugs were placed on the floor.

Description of Previous Damage to Site: On December 6, 2015 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that SARG warplanes fired missiles that struck al-Kabir mosque (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0154** in **Weekly Report 69-70**). The strikes damaged the ceiling and rendered the mosque unusable. On November 6, 2017 Qasioun News Agency published a video showing damage to the mosque.⁵⁵

On December 6, 2016 RFS Media Office reported that an airstrike damaged Abu Bakr al-Sidiq Mosque (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0182** in **Weekly Report 121-122**). Photographs accompanying the report showed that the mosque had suffered significant damage. A large hole was present in the ceiling of the mosque and a great deal of debris was present in the interior.

Operating Organization: Local volunteers.

Pattern: Site management.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor heritage response activity in al-Lataminah, as well as the condition of other cultural heritage sites undergoing response activity.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

STEP News Agency: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1v9dYZ6ngzk>

⁵⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1v9dYZ6ngzk>

⁵⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gEqx37iYwjQ>

Al-Kabir Mosque (المسجد الكبير)



Video still of the exterior of the al-Kabir Mosque (STEP News Agency; October 6, 2018)



Video still of the exterior of the al-Kabir Mosque (STEP News Agency; October 6, 2018)



Video still of the interior of the al-Kabir Mosque, removal of the prayer rugs (STEP News Agency; October 6, 2018)



Video still of the interior of the al-Kabir Mosque, sweeping up debris (STEP News Agency; October 6, 2018)



Video still of the interior of the al-Kabir Mosque, sweeping up debris (STEP News Agency; October 6, 2018)



Video still of the interior of the al-Kabir Mosque, with debris and piled prayer rugs present (STEP News Agency; October 6, 2018)

Abu Bakr al-Sidiq Mosque (مسجد ابو بكر الصديق)



Video still of the exterior of the Abu Bakr al-Sidiq Mosque (STEP News Agency; October 6, 2018)



Video still of the hole in the roof of Abu Bakr al-Sidiq Mosque (STEP News Agency; October 6, 2018)



Video still of the cleaning of Abu Bakr al-Sidiq Mosque (STEP News Agency; October 6, 2018)



Video still of the cleaning of Abu Bakr al-Sidiq Mosque (STEP News Agency; October 6, 2018)



Video still of the cleaning of Abu Bakr al-Sidiq Mosque (STEP News Agency; October 6, 2018)



Video still of the placing of prayer rugs at Abu Bakr al-Sidiq Mosque (STEP News Agency; October 6, 2018)

SHI 18-0130 Heritage Response Report

Report Date: October 17, 2018

Site Name: National Museum of Aleppo

Date of Incident: October 17, 2018

Location: Aleppo, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

Site Description: The National Museum of Aleppo building consists of two stories arranged around a central courtyard. To the right of the entrance to the main building is the administration annex.⁵⁶ The first floor contains a number of exhibits showing objects from the al-Jazeera Hills, Mari, the Hama region, Ugarit, Tell Halaf, Arslan Tash, Tell Ahmar, Ebla, and an exhibit on ancient statues and cuneiform scripts. The second floor contains Greco-Roman and Islamic era artifacts, and modern art. The internal courtyard of the museum is home to Roman and Hittite statues and a large 3rd-century CE mosaic. The exterior courtyard contains large artifacts from Assyrian, Aramaean, Byzantine, and Islamic civilizations.⁵⁷

Site Date: 1966 CE

Heritage Response Summary: Cleaning efforts have begun at Aleppo Museum.

Heritage Response Source (organization) and Description of Work: On October 17–18, 2018 the Facebook group Aleppo Glory shared a series of photographs showing the clearing of debris from the facade of the National Museum of Aleppo.⁵⁸ Most of the debris shown in the photographs are from previous protection efforts including sandbagging possible and concrete-encasement at the museum. This sandbagging protected the statues from Tell Halaf which formed the entrance of the museum. A Facebook post from the group dated October 18 explained that the cleaning was supported by the UNDP. On October 29, 2018, SANA shared more photographs of the main courtyard of the museum.⁵⁹ They state that the sandbags and wooden scaffolding are being removed, the rubble cleaned from the courtyard and inside the museum, and restoration is taking place inside the museum. The artifacts that were removed for safekeeping are also being returned. They do not state who is funding this restoration.

Description of Previous Damage to Site: The National Museum of Aleppo was damaged multiple times over the Syrian conflict. From 2012–2013, clashes between Syrian opposition and the Syrian regime caused damage to the museum's exterior. The DGAM soon reported that the museum's artifacts had been transferred to an undisclosed location for safekeeping. Artifacts in the facades and courtyards at the museum were sandbagged.⁶⁰ In November 2014, the DGAM reported that shelling struck the electrical transformer room outside the museum, injuring three people (ASOR

⁵⁶ Burns 2009: 50

⁵⁷ http://www.aleppo.us/news/view/30/ar/%D9%85%D8%AA%D8%AD%D9%81_%D8%AD%D9%84%D8%A8_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D8%B7%D9%86%D9%8A.html

⁵⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/aleppoglory/posts/1995755770481260> ; <https://www.facebook.com/aleppoglory/posts/1998310966892407>

⁵⁹ <https://sana.sy/?p=836177>

⁶⁰ <https://www.wsj.com/articles/amid-devastation-of-aleppo-syria-archaeological-museum-fights-to-preserve-heritage-1398456094>

CHI Incident Report SHI 14-0077 in Weekly Report 15). On July 11, 2016 the DGAM reported that Syrian opposition shelling had severely damaged the museum (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0105 in Weekly Report 101-102**). A series of photographs detailed the damage including a large hole in the roof of the museum and shattered windows. In July 2016, the DGAM reported that Syrian opposition shelling had damaged the facade of the museum (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0114 in Weekly Report 103-104**).

Operating Organization: According to Aleppo Glory, the cleaning efforts were being conducted with the support of the UNDP. ASOR CHI was unable to confirm these claims. However in July 2018, the Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) reported that a representative of the UNDP, Akiko Suzuki, attended a conference at the DGAM in Damascus and discussed UN support for repairing and restoring antiquities in the Old City of Aleppo, Homs, and Palmyra.⁶¹ The UNDP is actively operating in Aleppo Governorate. In 2017, the UNDP conducted “capacity development interventions targeted the field of cultural heritage through providing training programmes in partnership with the Archaeological Institute of Kashihara, Nara Prefecture. The training targeted the technical staff of the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums and provided them with the technical equipment necessary to document damaged structures and artefacts.”⁶²

Pattern: Site-management: reconstruction/clean-up.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor heritage response activity at the National Museum in Aleppo, as well as the condition of other cultural heritage sites undergoing response activity.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Aleppo Glory:

October 17, 2018: <https://www.facebook.com/aleppoglory/posts/1995755770481260>

October 18, 2018: <https://www.facebook.com/aleppoglory/posts/1998310966892407>

Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA):

July 19, 2018: <https://sana.sy/en/?p=142829>

October 29, 2018: <https://sana.sy/?p=836177>

UNDP in Syria:

<http://www.sy.undp.org/content/dam/syria/Reports/2017%20Annual%20Report%20Final%20Digital%20Version.pdf>

Scholarly:

Burns, R. (2010) *Monuments of Syria: A Guide*. London: I.B. Tauris.

⁶¹ <https://sana.sy/en/?p=142829>

⁶² <http://www.sy.undp.org/content/dam/syria/Reports/2017%20Annual%20Report%20Final%20Digital%20Version.pdf>



Clearing machinery seen outside the Aleppo Museum (Aleppo Glory; October 18, 2018)



Workers are show resting outside the Aleppo Museum (Aleppo Glory; October 17, 2018)



The facade of the museum after the cleaning (SANA; October 29, 2018)



The courtyard of the museum after cleaning (SANA; October 29, 2018)



A photograph of the current condition of the courtyard outside Aleppo Museum (Aleppo Glory; October 18, 2018)



A photograph of the current condition of the courtyard outside Aleppo Museum (Aleppo Glory; October 18, 2018)



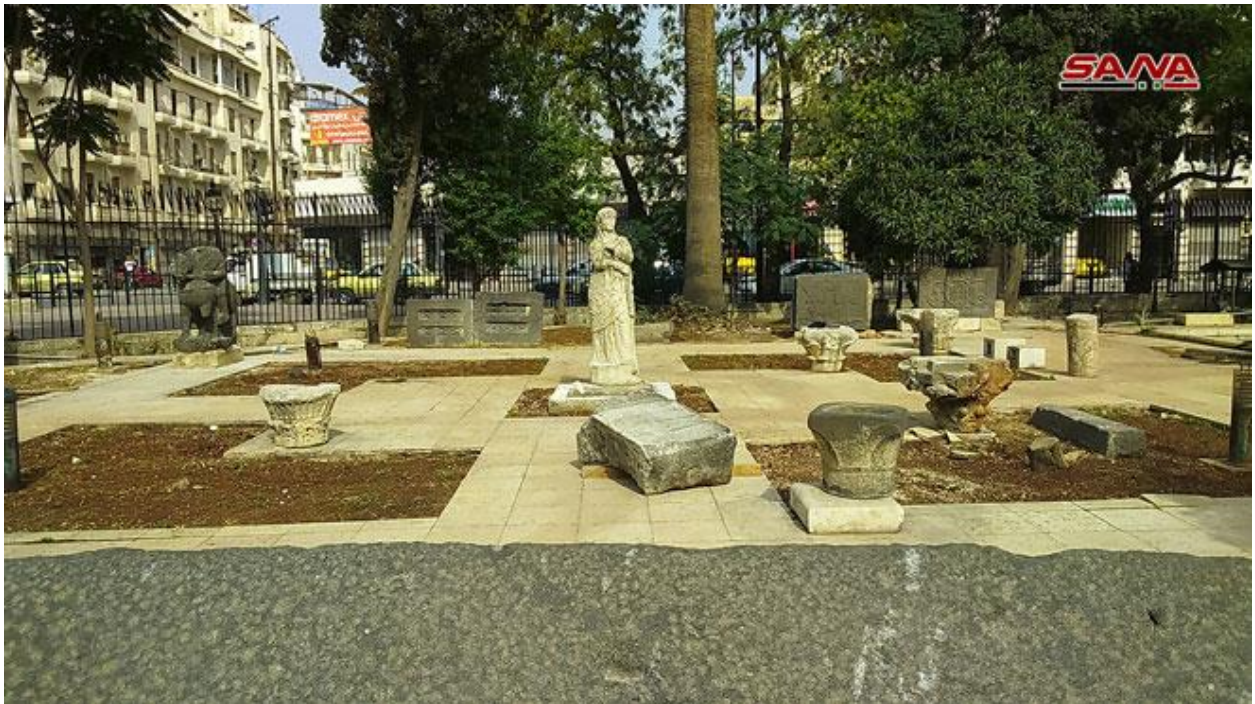
A statue in the Aleppo Museum courtyard after cleaning (SANA; October 29, 2018)



A carved basalt stone in the Aleppo Museum courtyard after cleaning (SANA; October 29, 2018)



Basalt statue in the Aleppo Museum courtyard after cleaning (SANA; October 29, 2018)



Aleppo Museum courtyard after cleaning (SANA; October 29, 2018)



Workers at the Aleppo Museum moving a column base into position in the courtyard (SANA; October 29, 2018)

Heritage Timeline

- October 29, 2018 *The Art Newspaper* published an article titled **“Oxford Museums Train Refugees as Tour Guides and Community Curators.”** The Berlin-based program that trains Syrian and Iraqi refugees to give tours in museums has spread to Oxford.
<https://www.theartnewspaper.com/news/oxford-museums-train-refugee-guides-and-curators>
- October 28, 2018 *The BBC* published an article titled **“Syria war: Damascus National Museum Reopens Doors.”** The National Museum of Damascus reopened after a seven-year suspension due to insecurity.
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-46009833>
<http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=105584>
- October 26, 2018 *The New York Times* published an article titled **“Exhibitions in Qatar Celebrate Syria Before the War.”** An exhibition titled , “Syria Matters” will open in November at the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/26/arts/exhibitions-in-qatar-celebrate-syria-before-the-war.html>
- October 25, 2018 *The Syrian Arab News Agency* published an article titled **“National Museum of Damascus to Reopen for Public next Sunday.”** The National Museum of Damascus is set to reopen next Sunday after a seven-year suspension due to insecurity.
<https://www.sana.sy/en/?p=149714>
- October 24, 2018 *The National* published an article titled **“Despite UN Reassurance, Controversial Syrian Expropriation Law Still in Effect.”** Syrian Law n.10, which allows for the state to seize private property for redevelopment purposes, is still in use.
<https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/despite-un-reassurance-controversial-syrian-expropriation-law-still-in-effect-1.784012>
- October 22, 2018 *Sputnik News* published an article titled **“Syrian Army Recovers Roman Artifacts Looted by Daesh from Palmyra-Reports.”** The Syrian Army reported the seizure of a cache of artifacts in Palmyra that had been prepared to be smuggled out of the country by ISIS in Palmyra.
<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201810221069105224-syrian-army-palmyra-artifacts/>
<https://www.almasdarnews.com/article/breaking-syrian-forces-recover-roman-era-artifacts-stolen-by-daesh-in-palmyra/>

- October 19, 2018 *Enab Baladi* published an article titled **“Syria’s Idlib: Popular Campaigns Combat Violations of Antiquities.”** The Idlib Antiquities Center launched a campaign calling on the international community, local and international organizations to put an end to the violations of archaeological ruins and humanitarian heritage in Idlib governorate.
<https://english.enabbaladi.net/archives/2018/10/syrias-idlib-popular-campaigns-combat-violations-of-antiquities/>
- October 18, 2018 *The New York Times* published an article titled **“Met and Brooklyn Museums will not use Saudi Money for Programs on the Middle East”** (by Sopan Deb). After journalist Jamal Khashoggi died in a Saudi consulate, officials from the Brooklyn Museum announced that they would not Saudi Money for the exhibition “Syria, Then and Now,” which had previously been supported by groups tied to the Saudi government.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/18/arts/design/museums-saudi-money-jamal-khashoggi.html>
- October 16, 2018 *The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe* published an article titled **“World Customs Organization and OSCE to Strengthen Co-operation in Helping States to Address Emerging and Evolving Security Threats.”** One goal of this co-operation is the prevention and combating of different forms of transnational organized crime, particularly the illicit trafficking of cultural objects.
<https://www.osce.org/secretariat/399836>
- *We Talk UAV* published an article titled **“How Drones May Help Rebuild Monuments Destroyed in Syria”** (by Feilidh Dwyer). ICONEM is using drones, paired with 3D technology, to recreate digital representations of monuments destroyed during the war in Syria. <https://www.wetalkuav.com/drones-helping-rebuild-destroyed-monuments/>
<https://www.facebook.com/dw.arabic/videos/245749099376935/>
- October 11, 2018 **DGAM** published an article titled **“The Reopening of the National Museum in Damascus.”** The National Museum in Damascus will reopen on October 28, 2018. <http://dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314>
- October 9, 2018 *Urdu Point* published an article titled **“Russia Calls on UNESCO to Restore Monuments in Syria’s Aleppo, Palmyra-Russia Envoy”** (by Fakhir Rizvi). The Russian Envoy Alexander Kuznetsov called on UNESCO to support restoration of cultural heritage sites in Syria.
<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/world/russia-calls-on-unesco-to-restore-monuments-i-451561.html>

- October 8, 2018 *The Times* published an article titled “**Monuments Men Unit to Stop Looting in Syria**” (by Tom Kington). The British Army is recruiting heritage specialists to form a unit to combat looting in Syria.
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/monuments-men-unit-to-stop-looting-in-syria-f9rkvzi9x>
- **Heritage for Peace** published its bi-weekly newsletter titled “**Damage to Syria's Heritage - 08 October 2018.**”
<http://www.heritageforpeace.org/syria-culture-and-heritage/damage-to-cultural-heritage/previous-damage-newsletters/damage-to-syrias-heritage-08-october-2018/>
- October 6, 2018 *Middle Eastern Eye* published an article titled “**Stranded between Syria’s Frontlines Afrin’s Yazidis Yearn for their Lost Homeland.**” During the fighting between Kurdish, Turkish, and Free Syrian Army (FSA) forces Yazidis fled the Afrin area. The fighting destroyed multiple Yezidi shrines and heavily damaged cities, leaving the possible return of the Yezidi populations in jeopardy.
<https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/syria-afrin-yazidis-idps-fafin-896855921>
- October 5, 2018 *Muraselon* published an article titled “**Turkey-Backed Terrorists Continue Plundering Afrin’s Historical Artifacts.**” The Turkish-backed Syrian opposition group Faylaq al-Awwal (a unit under the Free Syrian Army) is accused of looting artifacts from Cyrrhus.
<https://en.muraselon.com/2018/10/turkey-terrorists-afrin-historical-artifacts/>
- October 4, 2018 *Reuters* published an article titled “**Palmyra priest statue among haul of recovered Syrian relics**” (by Kinda Makieh). 500 Syrian artifacts recovered from areas captured by SARG forces are on display at the Damascus Opera House.
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-antiquities/palmyra-priest-statue-among-haul-of-recovered-syrian-relics-idUSKCN1ME137>
<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/syrias-recovered-antiquities-go-on-display-at-damascus-opera-137529>
<https://www.pri.org/stories/2018-10-04/syrian-antiquities-go-display-reminder-widespread-looting-during-war>
<http://dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=177&id=2428>

- Bazaar* published an article titled “**Syria Set To Restore UNESCO World Heritage City Palmyra By 2019.**” The Syrian Government announced its plan to reopen Palmyra by 2019. This is an estimated \$2 billion project supported by Syria and, reportedly, other countries. <https://www.harpersbazaararabia.com/art/news/syria-to-restore-palmyra-by-2019>
- October 2, 2018 *The Syrian Arab News Network* published an article titled “**Icons Full of Art and Creativity at Handicrafts and Heritage Exhibition in Damascus.**” Photographs of handicrafts on display at a Damascus exhibition. <https://www.sana.sy/en/?p=148102>
- October 2, 2018 **DGAM** published an article titled “إحباط محاولة تهريب قطع أثرية إلى الاردن (**Aborted attempts to smuggle antiquities into Jordan**)” . The Daraa Antiquities Department and security authorities stopped the smuggling of 14 objects from sites in Daraa to Jordan. <http://dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2430>

<http://syriatimes.sy/index.php/archaeology/38406-attempts-to-smuggle-14-artifacts-dating-back-to-roman-era-thwarted>
- PRI* published an article titled “**This Philadelphia museum hired Iraqi and Syrian refugees as tour guides for its Middle East gallery**” (by Emma Jacobs). The University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology has hired Iraqi and Syrian refugees as tour guides for its new Middle Eastern Gallery. <https://www.pri.org/stories/2018-10-02/philadelphia-museum-hiring-iraqi-and-syrian-refugees-tour-guides-its-middle-east>