

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

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March 2018 Monthly Report Appendices — March 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

Syria

- Aleppo Governorate
 - Batuta, one of the "Dead Cities" of Northern Syria, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Aleppo Governorate was completely dismantled. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0160 UPDATE**
 - Artifacts in the Ain Dara Museum in Ain Dara, Aleppo Governorate have been left unguarded and exposed to the elements. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0067**
 - Alleged Turkish shelling damaged the Shrine of Yagmur Dada in Mabatli, Aleppo Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0068**
 - Suspected Syrian Liberation Front shelling reportedly damaged al-Adnan Mosque in Urm al-Kubra, Aleppo Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0069**
 - Suspected Free Syrian Army fighters reportedly vandalized a Yezidi shrine, Shrine of Kara Jorna in Aleppo Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0071**
 - Reported FSA and Turkish fighters defaced the Statue of Rafiq al-Watani in Afrin, Aleppo Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0072**
 - Suspected Free Syrian Army (FSA) fighters reportedly ransacked the Shrine of Nebi Houri in Nebi Hour, Aleppo Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0073**
 - Reported FSA and Turkish soldiers vandalized and removed the Statue of Kawa in Afrin, Aleppo Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0074**
 - Turkish and Turkish-backed forces allegedly damaged the site of Barad in Barad, Aleppo Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0076**
- Daraa Governorate
 - Reported illegal excavations damaged the Nymphaeum in Bosra, Daraa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0061**
- Idlib Governorate
 - Video footage shows a reported Russian airstrike hitting the Harim Mosque in Harim, Idlib Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0077**
 - Volunteers renovated al-Kabir Mosque in Jisr al-Shughur, Idlib Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0078**
- Raqqa Governorate
 - Photographs show modern burials in the courtyard of al-Qadim Mosque in Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0110 UPDATE**
- Rif Dimashq Governorate
 - Satellite imagery revealed damage to al-Khanshur Mosque in Duma, Rif Dimashq Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0062**
 - Satellite imagery shows damage to al-Radha Mosque in Kafr Batna, Rif Dimashq Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0063**
 - Satellite imagery revealed damage to al-Kabir Mosque in Misraba, Rif Dimashq Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0064**
 - Reported SARG or Russian airstrikes damaged al-Sleiq Mosque in Duma, Rif Dimashq Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0065**
 - Military activity damaged al-Ayman Mosque in al-Nashabiyah, Rif Dimashq Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0066**
 - A reported airstrike damaged al-Kabir Mosque in Arbin, Rif Dimashq Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0070**
 - Reported SARG barrel bombs or Russian airstrikes damaged al-Mahmoud Mosque in Duma, Rif Dimashq Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0075**

Iraq

- Dohuk Governorate
 - New photographs show damage to the Maltai Rock Reliefs (Halamata Cave) near Kifriki Village, Dohuk Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 18-0005**
- Erbil Governorate
 - Illegal excavation occurred at an Islamic Cemetery in Benawanok, Bradost Area, Erbil Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 18-0006**
- Kirkuk Governorate
 - Unidentified militants reportedly destroyed a Kakayi shrine, Sayed Rebar Shrine in Zanqara, Daquq District, Kirkuk Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 18-0009**
 - ISIS militants reportedly destroyed the Tell Hama Sufi Shrine in Tell Hama, Kirkuk Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 18-0010**
- Nineveh Governorate
 - A NGO installed gates to control access to the grounds of the Nebi Yunus Mosque Complex in Mosul, Nineveh Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 18-0008**
- Salah al-Din Governorate
 - ISIS militants reportedly destroyed al-Mustafa Mosque on the Tikrit-Kirkuk Road, Salah al-Din Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 18-0007**

Libya

- Cyrenaica
 - Urban encroachment continues to occur on al Hamamah, in Quseir Yara, Hamamah, Shahat, Cyrenaica. **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 18-0013 UPDATE**
 - The DoA conducted a campaign to remove vegetation that threatened the stability of the Temple of Zeus in Cyrene, Shahat, Cyrenaica. **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 18-0017**
 - Stabilization and restoration work has begun in the Souq al Baladi in Benghazi, Cyrenaica. **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 18-0018**
- Fezzan
 - Recent fighting damaged Sabha Castle in Sabha, Fezzan. **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 18-0016**
- Tripolitania
 - Treasure hunters illegally excavated Qasr al-Hajj Tombs and Watchtower in Qasr al Hajj, Jebel Nafusa, Tripolitania, destroying them in the process. **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 18-0015**

Military and Political Context

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

1. Rif Dimashq Governorate:
 - On March 2, the Russian military announced that a new five-hour truce would occur in Eastern Ghouta. On the same day, pro-regime forces “breached heavily-fortified defensive lines” in Eastern Ghouta. The following day, SARG forces captured the town of al-Shayfouniya.²

² <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-ghouta-russia/russian-military-says-new-five-hour-truce-starts-in-syrias-ghouta-ifax-idUSKCN1GE0QL> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/03/syria-situation-report-february-21.html> ; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria/syrian-government-makes-ghouta-gains-turkey-steps-up-aftrin-attack-idUSKCN1GF0L8>

- On March 4, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported that SARG forces now held 25% of Eastern Ghouta after further advancement into opposition-held areas.³
- On March 5, an aid convoy entered Eastern Ghouta for the first time since February 14, 2018 despite ongoing SARG aerial bombardment. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), Syrian government officials seized 70% of the supplies including medical supplies. The Syrian army reportedly now held one-third of Eastern Ghouta.⁴
- On March 6–19, pro-regime forces, backed by SARG and Russian aerial bombardment, split the Eastern Ghouta suburbs into three separate pockets: Douma (aka Duma), Harasta, and Arbin-Ain Terma-Zamalka.⁵
- On March 7, SOHR reported that SARG forces had captured more than 50% of Eastern Ghouta.⁶
- On March 8, a UN official estimated that a “combined population of 50,000” civilians had fled from the Eastern Ghouta towns Misraba, Hammouriyeh, and Mudeira—representing the entire civilian population of the three towns. The civilians fled to other opposition-held parts of Eastern Ghouta, which remained under heavy aerial bombardment.⁷
- On March 10–11, pro-regime forces captured the areas of Misraba and Madyara, separating the city of Douma from the suburbs of Arbin, Ain Terma, and Zamalka.⁸
- On March 12–15, pro-regime forces captured the district of Qadam in southern Damascus following the evacuation of more than 1,000 local residents and between 300–500 Islamist opposition group Afnah al-Sham fighters to Idlib Governorate.⁹
- On March 13–14, several dozen civilians in need of urgent medical treatment were evacuated from Eastern Ghouta following an agreement with Jaish al-Islam. The Syrian American Medical Society reported that at least 1,034 “critically ill and wounded people were in need of medical evacuation.”¹⁰

³ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-43277856> ; <https://apnews.com/d29bc0432a374e4f8372adb158d326cf> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/03/regime-gains-in-damascus-syria-february.html>

⁴ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-43285298> ; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria/syria-lets-aid-reach-ghouta-but-blocks-medical-supplies-presses-assault-idUSKBN1GH1HN> ; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-ghouta-strikes/syrian-observatory-says-air-strikes-hit-eastern-ghouta-idUSKBN1GH1TD> ; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-ghouta-convoy/syrian-government-removes-trauma-kits-surgical-items-from-ghouta-convoy-who-idUSKBN1GH0WC> ; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-russia-ghouta/russia-syria-rebels-promise-to-let-civilians-leave-ghouta-ifax-idUSKBN1GH0ST> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/03/syria-situation-report-february-21.html> ; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-ghouta-enclave/observatory-pro-syrian-government-forces-effectively-cut-eastern-ghouta-in-half-idUSKCN1GJ2OB>

⁵ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/03/syria-situation-report-march-6-march-20.html>

⁶ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-43320040> ; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/mar/08/ghouta-syria-aid-convoy-postponed-chemical-attack>

⁷ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-ghouta-displaced/fighting-in-eastern-ghouta-drives-out-50000-civilians-u-n-idUSKCN1GK2PE>

⁸ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/03/regime-gains-in-damascus-syria-march-6.html>

⁹ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/03/regime-gains-in-damascus-syria-march-6.html>

¹⁰ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-43405101>

- On March 14, reported SARG and Russian aerial bombardment killed at least 25 civilians in the towns of Kafr Batna, Sabqa, Hammouriyeh, and Zamalka. According to Syria state tv, opposition shelling struck Damascus, injuring five civilians.¹¹
- On March 15, thousands of Syrian civilians fled in a “mass exodus” from the towns of Jisreen, Hammouriyeh, and other nearby opposition-held areas.¹²
- On March 16, aerial bombardment killed at least 61 civilians in Kafr Batna, Harasta, and Zamalka.¹³
- On March 18–19, opposition groups Jaish Tahrir al-Sham and other opposition groups operating under the Ghouta Anger Operations Room launched several attacks against SARG positions in the Eastern Qalamoun Mountains. The opposition groups claimed to have downed a SARG aircraft near the Sein Airbase.¹⁴
- On March 19, ongoing aerial bombardment struck an underground school in Arbin, killing 15 children. In the town of Douma, Syrian opposition activists reported that presence of white phosphorus in incendiary bombs dropped over the town.¹⁵
- On March 20, Syrian opposition forces reportedly launched a rocket attack on market in the neighborhood of Kashkoul in Jaramana, killing at least 35 civilians and wounding 20 more.¹⁶
- On March 20, Syrian opposition forces agreed to evacuate the town of Harasta in return for safe passage to opposition-held areas of Idlib Governorate.¹⁷
- On March 22–23, an estimated 1,400 fighters of the Salafi-jihadist group Ahrar al-Sham evacuated the town of Harasta, along with 4,500 local residents. The evacuation deal was facilitated by Russia.¹⁸
- On March 23–26, Islamist opposition group Failaq al-Rahman agreed to an evacuation deal and left the towns of Arbin, Ain Tarma, Jobar, and Zamalka.¹⁹
- On March 28, a pro-Syrian regime newspaper reported that a final military operation would be launched on the remaining opposition-held areas of Eastern Ghouta. Russia reportedly warned the last opposition group in Eastern Ghouta, Jaish al-Islam, that it had 48 hours to evacuate the final stronghold of Douma.²⁰

¹¹ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-43405101>

¹² <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-ghouta/thousands-flee-in-first-mass-exodus-from-syrias-besieged-eastern-ghouta-idUSKCN1GR0VM> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-43414348>

¹³ <http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/03/16/syrian-russian-regime-forces-committed-massacre-kafr-batna-town-damascus-suburbs-march-16/> ; <http://www.shrc.org/en/?p=30777>

¹⁴ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/03/syria-situation-report-march-6-march-20.html>

¹⁵ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-43470147> ; <https://twitter.com/SyrianCoalition/status/975996993876234241> ; <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/03/syria-war-16-children-killed-strike-ghouta-school-180320093343453.html>

¹⁶ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/03/syria-war-16-children-killed-strike-ghouta-school-180320093343453.html> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-43477707>

¹⁷ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-evacuation/syrian-rebels-agree-to-evacuate-town-in-ghouta-sources-idUSKBN1GW39R>

¹⁸ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-43500234> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/03/regime-gains-in-damascus-syria-march-12.html>

¹⁹ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/03/regime-gains-in-damascus-syria-march-12.html> ; <https://www.yahoo.com/news/rebels-cornered-syria-russia-pummel-ghouta-003405031.html>

²⁰ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-ghouta/syrian-army-prepares-huge-operation-in-last-rebel-bastion-as-pressure-mounts-idUSKBN1H40SE> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-43567237>

2. Aleppo Governorate:

- On February 22–March 4, pro-regime forces reportedly entered several districts held by the Kurdish YPG in the city of Aleppo, including the district of Sheikh Maqsood. According to a YPG commander in Aleppo, the YPG handed over control of the districts in exchange for “a facilitated transfer of fighters” to reinforces YPG defenses in the Afrin Canton.²¹
- On March 1, Turkish officials reported that heavy fighting in Afrin killed at least eight Turkish soldiers and wounded 14 more.²²
- On March 2–5, Turkish and allied Syrian opposition forces advanced along three axes in Afrin Canton, capturing the town of Rajo as well as several villages near the “key urban centers” of Jinderes and Shiran.²³
- On March 2, Turkish jets attacked pro-regime forces in Afrin, killing at least 17 people north of Afrin. Kurdish YPG forces reportedly downed a Turkish helicopter near Rajo.²⁴
- On March 3, a Turkish airstrike on a camp at Kafr Jina reportedly killed more than 50 pro-regime fighters.²⁵
- On March 6, unidentified militants detonated a vehicle-borne explosive device targeting the Free Syrian Army (FSA) police in al-Bab.²⁶
- On March 7, the Washington Post reported an alarming raise in summary executions and looting by Syrian opposition forces participating in the Turkish-led offensive against the YPG in Afrin.²⁷
- On March 7, unidentified militants detonated a vehicle-borne explosive at an FSA checkpoint near Jarablus.²⁸
- On March 8, Turkish and pro-opposition forces captured the town of Jinderes, one of the “largest settlements” in the Afrin region.²⁹
- On March 13, the Turkish military announced that it had surrounded the Kurdish-held city of Afrin. Kurdish sources reported that all roads into the city were being targeted by Turkish shelling.³⁰

²¹ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/03/syria-situation-report-february-21.html>

²² <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-43271148> ; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-turkey/eight-turkish-soldiers-killed-13-wounded-in-clashes-in-syrias-afrin-idUSKCN1GD6CY> ; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-convoy/aid-convoy-arrives-in-syrias-afrin-icrc-says-idUSKCN1GD4JB> ; <https://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2018/03/01/world/europe/01reuters-mideast-crisis-syria-convoy.html>

²³ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/03/syria-situation-report-february-21.html>

²⁴ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-afrin/syrian-observatory-turkish-jets-attack-pro-government-forces-in-afrin-idUSKCN1GE0W1> ; <https://sg.news.yahoo.com/turkish-air-strikes-kill-36-pro-regime-fighters-135800766.html>

²⁵ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-43271148> ; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-turkey/turkish-warplanes-hit-pro-syrian-government-forces-in-afrin-kill-36-monitor-idUSKCN1GF0EB> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/03/syria-situation-report-february-21.html>

²⁶ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/03/syria-situation-report-march-6-march-20.html>

²⁷ https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/syrian-rebels-are-using-the-turkish-offensive-to-take-revenge-against-kurds/2018/03/06/85c36eea-1e2d-11e8-8a2c-1a6665f59e95_story.html

²⁸ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/03/syria-situation-report-march-6-march-20.html>

²⁹ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-afrin/turkish-military-seizes-control-of-jinderes-town-in-syrias-afrin-region-anadolu-idUSKCN1GK1SK>

³⁰ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-43384120> ; <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/syriasource/operation-olive-branch-status-update>

- On March 16, Turkish airstrikes reportedly struck the Afrin hospital resulting in at least nine civilian casualties. Airstrikes also struck the city center of Afrin resulting in dozens of civilian casualties.
 - On March 18, Turkish and FSA forces captured the city of Afrin, facing little resistance from YPG forces who withdrew to nearby areas. The same day, a meeting between Arabs, Kurds, Yazidis, Alawites, and Christians, took place in the Turkish city of Gaziantep in order to select council members to “run an administration” in Afrin.³¹
 - On March 19, unidentified militants detonated a vehicle-borne explosive at an FSA checkpoint near the town of Jarablus.³²
 - On March 27, Turkish media reported that the YPG had withdrawn from the town of Tel Rifaat.³³
 - On March 30, a roadside bombing struck US and British forces in Manbij, killing two servicemembers and wounding five more.³⁴
3. Idlib Governorate:
- On February 21–March 6, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) and the Syrian Liberation Front clashed in Idlib and Aleppo Governorates. In Hama Governorate, the two groups agreed to “neutrality deals and military withdrawals” and to hand over key towns to local councils or other Syrian opposition groups.³⁵
 - On February 28–March 1, seven Al Qaeda-aligned groups in Idlib Governorate merged to form a new group called Hiras al-Din (Guardian of Religion) under the leadership of Emir Abu Hammam al-Shami, a former Jabhat al-Nusra military emir. The group’s first statement was a call for HTS and the Syrian Liberation Front to cease fighting.³⁶
 - On March 1, HTS recaptured some towns and villages from rival groups near the Turkish border after being pushed out by a new alliance of opposition forces known as the Jabhat Tahrir Soria (Liberation of the Syrian Front)—comprised of the former groups Ahrar al-Sham and Nour al-Din al-Zinki.³⁷
 - On March 17, Syrian opposition groups HTS and Jabhat Tahrir Souriya agreed to a ceasefire following a failed initial ceasefire deal on March 11. The new agreement, brokered by Islamist group Failaq Rahman al-Sham, calls for the “release of detainees, the removal of checkpoints on major roads and highways, and ‘non-incitement’ between the media organizations of both groups.”³⁸

³¹ https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/turkish-military-and-allied-rebels-in-total-control-of-syrias-afrin-erdogan/2018/03/18/875e6b29-5a4b-439d-9b99-a92ad82264dc_story.html ; <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/18/world/middleeast/afrin-turkey-syria.html>

³² <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/03/syria-situation-report-march-6-march-20.html>

³³ <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/03/ypg-pushed-out-tal-rifaat.html>

³⁴ <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2018/03/30/598198519/2-coalition-personnel-killed-in-syria> ; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-usa/u-s-british-service-members-killed-by-improvised-bomb-in-syria-idUSKBN1H60SK>

³⁵ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/03/syria-situation-report-february-21.html>

³⁶ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/03/syria-situation-report-february-21.html>

³⁷ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-rebel/syrias-ex-qaeda-vies-with-rivals-over-control-of-northwest-syria-idUSKCN1GD65X>

³⁸ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/03/syria-situation-report-march-6-march-20.html>

- On March 20, an airstrike targeted an IDP camp in Idlib Governorate, killing at least 9 people.³⁹
 - On March 21, airstrikes on the opposition-held village of Kafr Batikh killed at least 20 people, including 16 children.⁴⁰
4. Damascus Governorate:
- On March 20, ISIS militants captured the Damascus neighborhood of Qadam. The Syrian regime responded by sending reinforcements. Clashes between the two groups resulted in the death of 36 SARG soldiers and pro-government militia members. Syrian opposition fighters had surrendered the neighborhood one week prior to SARG and pro-regime forces. ISIS retains control over the adjacent neighborhoods of Hajr al-Aswad and Yarmouk.⁴¹
5. Deir ez Zor Governorate:
- On March 6, Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) announced the re-deployment of 1,700 fighters from positions on the frontline against ISIS to combat aggressions by Turkey in Afrin Canton. The US Coalition also confirmed an “operational pause” in the ongoing campaign against ISIS in areas east of the Euphrates River Valley.⁴²
 - On March 17, ISIS militants launched an attack against pro-regime forces near the T2 pumping station, killing an estimated 14 pro-regime fighters.⁴³
 - On March 25, ISIS militants clashed with pro-regime fighters in al-Mayadeen desert, killed at least 26 pro-regime fighters.⁴⁴
6. Daraa Governorate:
- On March 12, SARG airstrikes struck at least seven Syrian opposition-held towns in Daraa Governorate. These are the first airstrikes in southern Syria since the Jordan, Russia, and US brokered ceasefire in July 2017.⁴⁵
7. Latakia Governorate:
- On March 6, a Russian transport aircraft crashed during landing at the Bassel al-Assad International Airport, killing at least 39 Russian servicemen including a major general. According to the Russian Ministry of Defense, the crash was a result of a “technical error.”⁴⁶

³⁹ https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/syria-monitors-is-militants-seize-damascus-neighborhood/2018/03/20/3c61d6f2-2c1e-11e8-8dc9-3b51e028b845_story.html

⁴⁰ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-strike/strike-in-northwest-syria-kills-20-including-16-children-monitor-idUSKBN1GX1X0>

⁴¹ https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/syria-monitors-is-militants-seize-damascus-neighborhood/2018/03/20/3c61d6f2-2c1e-11e8-8dc9-3b51e028b845_story.html ; https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/syria-monitors-is-militants-seize-damascus-neighborhood/2018/03/20/3c61d6f2-2c1e-11e8-8dc9-3b51e028b845_story.html

⁴² <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/03/syria-situation-report-february-21.html> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/03/syria-situation-report-march-6-march-20.html>

⁴³ <https://www.newsdeeply.com/syria/executive-summaries/2018/03/26>

⁴⁴ <https://www.newsdeeply.com/syria/executive-summaries/2018/03/26>

⁴⁵ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/03/syria-situation-report-march-6-march-20.html>

⁴⁶ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/03/syria-situation-report-february-21.html>

8. Raqqa Governorate:
 - On March 15, unidentified gunmen assassinated a member of the local Raqqa Civil Council. This was not the first assassination or attempted assassination of members of the Raqqa Civil Council. In January 2018, unidentified gunmen in Tel Abyad attempted to assassinate Ibrahim Hassan, the head of Raqqa's Reconstruction Committee of the city of Raqqa.⁴⁷
9. Homs Governorate:
 - On March 15, Syrian opposition groups, including Ahrar al-Sham, announced the formation of the "Fourth Corps of the [Turkish-backed] Syrian National Army in Northern Homs Province."⁴⁸
10. Hama Governorate:
 - On March 4, Syrian opposition Jabhat Tahrir Souriya (JTS) and nine other member opposition groups from the Eastern Ghouta suburbs of Damascus launched a major attack in Hama Governorate, briefly capturing the towns of Kernaz and Hamamiyat. The opposition forces were later forced to withdraw under heavy aerial bombardment.⁴⁹

Other Key Points:

- During the reporting period, the US-led coalition conducted airstrikes in the areas of al-Bukamal (Abu Kamal) Deir ez Zor, and Shadaddi.⁵⁰
- On March 7, the UN Security Council again called for a ceasefire across Syria.⁵¹
- On March 11, US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis warned Syria against using poison gas in Eastern Ghouta but stopped short of threatening a military response to any such reports.⁵²
- On March 12, French President Emmanuel Macron announced that France was prepared to launch targeted strikes against any site in Syria from which chemical attacks were launched against civilians.⁵³
- On March 16, the foreign ministers of Turkey, Russia, and Iran met in the Kazakhstan capital of Astana for a discussion of the Astana process one-year later. The Astana peace talks were established on January 23–24, 2017.⁵⁴
- On March 20, Israeli officials admitted, for the first time, that a 2007 strike against Syria targeted a nuclear reactor near the city of Deir ez Zor. According to the Israeli military, the al-Kubar facility housed a reactor being built with assistance from North Korea and, at the time of the strike, was months away from activation.⁵⁵

⁴⁷ <https://twitter.com/nadimhoury/status/974203568696721409> ; <http://theregion.org/article/12458-assassination-attempt-nearly-kills-raqqa-s-reconstruction-head-turkish-role-suspected>

⁴⁸ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/03/syria-situation-report-march-6-march-20.html>

⁴⁹ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/03/syria-situation-report-march-6-march-20.html>

⁵⁰ See: "US DOD News Release Military Strikes Hit ISIS in Syria, Iraq". *Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve*. News Release No: [1455842](#), [1473980](#), [1468178](#), [1480443](#)

⁵¹ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-un/u-n-security-council-calls-for-syria-ceasefire-to-be-implemented-idUSKCN1GJ2RO>

⁵² <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-43364923>

⁵³ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-france/france-will-strike-syria-chemical-arms-sites-if-used-to-kill-macron-idUSKCN1G01RP>

⁵⁴ <https://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/turkey-russia-iran-fms-to-assess-astana-syria-process/1080894>

⁵⁵ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-syria-nuclear/israel-admits-bombing-suspected-syrian-nuclear-reactor-in-2007-warns-iran-idUSKBN1GX09K>

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

1. Kirkuk Governorate:
 - On March 4, clashes between ISIS militants and Iraqi security forces, including members of Shia Popular Mobilization Front (PMF) forces, killed 20 ISIS militants in the village of al-Saadiya. Iraqi forces have warned that ISIS maintains a presence in Kirkuk Governorate.⁵⁶
 - On March 28, Iraq security forces foiled an ISIS-attempted attack against an under-construction Shia place of worship (aka Husseiniya) in Kirkuk Governorate.⁵⁷
2. Anbar Governorate:
 - On March 16, a US helicopter crashed near the town of al-Qaim, killing seven US military personnel. According to US officials, the crash was not a result of enemy activity.⁵⁸
3. Baghdad Governorate:
 - On March 1, the Iraqi parliament demanded that Iraq's government set a withdrawal date for foreign troops.⁵⁹
 - On March 3, the Iraqi parliament approved a budget for the 2018 financial year despite Kurdish lawmakers' boycott of the vote.⁶⁰
4. Erbil Governorate:
 - On March 1, a car bombing targeting the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (PDKI) injured two people.⁶¹
 - On March 21, the Turkish military announced that one of its warplanes had "neutralized" at least 12 members of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), identified by Turkey as a terrorist organization.⁶²
5. Ninawa Governorate:
 - On March 20, India confirmed the death of 39 construction workers, kidnapped in Mosul by ISIS in May 2014, after remains found in a mass grave were positively identified.⁶³
 - On March 25, Turkish President Erdogan reported that Turkey had begun operations in the Sinjar region targeting the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). However, Iraq's Joint Operation Command denied that any foreign forces were there.⁶⁴

⁵⁶ <https://www.iraqnews.com/iraq-war/20-islamic-state-militants-killed-in-clashes-with-iraqi-forces-in-hawija/>

⁵⁷ <https://www.iraqnews.com/iraq-war/iraqi-security-foil-bombing-of-shia-rituals-spot-in-kirkuk/>

⁵⁸ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-43425267>

⁵⁹ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-coalition/iraqi-parliament-demands-timeline-for-foreign-troop-withdrawal-idUSKCN1GD54H>

⁶⁰ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-budget/iraqi-parliament-approves-budget-kurdish-lawmakers-boycott-vote-idUSKCN1GF0PP>

⁶¹ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-kurds-blast/car-bomb-injures-two-in-iraqi-kurdish-capital-erbil-security-sources-idUSKCN1GD55F>

⁶² <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-turkey/turkish-air-strike-neutralizes-12-kurdish-militants-in-iraq-military-idUSKBN1GX0G9>

⁶³ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-43467956> ; <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2018/03/20/595231816/bodies-of-39-kidnapped-indian-workers-found-in-mass-grave-in-iraq>

⁶⁴ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-turkey/turkeys-erdogan-says-operations-begin-in-iraqs-sinjar-region-idUSKBN1H10QX>

Other Key Points:

- During the reporting period, the US-led coalition conducted airstrikes in the areas of Baghdad, Hawijah, Makhmour, Qaim, Qayyarah, Ramadi, Rutbah.⁶⁵
- On March 5, the Iraqi parliament voted to establish a new National Oil Company to serve as an “umbrella organization” for Iraqi state oil firms.⁶⁶
- On March 7, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) reported that the organization had “increasingly cooperative access to families of suspected” ISIS militants. “More than 1,000 wives and children,” have been detained in Iraq since the defeat of the militant group in Iraq in August 2017.⁶⁷
- On March 8, Iraq Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi issued a decree that formalized the inclusion of Shia militia forces (aka Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF)). According to the decree, the PMF will be granted many of the same rights, including equivalent salaries, as members of Iraq’s military.⁶⁸
- On March 11–12, Iraqi officials reported that ISIS attacks had killed at least 25 civilian and Iraqi Security Forces in northern Iraq including in one attack in which ISIS militants staged a fake roadblock on a major road.⁶⁹

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

1. Cyrenaica:
 - On March 29, a suicide car bombing struck the town of Ajdabiya, reportedly killing six people and wounding nine members of the Libyan National Army (LNA). ISIS later took responsibility for the attack.⁷⁰

Other significant political and military events during the reporting period:

- On March 5, Turkish police arrested 12 suspected ISIS militants. On the same day, the US embassy in Ankara was closed due to a security threat.⁷¹

⁶⁵ See: “US DOD News Release Military Strikes Hit ISIS in Syria, Iraq”. *Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve*. News Release No: [1473980](#), [1462109](#), [1468178](#), [1480443](#)

⁶⁶ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iraq-oil/iraq-parliament-votes-to-create-national-oil-company-lawmakers-idUSKBN1GH1XB>

⁶⁷ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-icrc/icrc-says-has-more-cooperative-access-to-detained-islamic-state-families-idUSKCN1GJ2VY>

⁶⁸ <http://www.businessinsider.com/r-iraqs-shiite-militias-formally-inducted-into-security-forces-2018-3>

⁶⁹ <http://www.nrttv.com/en/Details.aspx?jmare=19170> ; <https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/isil-sleeper-cells-mounting-attacks-in-northern-iraq-1.713431>

⁷⁰ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security/islamic-state-says-behind-car-suicide-bombing-in-east-libyan-town-idUSKBN1H61B8>

⁷¹ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-security-islamic-state/turkish-police-detain-12-islamic-state-suspects-state-media-idUSKBN1GH0V3>

Incident Reports: Syria

SHI 16-0160 UPDATE

Report Date: March 30, 2018

Site Name: Batuta (بطوطة)

Date of Incident: Between June 23, 2016 and July 29, 2017

Location: Aleppo Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Batuta is a Roman and Byzantine site that consists of the remains of several houses and churches. The north section of the site contains the remains of a fourth century church. Nearby, there is a villa with an inscription over its entrance dating to 363 CE. To the south, there is a sixth century church and many private homes from the third century and later.⁷² Due to its difficult location and the lack of roads leading to the site, it remains unexcavated.⁷³

Batuta is one of the "Dead Cities" of Northern Syria, a UNESCO World Heritage Site that consists of hundreds of Roman and Byzantine-era towns and villages spread over several mountainous areas in Aleppo and Idlib Governorates.⁷⁴ The Dead Cities were inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2011, and have been on the World Heritage List in Danger since 2013.

Site Date: Roman, Byzantine

Incident Summary: An archaeological site was completely dismantled.

Incident Source and Description: On October 31, 2016 the DGAM reported illegal, ongoing excavations occurring at archaeological sites across Aleppo Governorate, including the Dead City of Batuta. Recent DigitalGlobe satellite imagery analysis has revealed the extent of the damage to the ancient remains. Between July 25, 2015 and March 22, 2016 multiple buildings within the archaeological site were dismantled and their stones removed. The dismantling and removing occurred at both the fourth and sixth century churches. Additional structures were removed between March 22, 2016 and June 23, 2016, leaving only three buildings still intact. Between June 23, 2016 and September 18, 2016 all remaining stone structures were removed from the archaeological site.

A new building and dirt road were constructed on the western side of the site between February 22, 2017 and July 29, 2017. No further construction has taken place, based on the most recent satellite imagery from March 17, 2018.

For more information on previous damage to Batuta, see [ASOR CHI Incident Reports SHI 14-0029](#) in [Weekly Report 6](#), [SHI 15-0162](#) in [Weekly Report 71-72](#), and [SHI 16-0160](#) in [Weekly Report 115-116](#).

⁷² Hajjār 1991: 116; Butler 1912: 330-332.

⁷³ Butler 1912: 330-332.

⁷⁴ Trombley

Pattern: Reuse of ancient/historic building materials (non-combatants); Development disturbances.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of Batuta, as well as the condition of other heritage sites located in regions subject to development disturbances and the reuse of ancient/historic building materials.

Sources:

Scholarly:

Butler, H. C. (1912) *Ancient Architecture in Syria*. Division II, Section B, Part 5: The Djebel Halakah. Publications of the Princeton University Archaeological Expeditions to Syria in 1904-5 & 1909. Leiden: Brill.

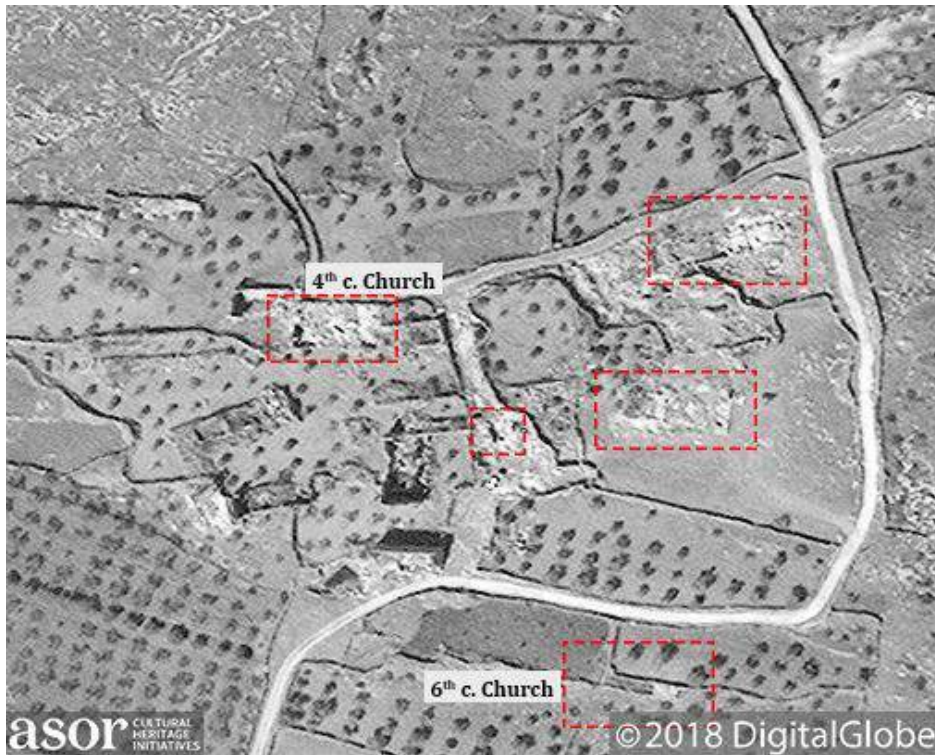
Hajjār, A. (1991) *The Church of St. Simeon and the Stylite and other archaeological sites in the mountains of Simeon and Halaqa*. Damascus: Sidawi Printing House. 116.

Trombley, F. *Hellenic Religion and Christianization c. 370-529*, Vol. 2. Leiden: Brill. 261 n. 69 ; <https://epigraphy.packhum.org/text/242465?bookid=469&location=3>

UNESCO: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1348>



Batuta prior to removal of ancient structures (DigitalGlobe NextView License; April 3, 2013)



Removal of at least five structures within the site of Batuta including both churches, outlined in red (DigitalGlobe NextView License; March 22, 2016)



Removal of three more structures within the site of Batuta, outlined in red (DigitalGlobe NextView License; June 23, 2016)



Removal of final remains of Batuta (DigitalGlobe NextView License; September 18, 2016)



New building and road construction along eastern side of Batuta remains (DigitalGlobe NextView License; September 26, 2017)



Batuta as it now appears (DigitalGlobe NextView License; March 17, 2018)

SHI 17-0110 UPDATE

Report Date: March 15, 2018

Site Name: al-Qadim Mosque (مسجد القديم)

Date of Incident: March 15, 2018

Location: Old City, Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate, Syria

Site Description: The Abbasid Caliph al-Mansur built al-Qadim Mosque in 772 CE.⁷⁵ The mosque received extensive renovations during the reign of Nur ad-Din Zangi in 1166.⁷⁶ The destruction of the city of Raqqa in 1265 ended the mosque's use.⁷⁷

The mosque consisted of a rectilinear structure with rounded towers on all four sides. A single large courtyard lay inside. Multiple arched colonnades flanked the courtyard on all four sides. The mosque's minaret lay in the northeastern corner of the courtyard and a cistern was located in the northwestern corner. Much of the mosque has disappeared in the centuries since its destruction. However, the exterior wall of the mosque, the minaret, the cistern, and the northernmost colonnade

⁷⁵ Hagen, al-Hassoun, & Meinecke 2004: 37

⁷⁶ Ibid. 38

⁷⁷ Heidemann 2003: 51

on the southern side of the courtyard remain largely intact. The Syrian DGAM restored these remains between 1983 and 1987.⁷⁸

Additionally, a small, domed shrine was built in the courtyard of the mosque in 1836.⁷⁹ This was located over the purported grave of Wabisa ibn Ma'bad al-Asadi, a companion of the prophet Muhammad.

Site Date: Built 772 CE; rebuilt 1165 CE

Incident Summary: Photographs show modern burials in the courtyard of al-Qadim Mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On March 15, 2018 Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently (RBSS) published photographs that show modern burials in the courtyard of al-Qadim Mosque.⁸⁰ The graves contain the bodies of individuals killed during the battle to liberate Raqqa from ISIS. RBSS originally reported the use of the grounds for burials in June 2017.⁸¹ DigitalGlobe satellite imagery confirmed the existence of the burials at that time.

For previous damage to al-Qadim Mosque see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0157 UPDATE** in the **September 2017 Monthly Report; SHI 17-0157** in the **August 2017 Monthly Report; SHI 17-0110** in the **June 2017 Monthly Report**; and **SHI 15-0132** in **Weekly Report 59–60**.

Pattern: Modern burials.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently (RBSS):

June 12, 2017: <https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/posts/1580546825289896>

March 15, 2018: <https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/posts/1872058289472080>

Scholarly:

Hagen, N., M. al-Hassoun, and M. Meinecke (2004) "Die grosse Moschee von ar-Rāfiqa." In *Baudenkmäler und Paläste I*, Eds. V. Daiber and A. Becker, 25–39. Raqqa III. Mainz am Rhein: Verlag Philipp von Zabern.

Heidemann, S. (2003) "Die Geschichte von ar-Raqqa/ar-Rāfiqa – ein Überblick." In *Die islamische Stadt*, Eds. S. Heidemann and A. Becker, 9–56. Raqqa II. Mainz am Rhein: Verlag Philipp von Zabern.

⁷⁸ Hagen, al-Hassoun, & Meinecke 2004: 26

⁷⁹ Heidemann 2003: 55

⁸⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/posts/1872058289472080>

⁸¹ <https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/posts/1580546825289896>



A view of the burials on the grounds of al-Qadim Mosque, seen from the northeast (RBSS; March 15, 2018)



A view of the burials on the grounds of al-Qadim Mosque, seen from the northeast (RBSS; March 15, 2018)



A view of the shrine of Wabisa ibn Ma'bad al-Asadi, seen from the north (RBSS; March 15, 2018)



A view of the burials on the grounds of al-Qadim Mosque, seen from the northeast (RBSS; March 15, 2018)



A view of the burials on the grounds of al-Qadim Mosque, seen from the northeast (RBSS; March 15, 2018)



A view of the burials on the grounds of al-Qadim Mosque, seen from the northeast (RBSS; March 15, 2018)

SHI 18-0061**Report Date:** February 27, 2018**Site Name:** Nymphaeum**Date of Incident:** February 11, 2018**Location:** Bosra, Daraa Governorate, Syria**Site Description:** The Bosra nymphaeum is a religious building dedicated to nymphs that doubled as a public drinking fountain. The nymphaeum likely dates to the late 2nd century CE.⁸²**Site Date:** ca. late 2nd century CE**Incident Summary:** Reported illegal excavations damaged an archaeological site.**Incident Source and Description:** On February 11, 2018 SMART News Agency reported that four people died when a section of an ancient building in Bosra, in which they were illegally excavating, collapsed.⁸³ The DGAM published photographs of members of the White Helmets attempting to rescue those trapped under the rubble. According to the DGAM, the collapse occurred in the Palace of the Bishops. However, SMART News Agency reported the damaged occurred in the “kalybe” (also identified as a nymphaeum).

⁸² Ball 2016: 233.

⁸³ <https://smartnews-agency.com/ar/wires/264518/حادث-يتسبب-بوفاة-مدنيين-أثناء-تنقيبهم-عن-الأثار-في-مدينة>

As seen in DigitalGlobe satellite imagery, the initial collapse of the nymphaeum occurred between December 27, 2010 and August 23, 2014. Between December 6, 2015 and March 4, 2018 there was further structural damage to the feature. There are also at least four large, illegal excavation pits visible in its vicinity.

Pattern: Illegal excavation.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

DGAM: <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=177&id=2376>

SMART News Agency:

<https://smartnews-agency.com/ar/wires/264518/حادث-يتسبب-بوفاة-مدنيين-أثناء-تنقيبهم-عن-الأثار-في-مدينة/>



Collapsed section of the nymphaeum (SMART News Agency; February 11, 2018)



Members of the White Helmets attempt to rescue people trapped under rubble in the nymphaeum (DGAM; February 12, 2018)



Members of the White Helmets attempt to rescue people trapped under rubble in the nymphaeum (DGAM; February 12, 2018)



The nymphaeum prior to any visible damage (DigitalGlobe NextView License; December 27, 2010)



Much of the architecture of nymphaeum has collapsed (DigitalGlobe NextView License; August 18, 2015)



At least four illegal excavation pits are visible near the nymphaeum, as indicated by the red arrows (DigitalGlobe NextView License; March 4, 2018)

SHI 18-0062

Report Date: March 1, 2018

Site Name: al-Khanshur Mosque (Omar ibn al-Khattab Mosque; مسجد الخنشور)

Date of Incident: Between February 6, 2018 and March 1, 2018

Location: Duma, Rif Dimashq Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: Satellite imagery revealed damage to a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: DigitalGlobe satellite imagery indicates that damage to al-Khanshur Mosque in Duma occurred between February 6, 2018 and March 1, 2018. The damage was likely as the result of an airstrike. There is visible structural damage at the northeastern corner of the mosque, as well as two holes in the roof of the mosque.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Rif Dimashq Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0063, SHI 18-0064, SHI 18-0065, SHI 18-0066, SHI 18-0070, and SHI 18-0075.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives - airstrike.

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



Al-Khanshur Mosque prior to visible damage (DigitalGlobe NextView License; February 6, 2018)



An airstrike crater indicated by a red arrow just northeast of al-Khanshur Mosque, with subsequent damage also indicated (DigitalGlobe NextView License; March 1, 2018)

SHI 18-0063**Report Date:** March 1, 2018**Site Name:** al-Radha Mosque (مسجد الرضا)**Date of Incident:** Between February 6, 2018 and March 1, 2018**Location:** Kafr Batna, Rif Dimashq Governorate, Syria**Site Description:** Mosque**Site Date:** ca. 2000 CE**Incident Summary:** Satellite imagery shows damage to a mosque.**Incident Source and Description:** Recently released DigitalGlobe satellite imagery indicates that between February 6, 2018 and March 1, 2018 the south facade of al-Radha Mosque and adjacent buildings were damaged. The damage appears to be the result of explosives of unknown origin.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Rif Dimashq Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0062, SHI 18-0064, SHI 18-0065, SHI 18-0066, SHI 18-0070, and SHI 18-0075.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of al-Radha Mosque, as well as the condition of other heritage sites located in regions subject to intense military activity.



Al-Radha Mosque prior to visible damage (DigitalGlobe NextView License; February 6, 2018)



A red arrow indicates damage to the southern facade of al-Radha Mosque. There is also significant damage to the adjacent buildings (DigitalGlobe NextView License; March 1, 2018)

SHI 18-0064

Report Date: March 1, 2018

Site Name: al-Kabir Mosque (مسجد الكبير)

Date of Incident: Between February 6, 2018 and March 1, 2018

Location: Misraba, Rif Dimashq Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: Satellite imagery revealed damage to a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: Recently released DigitalGlobe satellite imagery indicates that the roof of al-Kabir Mosque was damaged between February 6, 2018 and March 1, 2018. The northwestern section of the roof is visibly scorched, possibly from explosives. There are two holes near the southern side of the roof, indicating damage from heavy shelling. In an image from March 12, 2018 there is smoke billowing immediately southwest of the mosque. Between March 12, 2018 and March 25, 2018 there is further damage to the mosque. There is a large hole visible in the center of the roof, likely the result of explosives.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Rif Dimashq Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0062, SHI 18-0063, SHI 18-0065, SHI 18-0066, SHI 18-0070, and SHI 18-0075.**

For more information on previous damage to al-Kabir mosque, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0041 in February 2018 Monthly Report.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

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



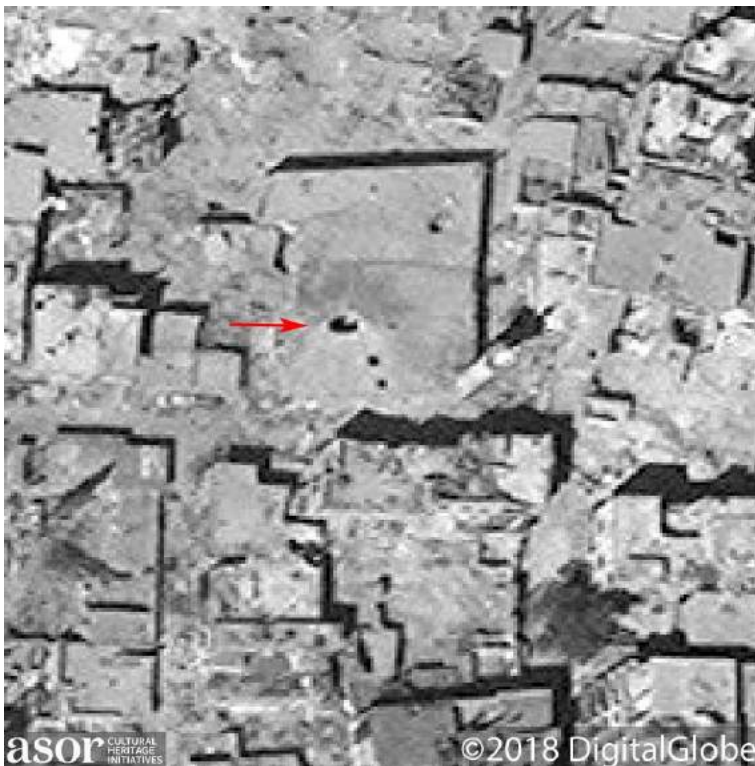
Al-Kabir Mosque prior to increased military damage (DigitalGlobe NextView License; October 20, 2017)



Two holes and scorch marks on the roof of al-Kabir Mosque are indicated by red arrows (DigitalGlobe NextView License; March 1, 2018)



There is smoke directly southwest of al-Kabir Mosque and a scorch mark on the northeast part of the roof (DigitalGlobe NextView License; March 12, 2018)



Increased damage to the roof of al-Kabir Mosque from shelling is indicated by the red arrow (DigitalGlobe NextView License; March 25, 2018)

SHI 18-0065

Report Date: March 2, 2018

Site Name: al-Sleiq Mosque (مسجد السليق)

Date of Incident: March 1, 2018

Location: Duma, Rif Dimashq Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: ca. 1900 CE⁸⁴

Incident Summary: Reported SARG or Russian airstrikes damaged a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On March 1, 2018 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that SARG or Russian airstrikes severely damaged al-Sleiq Mosque in Duma.⁸⁵

As seen in DigitalGlobe satellite imagery, between February 6, 2018 and March 1, 2018 the northern part of the al-Sleiq Mosque was damaged. The central area of the roof has collapsed and there is visible debris within the courtyard.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Rif Dimashq Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0062, SHI 18-0063, SHI 18-0064, SHI 18-0066, SHI 18-0070, and SHI 18-0075.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives - airstrike.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

SNHR:

March 1, 2018: <http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/03/01/syrian-russian-regime-forces-shelled-al-sleiq-mosque-douma-city-damascus-suburbs-march-1/>

March 12, 2018: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sp1li4Fgcas> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RGhxxCMc0A>

El Watan: <https://www.elwatannews.com/news/details/3122177>

⁸⁴ <https://www.elwatannews.com/news/details/3122177>

⁸⁵ <http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/03/01/syrian-russian-regime-forces-shelled-al-sleiq-mosque-douma-city-damascus-suburbs-march-1/>



A video still shows severe damage to the interior of al-Sleiq Mosque (SNHR; March 12, 2018)



A video still shows severe damage to the interior of al-Sleiq Mosque (SNHR; March 12, 2018)



A video still shows severe damage to the exterior of al-Sleiq Mosque (SNHR; March 12, 2018)



A video still shows severe damage to the exterior of al-Sleiq Mosque (SNHR; March 12, 2018)



Al-Sleiq Mosque prior to an increase in damage shown within red square (DigitalGlobe NextView License; February 6, 2018)



Partial collapse of the inner roof of al-Sleiq Mosque is indicated by the red arrows (DigitalGlobe NextView License; March 1, 2018)

SHI 18-0066

Report Date: March 5, 2018

Site Name: al-Ayman Mosque (مسجد الايمان)

Date of Incident: Between March 28, 2014 and August 18, 2015; Between February 6 and March 4, 2018

Location: al-Nashabiyah, Rif Dimashq Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: Military activity damaged a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On March 4, 2018 Twitter user Qalaat al-Mudiq published a photograph of al-Ayman Mosque after its capture by SARG forces.⁸⁶ The photograph shows multiple holes in the dome, heavy damage to the walls of the mosque and rubble spread across the grounds.

DigitalGlobe satellite imagery indicates that al-Ayman Mosque was initially damaged between March 28, 2014 and August 18, 2015. There are two holes in the dome of the mosque, likely from heavy shelling. Additionally, the minaret sustained severe damage and has collapsed. There is further damage to the dome and roof of the mosque between February 6, 2018 and March 4, 2018.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Rif Dimashq Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0062, SHI 18-0063, SHI 18-0064, SHI 18-0065, SHI 18-0070, and SHI 18-0075.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Qalaat al-Mudiq: <https://twitter.com/QalaatAlMudiq/status/970243329941299200>

⁸⁶ <https://twitter.com/QalaatAlMudiq/status/970243329941299200>



al-Ayman Mosque, seen from the east (Qalaat al-Mudiq; March 4, 2018)



Al-Ayman Mosque prior to any visible damage (DigitalGlobe NextView License; March 28, 2014)



The minaret has collapsed southward, as indicated by two red arrows, and there are at least two holes in the dome of the mosque from heavy shelling (DigitalGlobe NextView License; August 18, 2015)



Increased damage to the mosque from heavy shelling. There are at least two large holes in the roof, one in the dome and one just north of the dome, indicated by red arrows (DigitalGlobe NextView License; March 4, 2018)

SHI 18-0067

Report Date: March 8, 2018

Site Name: Ain Dara Museum

Date of Incident: early March 2018

Location: Ain Dara, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

Site Description: The Ain Dara Museum consists of a cluster of structures along the eastern side of the high mound of Tell Ain Dara. The buildings previously served as the residence of the archaeological team when the site was under excavation.

Site Date: 20th century CE

Incident Summary: Artifacts in a museum have been left unguarded and exposed to the elements.

Incident Source and Description: On March 8, 2018 a Facebook user published photographs of artifacts in the Ain Dara Museum, located in Afrin District. The user claimed that the artifacts were exposed to the elements and unguarded. At the time of the Facebook user's visit, the YPG, which was responsible for security in Afrin District, was engaged in heavy fighting against Turkish Security Forces and the Turkish-backed Free Syrian Army. The photographs confirm that the artifacts are outside of the museum. One stele with a human form in low relief has begun to accumulate rain water.

Pattern: Site management.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Private Facebook Account



A stone stele with carved relief of a person at the Ain Dara Museum (Private Facebook Account; March 8, 2018)



A partial stone statue at the Ain Dara Museum (Private Facebook Account; March 8, 2018)



A carved stone stele or architectural element at the Ain Dara Museum (Private Facebook Account; March 8, 2018)

SHI 18-0068

Report Date: March 8, 2018

Site Name: Shrine of Yagmur Dada (مزار ياغمور داده)

Date of Incident: February 24, 2018

Location: Mabatli, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

Site Description: The Shrine of Yagmur Dada is an Alawite shrine located on hill west of Mabatli. It is one of about ten Alawite shrines located in the Afrin region.⁸⁷

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: Alleged Turkish shelling damaged a shrine.

Incident Source and Description: On March 8, 2018 Rok Online reported that shells fired by Turkish forces struck the Shrine of Yagmur Dada in Mabatli on February 24, 2018 damaging the shrine.⁸⁸ No photographs of the damage were available at the time of publication.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Aleppo Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0069, SHI 18-0071, SHI 18-0072, SHI 18-0073, SHI 18-0074, and SHI 18-0076.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Peace in Kurdistan:

<https://peaceinkurdistancampaign.com/2018/03/08/the-file-of-religions-and-nationalities-in-afrin/>

Pirha:

July 26, 2017: <https://www.pirha.net/afrinin-mabetada-yagmur-dede-turbesine-alevilerin-ilgisi-yogun-74352.html/26/07/2017/>

February 10, 2018: <https://www.pirha.net/mabetadaki-aleviler-yolumuzu-birakmiyoruz-105865.html/>

Sahip Kiran: <http://sahipkiran.org/2018/03/07/afrin-alevileri/>

⁸⁷ <https://peaceinkurdistancampaign.com/2018/03/08/the-file-of-religions-and-nationalities-in-afrin/>

⁸⁸ <http://www.rok-online.com/?p=12078>

SHI 18-0069

Report Date: March 9, 2018

Site Name: al-Adnan Mosque (مسجد العدنان)

Date of Incident: March 8, 2018

Location: Urm al-Kubra, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: Suspected Syrian Liberation Front shelling reportedly damaged a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On March 8, 2018 Medad Press reported that an artillery shell fired by the Syrian Liberation Front struck al-Adnan Mosque in Urm al-Kubra, killing the muezzin of the mosque.⁸⁹ The damage caused to the mosque was unspecified. No photographs of the site were available at the time of publication.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Aleppo Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0068, SHI 18-0071, SHI 18-0072, SHI 18-0073, SHI 18-0074, and SHI 18-0076.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Medaad Press: https://twitter.com/MEDAAD_PRESS/status/971750921611956224

⁸⁹ https://twitter.com/MEDAAD_PRESS/status/971750921611956224

SHI 18-0070

Report Date: March 13, 2018

Site Name: al-Kabir Mosque (مسجد الكبير)

Date of Incident: March 12, 2018

Location: Arbin (aka Arbaeen), Rif Dimashq Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Al-Kabir Mosque in Arbin is thought to date to the 10th century CE.⁹⁰ Its design is reminiscent of the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus. Historically it had been a place of learning for students of Islamic law and jurisprudence. The mosque has been restored several times.

Site Date: Founded ca. 10th century CE; Renovated 1985 CE⁹¹

Incident Summary: A reported airstrike damaged a mosque in Arbin.

Incident Source and Description: On March 13, 2018 Unified Media Office in Arbin published video footage of damage to the interior of al-Kabir Mosque in Arbin, reportedly the result of a missile that struck the mosque on March 12, 2018.⁹² The video footage shows severe damage to several sections of the mosque. The roof appears to have partially collapsed and part of the mosque is still on fire. DigitalGlobe satellite imagery confirms that the southern part of the roof collapsed between March 4, 2018 and March 12, 2018. Additionally, smoke from a fire is visible in satellite imagery. Between March 12, 2018 and March 25, 2018, the rubble from the collapsed roof was cleared away. At the same time, the central part of the remaining roof has collapsed.

Al-Kabir Mosque has been damaged on several previous occasions. On January 22, 2018 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that SARG warplanes fired missiles at the mosque causing significant damage.⁹³ On April 7, 2017 SNHR reported that SARG warplanes fired a missile on al-Kabir Mosque, causing damage to the mosque, severely damaging the furniture, and rendering the building inoperable.⁹⁴

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Rif Dimashq Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0062, SHI 18-0063, SHI 18-0064, SHI 18-0065, SHI 18-0066, and SHI 18-0075.**

For more information on damage to al-Kabir Mosque, see **ASOR CHI Incident Reports SHI 17-0056** in **April 2017 Monthly Report** and **SHI 18-0023** in **January 2018 Monthly Report.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives - airstrike.

⁹⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zWRJk9k2Yzc&t=4s>

⁹¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zWRJk9k2Yzc&t=4s>

⁹² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IfQHjHHMF10>

⁹³ <http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/01/22/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-mosque-irbeen-city-damascus-sub-urbs-january-22/>

⁹⁴ <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/04/07/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-al-kabir-mosque-erbeen-city-damascus-suburbs-april-7/>

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

SMART News Agency: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G0J0dzpvAul>

SNHR:

January 22, 2018: <http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/01/22/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-mosque-irbeen-city-damascus-sub-urbs-january-22/>

April 7, 2017: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/04/07/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-al-kabir-mosque-erbeen-city-damascus-s-uburbs-april-7/>

Unified Media Office in Arbin: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IfQHjHMF10>

Zaman TV: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zWRJk9k2Yzc&t=4s>



Video still showing fire in and severe damage to the interior of al-Kabir Mosque (Unified Media Office in Arbin; March 13, 2018)



Video still showing severe damage to the interior of al-Kabir Mosque (Unified Media Office in Arbin; March 13, 2018)



Video still showing severe damage to al-Kabir Mosque (Unified Media Office in Arbin; March 13, 2018)



Video still showing severe damage to the interior of al-Kabir Mosque (Unified Media Office in Arbin; March 13, 2018)



Video still showing severe damage to the interior of al-Kabir Mosque (Unified Media Office in Arbin; March 13, 2018)



Video still showing damage to the interior of al-Kabir Mosque (Unified Media Office in Arbin; March 13, 2018)



Al-Kabir mosque with previously occurring damage from heavy shelling indicated by red arrows (DigitalGlobe NextView License; March 4, 2018)



Red arrows indicate where the southern half of the roof of al-Kabir Mosque collapsed, exposing the interior pillars of the mosque. Smoke from the event is visible in the satellite image (DigitalGlobe NextView License; March 12, 2018)



Rubble from the southern part of al-Kabir Mosque that previously collapsed has been cleared away and the central part of the remaining roof collapsed (DigitalGlobe NextView License; March 25, 2018)

SHI 18-0071

Report Date: March 19, 2018

Site Name: Shrine of Kara Jorna (مزار قره جورنه)

Date of Incident: March 17, 2018

Location: Aleppo Governorate, Syria

Site Description: The Shrine of Kara Jorna is a Yezidi shrine located in the Afrin region west of the town of Mash'ala. There is a Yezidi cemetery located nearby. Worshipers tie ribbons to the branches of a nearby tree in order to have their requests granted.⁹⁵ The shrine is popular with both Yezidis and Muslim Kurds in the area.

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: Suspected Free Syrian Army fighters reportedly vandalized a Yezidi shrine.

Incident Source and Description: On March 17, 2018 a Private Facebook Account published a video reportedly showing members of the Free Syrian Army (FSA) vandalizing a shrine in the Afrin region. A fighter removes ribbons tied to a tree near the shrine by worshippers, while others set clothes attached to trees on fire.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Aleppo Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0068, SHI 18-0069, SHI 18-0072, SHI 18-0073, SHI 18-0074, and SHI 18-0076.**

Pattern: Vandalism.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Private Facebook Account

ESyria:

<http://www.esyria.sy/ealeppo/index.php?p=stories&category=places&filename=201110281910011>

Ezdina: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rITB3Q5ZUT8>

Lokman Afrin: <http://lokmanaftrin.com/qarajurne.htm>

⁹⁵ <http://www.esyria.sy/ealeppo/index.php?p=stories&category=places&filename=201110281910011>



A reported FSA fighter sets fire to a tree near the Kara Jorna Shrine (Private Facebook Account; March 17, 2018)



A reported FSA fighter removes ceremonial ribbons from a tree near the Kara Jorna Shrine (Private Facebook Account; March 17, 2018)

SHI 18-0072

Report Date: March 18, 2018

Site Name: Statue of Rafiq al-Watani

Date of Incident: March 18, 2018

Location: Afrin, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Statue of a Kurdish figure inspired by Apo Ocalan.

Site Date: After 2005 CE

Incident Summary: Reported FSA and Turkish fighters defaced a statue in Afrin.

Incident Source and Description: On March 18, 2018 Orient News published video footage taken in Afrin following the capture of the city by Turkish and Free Syrian Army (FSA) fighters taking part in Operation Olive Branch.⁹⁶ The footage shows the defaced statue of Rafiq al-Watani at the al-Watani Roundabout in Afrin.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Aleppo Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0068, SHI 18-0069, SHI 18-0071, SHI 18-0073, SHI 18-0074, and SHI 18-0076.**

Pattern: Military activity: intentional destruction.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Orient News: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3PwSbrVt6lY>

RFS Media Office: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M9fQTjQVIL0>

SMART News Agency:

<https://www.smartnews-agency.com/ar/wires/280384/-/منطقة-مجلس-محلي-لمنطقة-عفرين>

⁹⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3PwSbrVt6lY>



The defaced statue of Rafiq al-Watani in Afrin (SMART News Agency; March 29, 2018)

SHI 18-0073

Report Date: March 19, 2018

Site Name: Shrine of Nebi Hourī (مقام النبي هوري; Roman Tower Tomb)

Date of Incident: Between March 2–19, 2018

Location: Nebi Hourī, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

Site Description: This shrine is dedicated to an Islamic saint known as Nebi Hourī. It was built in 1303 CE in the interior of a pyramid-roofed, hexagonal Roman-era mausoleum.⁹⁷

Site Date: Shrine built 1303 CE; Roman mausoleum built ca. late 2nd or early 3rd century CE.⁹⁸

Incident Summary: Suspected Free Syrian Army (FSA) fighters reportedly ransacked a shrine.

Incident Source and Description: On March 19, 2018 a Private Facebook Account published a video showing the interior of the Shrine of Nebi Hourī. The video shows that the table representing the actual grave of Nebi Hourī in the shrine interior has been turned on its side, and garbage had been strewn about the shrine.

ASOR CHI received photographs of the Shrine of Nebi Hourī taken by an ASOR CHI in-country source on or before March 2, 2018. According to the in-country source, members of the FSA members allied with Operation Euphrates Shield ransacked the shrine looking for treasure. In these earlier photographs, the grave has not been turned on its side, perhaps indicating the grave was vandalized again between March 2 and March 19, 2018.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Aleppo Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0068, SHI 18-0069, SHI 18-0071, SHI 18-0072, SHI 18-0074, and SHI 18-0076.**

Pattern: Vandalism; Theft.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Private Facebook Account

Scholarly:

Ball, W. (2016) *Rome in the East: The Transformation of an Empire*. London: Routledge.

⁹⁷ Ball 2016: 414.

⁹⁸ Burns 2009: 93.

Burns, R. (2009) *The Monuments of Syria: A Guide*. London: I.B. Tauris.



Interior of Nebi Hourri Shrine with overturned table (Private Facebook Account; March 19, 2018)



Interior of Nebi Houri Shrine with table in place (ASOR CHI in-country source; March 2, 2018)

SHI 18-0074

Report Date: March 19, 2018

Site Name: Statue of Kawa

Date of Incident: March 18, 2018

Location: Afrin, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Kawa is a Kurdish folk-hero who appears in a version of the Nowruz story and in Firdowsi's *Shahnameh*.⁹⁹

Site Date: 2016 CE¹⁰⁰

Incident Summary: Reported FSA and Turkish soldiers vandalized and removed a statue.

Incident Source and Description: On March 18, 2018 multiple news outlets reported that Turkish and Free Syrian Army (FSA) fighters tore down a statue of the Kurdish folk-hero Kawa in Afrin following their capture of the city.¹⁰¹ A photograph accompanying an NPR report shows Turkish and FSA fighters (wearing blue or red armbands/headbands, respectively) posing in front of the defaced statue while others tie ropes around it, preparing to tear it down.¹⁰² Other photographs show the damaged statue lying on the ground after a bulldozer was used to remove it.¹⁰³

Kawa (or Kaveh) the Blacksmith is a mythical figure in Iranian and Kurdish mythology who plays a large role in the story of the New Year, or Nowruz. The destruction of the statue occurred three days before the New Year, which fell on March 21, 2018.¹⁰⁴

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Aleppo Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0068, SHI 18-0069, SHI 18-0071, SHI 18-0072, SHI 18-0073, and SHI 18-0076.**

Pattern: Military activity: intentional destruction.

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

⁹⁹ <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/kava-hero>

¹⁰⁰ <http://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/syria/190320182>

¹⁰¹ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-afirin-statue/turkey-backed-forces-pull-down-kurdish-statue-in-afirin-town-center-statement-idUSKBN1GU0CU>; <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2018/03/18/594690169/turkish-forces-seize-syrian-city-of-afirin>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGMA4UrJnRs>; <http://aleppo24.com/?p=7801>

¹⁰² <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2018/03/18/594690169/turkish-forces-seize-syrian-city-of-afirin>

¹⁰³ <http://aleppo24.com/?p=7801>

¹⁰⁴ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-afirin-statue/turkey-backed-forces-pull-down-kurdish-statue-in-afirin-town-center-statement-idUSKBN1GU0CU>

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Aleppo 24: <http://aleppo24.com/?p=7801>

NPR: <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2018/03/18/594690169/turkish-forces-seize-syrian-city-of-aftrin>

Orient News: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3PwSbrVt6lY>

Reuters:

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-aftrin-statue/turkey-backed-forces-pull-down-kurdish-statue-in-aftrin-town-center-statement-idUSKBN1GU0CU>

Rudaw:

March 19, 2018: <https://www.facebook.com/RudawArabi/videos/1736203359798023/> ; <http://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/syria/190320182>

SMART News Agency: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGMA4UrJnRs>

Scholarly:

Omidisalar, M. "KĀVA." *Encyclopædia Iranica* Vol. XVI, Fasc. 2, pp. 130–132. Available online at: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/kava-hero>

Winter, S. (2005) "Les Kurdes du Nord-Ouest Syrien et l'Etat Ottoman, 1690–1750". In Afifi, Mohammad, *Societes Rurales Ottomanes*. Cairo: IFAO. 243–258.



FSA (red armbands) and Turkish soldiers (blue headbands) celebrate in front of the damaged statue of Kawa, as they prepare to destroy it (Hasan Kirmizitas; March 18, 2018)



A bulldozer is attached to the statue of Kawa (REUTERS/Khalil Ashawi; March 18, 2018)



The toppling of a statue of Kawa (Bulent Kilic/Agence France-Presse; March 18, 2018)



A soldier is seen in front of the remains of the Kawa statue (Bulent Kilic/Getty Images; March 19, 2018)

SHI 18-0075**Report Date:** March 20, 2018**Site Name:** al-Mahmoud Mosque (جامع المحمود)**Date of Incident:** March 19, 2018**Location:** Duma, Rif Dimashq Governorate, Syria**Site Description:** Mosque**Site Date:** Unknown**Incident Summary:** Reported SARG barrel bombs or Russian airstrikes damaged a mosque.**Incident Source and Description:** On March 19, 2018 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that SARG helicopters dropped barrel bombs on al-Mahmoud Mosque, damaging the building severely and rendering it inoperable.¹⁰⁵ Damascus Media Center attributed the damage to Russian airstrikes.¹⁰⁶

DigitalGlobe satellite imagery indicates that initial damage to the mosque occurred between November 6, 2012 and December 23, 2014. There are at least two holes visible in the roof of the mosque that appear during that time. There is increased damage to the mosque between March 25, 2018 and March 27, 2018. There is visible rubble along the southern facade and the northeast corner of the mosque is damaged, possibly from an airstrike.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Rif Dimashq Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0062, SHI 18-0063, SHI 18-0064, SHI 18-0065, SHI 18-0066, and SHI 18-0070.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of al-Mahmoud Mosque, as well as the condition of other heritage sites located in regions subject to intense military activity.**Sources:**Online Reporting:Damascus Media Center: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KcKq9erTHEc>

SNHR:

<http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/03/20/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-mosque-douma-city-damascus-suburbs-march-19/>

¹⁰⁵ <http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/03/20/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-mosque-douma-city-damascus-suburbs-march-19/>

¹⁰⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KcKq9erTHEc>



Video still showing severe damage to exterior of al-Mahmoud Mosque (Damascus Media Center; March 19, 2018)



Video still showing severe damage to exterior of al-Mahmoud Mosque (Damascus Media Center; March 19, 2018)



Video still showing severe damage to interior of al-Mahmoud Mosque (Damascus Media Center; March 19, 2018)



Al-Mahmoud Mosque prior to any visible damage, shown within the red rectangle (DigitalGlobe NextView License; November 6, 2012)



Red arrows indicate two holes in the roof of al-Mahmoud Mosque (DigitalGlobe NextView License; December 23, 2014)



Rubble along the southern facade of al-Mahmoud Mosque and damage to the northeastern corner of the mosque both indicated by a red arrow (DigitalGlobe NextView License; March 27, 2018)

SHI 18-0076

Report Date: March 22, 2018

Site Name: Barad - North Church; Church of Julianos; Barad Monastery

Date of Incident: around March 22, 2018

Location: Barad, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Barad is one of a series of archaeological sites inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2011.¹⁰⁷ The site is located on the Jebel Semaan. Standing remains at Barad include a late 2nd or early 3rd century CE tomb, a 2nd or 3rd century CE bath, multiple churches (including a large basilica known as the Church of Julianos built ca. 400 CE), and a 6th century CE monastery.¹⁰⁸ The Church of Julianos is home to the Tomb of St. Maron, patron saint of the Maronite Church, who was reportedly buried there in the 5th century CE. The tomb is situated in an annex on the north side of the church that is known as the Chapel of the Martyrs.

Site Date: North Church: 561 CE
Church of Julianos: 5th century CE
Barad Monastery: 6th century CE

Incident Summary: Turkish and Turkish-backed forces allegedly damaged the site of Barad.

Incident Source and Description: On March 22, 2018 the Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums (DGAM) reported that Turkish and Turkish-backed forces had damaged archaeological remains at the site of Barad.¹⁰⁹ These forces captured Barad from YPG and Syrian regime-back forces on March 21, 2018.¹¹⁰ The DGAM stated that Turkish aircraft had bombed the Church of Julianos and the Tomb of St. Maron. A separate source reported that the monastery at the site was damaged by Turkish forces, as well.¹¹¹

More recently, other sources have cast doubt on the extent of the damage caused at the site.¹¹² Photographs and video appear to indicate that the Church of Julianos and the Tomb of St. Maron are in good condition. The condition of the Barad Monastery, located on a knoll southwest of the modern town, is currently unknown. DigitalGlobe satellite imagery from March 22, 2018 shows no clear damage to any of the archaeological remains due to reported airstrikes or explosives.

Photographs also indicate that a modern structure located between the Church of Julianos and the North Church is in poor condition. Only the metal framework and the roof of the building remain. The building was connected to the activities of the Maronite Church. In 2010, it possibly served as the location where the Maronite Church held a service to commemorate the 1600-year anniversary

¹⁰⁷ <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1348/>

¹⁰⁸ Butler 1912: 299 ff.

¹⁰⁹ <http://dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2384>

¹¹⁰ <https://twitter.com/WyvernReports/status/976513140434325505>

¹¹¹ <https://www.facebook.com/ghassanshami/posts/10157536600988438>

¹¹² <https://www.lorientlejour.com/article/1106871/non-le-tombeau-de-saint-maron-na-pas-ete-bombarde-par-les-turcs.html>; <https://www.facebook.com/aleppoarchaeology/posts/1731542966904217>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fGikqw7z2Ak>; <https://www.facebook.com/trtalarabiya/videos/2004594669570224/UzpfSTI2MTA4NzIxMzE0MzozNjM3MzExNTc0Nzg3NTg>

of the death of St. Maron.¹¹³ The building was the target of vandalism on February 11, 2013.¹¹⁴ The vandals reportedly smashed the windows of the building, stole religious paraphernalia, and defaced the altar. DigitalGlobe satellite imagery indicates that the building was possibly in its current skeletal condition by September 18, 2016.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Aleppo Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0068, SHI 18-0069, SHI 18-0071, SHI 18-0072, SHI 18-0073, and SHI 18-0074.**

Pattern: No damage. Military activity: explosives.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Al Ain: <https://al-ain.com/article/brad-efreen-attack>

Aleppo Archaeology: <https://www.facebook.com/aleppoarchaeology/posts/1731542966904217>

DGAM: <http://dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2384>

Ghassan Shami: <https://www.facebook.com/ghassanshami/posts/10157536600988438>

Al Hurra: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZsXZMH00IMo>

Al Jaml:

<http://www.aljaml.com/>

قرية 20% براد 20% في 20% حلب 20% من 20% من 20% ملحاً 20% للموارد 20% إلى 20% ملجأ 20% للصوص

La Revue du Liban: <http://www.rdl.com.lb/2010/q1/4249/nemanquezas2.html>

L'Orient Le Jour: <https://www.lorientlejour.com/article/1106871/non-le-tombeau-de-saint-maron-na-pas-ete-bombarde-par-les-turcs.html>

Monuments of Syria Website: <http://monumentsofsyria.com/places/barad/>

Orient Panorama: <http://www.orientpanorama.com/panorama.php?id=14>

Rome Art Lover: <http://romeartlover.tripod.com/Brat.html>

SY24 News: <https://www.sy-24.com/miscellaneous/تعرف-على-قرية-براد-الأثرية-ومؤسس-كنيس/>

¹¹³ <http://www.rdl.com.lb/2010/q1/4249/nemanquezas2.html>

¹¹⁴ <http://www.aljaml.com/قرية-20% براد 20% في 20% حلب 20% من 20% من 20% ملحاً 20% للموارد 20% إلى 20% ملجأ 20% للصوص>

Tayyar.org:

February 8, 2018: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NAczA7Fjy1w>

February 8, 2018: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6jKMc7EnyGg>

February 8, 2018: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cx2bcPk-xvw>

Thiqa Agency: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fGikqw7z2Ak>

TNT Arabiya:

<https://www.facebook.com/trtalarabiya/videos/2004594669570224/UzpfSTI2MTA4NzMxNzc0MzE0MzozNjM3MzExNTc0Nzg3NTg>

UNESCO: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1348/>

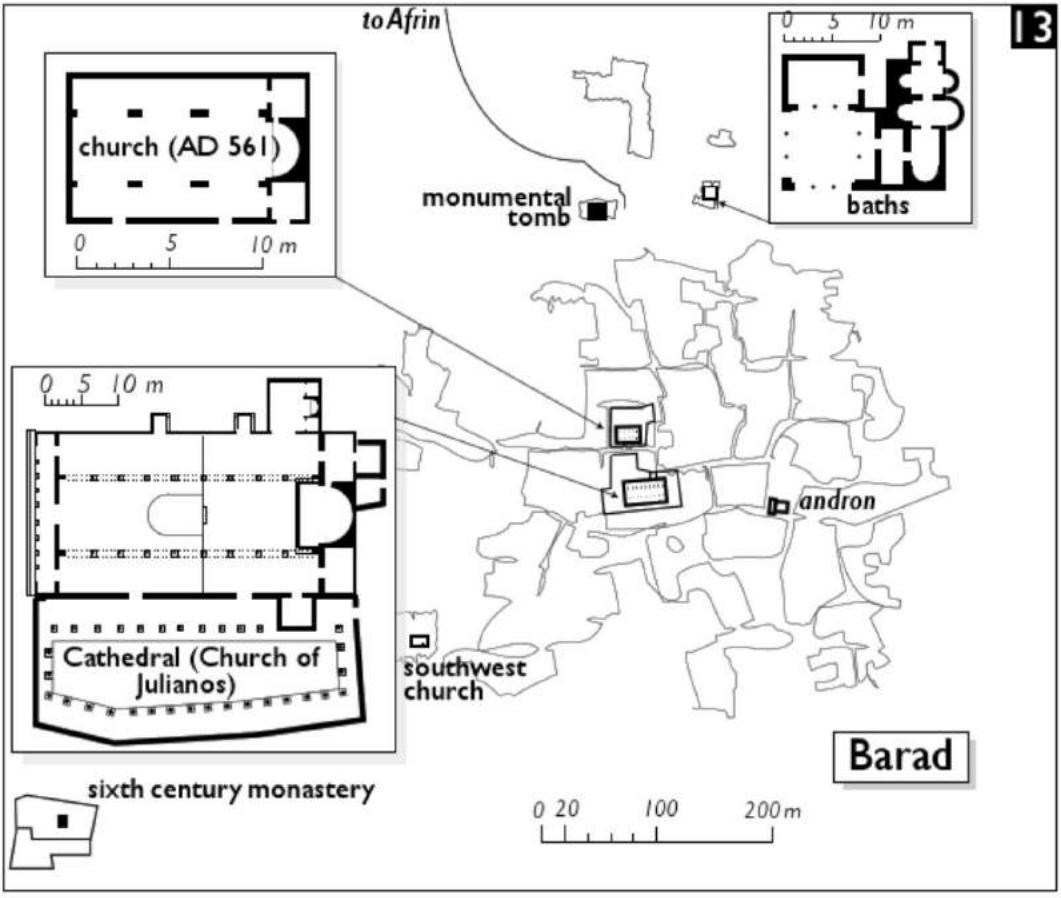
Wyvern Reports: <https://twitter.com/WyvernReports/status/976513140434325505>

YPD: <http://pydrojava.net/arabic/archives/32371>

Scholarly:

Burns, R. (2009) *The Monuments of Syria: A Guide*. I.B Tauris.

Butler, H.C. (1912) *Ancient Architecture in Syria*. Division II, Section B, Part 5. Publications of the Princeton University Archaeological Expeditions to Syria in 1904-5 & 1909. Leiden: Brill. pp. 299-315.



Site plan of Barad (Burns 2009: 75)



Barad, 2010

Panoramic view of Barad in 2010, seen from the west. The North Church is on the left, a modern structure connected to the Maronite Church is in the middle, and the remains of the Church of Julianos are on the right (Orient Panorama; 2010)



The Chapel of the Martyrs in the Church of Julianos, seen from the west (SY24 News; March 24, 2018)



The Chapel of the Martyrs in the Church of Julianos, seen from the east (SY24 News; March 24, 2018)



The Chapel of the Martyrs in the Church of Julianos as seen from inside the remains of the Maronite Church building, seen from the north (Thiqa Agency; March 25, 2018)



A sign in front of the remains of the Chapel of the Martyrs in the Church of Julianos, seen from the east (Thiqa Agency; March 25, 2018)



The North Church, seen from the southeast (SY24 News; March 24, 2018)



The North Church, seen from the east (Thiqa Agency; March 25, 2018)



The Chapel of the Martyrs in the Church of Julianos, seen from the west (SY24 News; March 24, 2018)



The remains of the Church of Julianos, seen from the northeast (Thiqa Agency; March 25, 2018)



The entrance to the Church of Julianos, seen from the northeast (SY24 News; March 24, 2018)



A grave on the grounds of the Church of Julianos (Thiqa Agency; March 25, 2018)



The remains of the Maronite Church building, seen from the southwest (TRT al-Arabiya; March 30, 2018)



The remains of the Maronite Church building and the Chapel of the Martyrs with the Tomb of St. Maron, seen from the west (TRT al-Arabiya; March 30, 2018)



The North Church, seen from the east (ASOR CHI Source; March 30, 2018)



The North Church, seen from the east (ASOR CHI Source; March 30, 2018)



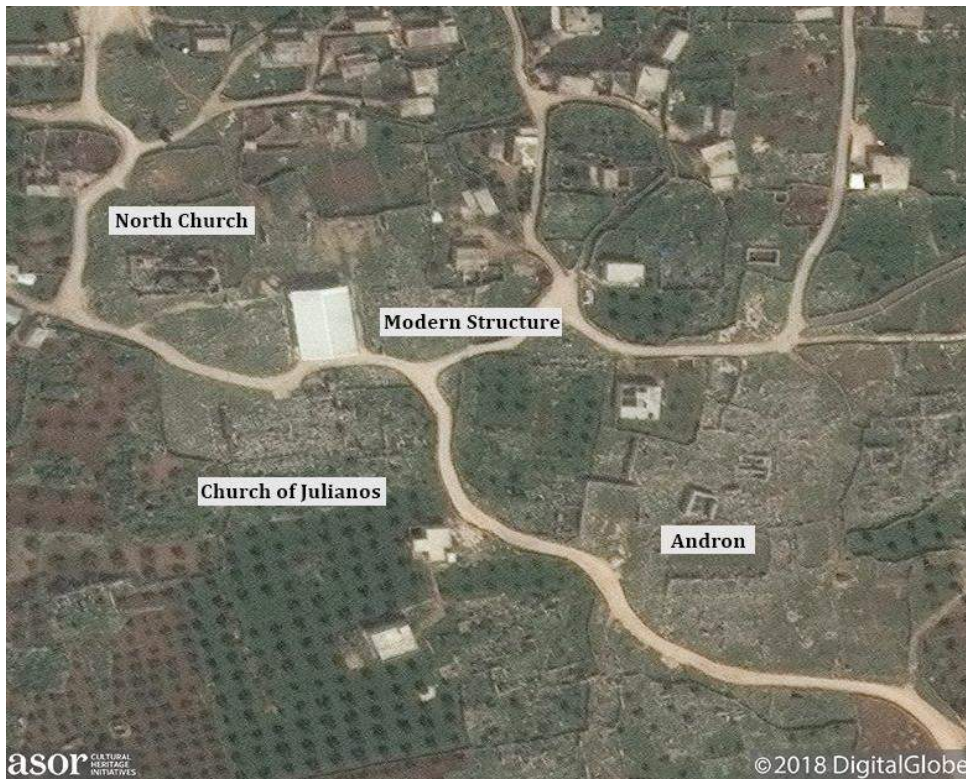
The North Church, seen from the northeast (ASOR CHI Source; March 30, 2018)



A tetrapylon at Barad. Multiple arches are in danger of collapsing (ASOR CHI Source; March 30, 2018)



The North Church and the Church of Julianos with the Maronite Church building in between the two (DigitalGlobe NextView License; September 18, 2016)



No visible recent damage to the remains of Barad (DigitalGlobe NextView License; March 22, 2018)

SHI 18-0077

Report Date: March 22, 2018

Site Name: Harim Mosque

Date of Incident: March 22, 2018

Location: Harim, Idlib Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: Video footage shows a reported Russian airstrike hitting a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On March 22, 2018 Aleppo Media Center and the White Helmets reported that a number of airstrikes hit the town of Harim in Idlib Governorate. Affected buildings included a vegetable market and a mosque.¹¹⁵ A video of one of the airstrikes published by a Twitter account shows a missile strike on or near a mosque.¹¹⁶ The airstrikes were allegedly carried out by Russian forces.

Pattern: Military activity: explosives - airstrike.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Aleppo Media Center: <https://twitter.com/AleppoAMC/status/976838548329586688>

Qalaat al-Mudiq/Twitter: <https://twitter.com/QalaatAlMudiq/status/976834713888411648>

The White Helmets:

March 22, 2018: <https://twitter.com/SyriaCivilDef/status/976876628453347330> ; <https://twitter.com/SyriaCivilDef/status/976848303416635394>

¹¹⁵ <https://twitter.com/SyriaCivilDef/status/976876628453347330> ; <https://twitter.com/SyriaCivilDef/status/976848303416635394> ; <https://twitter.com/AleppoAMC/status/976838548329586688>

¹¹⁶ <https://twitter.com/QalaatAlMudiq/status/976834713888411648>



A video still shows the moment a missile strikes the mosque or the surrounding area (Qalaat al-Mudiq/Twitter; March 22, 2018)

SHI 18-0078

Report Date: March 28, 2018

Site Name: al-Kabir Mosque (مسجد الكبير)

Date of Incident: Ongoing

Location: Jisr al-Shughour, Idlib Governorate, Syria

Site Description: The Great Mosque of Jisr al-Shughur was built in 1658 CE by Muhammad Basha al-Kubirli Zadeh to serve as a rest spot for pilgrims from the north on their way to Mecca.¹¹⁷ It was reconstructed in 1826 after an earthquake.

Site Date: Built 1658 CE; Reconstructed 1826 CE

Incident Summary: Volunteers renovated a damaged mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On March 28, 2018 SMART News Agency published video footage of ongoing renovations to al-Kabir Mosque in Jisr al-Shughour.¹¹⁸ The work is apparently being carried out by local volunteers using their personal funds.

Al-Kabir Mosque suffered damage on several occasions in 2017. On March 20, 2017 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that suspected Russian warplanes had fired missiles on the mosque, causing partial damage.¹¹⁹ SNHR also reported that the mosque's fence was partially destroyed and its furniture was moderately damaged.¹²⁰ On September 28, 2017 SNHR reported that a suspected Russian airstrike had again damaged al-Kabir Mosque.¹²¹ The airstrike blasted a hole through an exterior wall of the mosque.¹²²

For previous damage to al-Kabir Mosque see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0039** in the **March 2017 Monthly Report**; **SHI 17-0173** in the **September 2017 Monthly Report**.

Pattern: Site management: reconstruction/clean-up.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of al-Kabir Mosque, as well as the condition of other heritage sites located in regions subject reconstruction and clean-up.

¹¹⁷ <http://www.esyria.sy/eidleb/index.php?p=stories&category=places&filename=2008092510300210>

¹¹⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ERziuwNlhg0>

¹¹⁹ <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/03/20/media-activist-daraa-killed-isis-wadi-al-yarmouk-daraa-governorate-march-20/>

¹²⁰ http://sn4hr.org/wp-content/pdf/english/114_incidents_of_assault_on_civilian_vital_centers_in_March_2017_en.pdf

¹²¹ <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/09/28/suspected-russian-forces-shelled-al-kabir-mosque-jisr-al-shoghour-city-idlib-governorate-september-28/>

¹²² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LqzPxGAXWNQ>

Sources:

Online Reporting:

ESyria:

<http://www.esyria.sy/eidleb/index.php?p=stories&category=places&filename=2008092510300210>

SMART News Agency:

March 28, 2018: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ERziuwNlhg0> ; <https://smartnews-agency.com/ar/album/280132/بجهود فردية-الشغور-جسر-مدينة-الأثري-في-مدينة-جسر-الشغور-بجهود فردية/63496>

SNHR:

March 20, 2017: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/03/20/media-activist-daraa-killed-isis-wadi-al-yarmouk-daraa-governorate- march-20/>

April 7, 2017: [http://sn4hr.org/wp-content/pdf/english/114 incidents of assault on civilian vital centers in March 2017 en.pdf](http://sn4hr.org/wp-content/pdf/english/114%20incidents%20of%20assault%20on%20civilian%20vital%20centers%20in%20March%202017%20en.pdf)

September 28, 2017: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/09/28/suspected-russian-forces-shelled-al-kabir-mosque-jisr-al-shoghur-city-idlib-governorate-september-28/>

September 29, 2017: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LqzPxGAXWNQ>



Volunteers work to restore al-Kabir Mosque (SMART News Agency; March 28, 2018)



Volunteers work to restore al-Kabir Mosque (SMART News Agency; March 28, 2018)



Volunteers work to restore al-Kabir Mosque (SMART News Agency; March 28, 2018)



Volunteers work to restore al-Kabir Mosque (SMART News Agency; March 28, 2018)



Volunteers work to restore al-Kabir Mosque (SMART News Agency; March 28, 2018)

Incident Reports: Iraq

IHI 18-0005

Report Date: March 6, 2018

Site Name: Malthai Rock Reliefs (Halamata Cave)

Date of Incident: February 25, 2018

Location: Kifriki Village, Dohuk Governorate, Iraq

Site Description: The Malthai Reliefs are a series of four Neo-Assyrian bas-reliefs carved into the cliff-side above the village of Malthai (in the suburbs of Dohuk) on the south bank of Dohuk River. Three reliefs are grouped close together while the fourth is about 50 meters to their right. Each relief is 6 meters long and 2 meters high, and the same composition of nine figures is repeated on each panel with small variations.¹²³ The scenes depict the king as a worshipper facing right toward a line of five deities—Assur, Ninlil, Sin, Anu (or Enlil), Shamash, Adad, and Ishtar—mounted on animals. Another figure of the king is depicted at the end of this row of deities, so that the line of divinities is flanked on either side by two identical royal images.¹²⁴ The king depicted is Sennacherib (reigned ca. 704-681 BCE), who had these and other rock reliefs carved at points along his northern canal system.¹²⁵

All four reliefs panels have sustained damage, but little of this is recent. Sometime during the 1st to 3rd centuries CE, for example, large holes were cut in two of the panels to make tombs. Another panel was damaged in the 1920s when antiquities thieves cut out part of another of the reliefs. This stolen section was later recovered and is now in the Iraq Museum in Baghdad.¹²⁶ The small holes seen on all four reliefs are apparently due to the porosity of the rock, and are not bullet-holes or otherwise manmade as has recently been claimed.¹²⁷

Site Date: Neo-Assyrian (ca. 680 BCE)

Incident Summary: New photographs show damage to the ancient reliefs.

Incident Source and Description: On March 5, 2018 Rudaw reported that unknown perpetrators had damaged the Malthai Reliefs outside of Dohuk.¹²⁸ Nivin Mohammed, head of legal affairs for the Directorate of Antiquities of Dohuk reported, “On February 25, one of our guards informed us that some people had damaged the archeological items in Halamat cave. Later, a team visited the site and prepared a report on this issue. It was revealed later that some people had taken part in stealing the archeological items of the cave. The archeological piece stolen is called Sanharib

¹²³ http://archmap.org/archmap_2/Site/Collection?resource=233&building_id=2689

¹²⁴ <http://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2014/assyria-to-iberia/blog/posts/rock-reliefs>

¹²⁵ http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~jasonur/pdf/Ur_Iraq67_2005.pdf

¹²⁶ http://archmap.org/archmap_2/Site/Collection?resource=233&building_id=2689

¹²⁷ <http://conflictantiquities.wordpress.com/2016/02/23/iraq-krq-dohuk-maltai-peshmerga-destruction-false-claims/>

¹²⁸ <http://www.rudaw.net/english/kurdistan/050320186>

[Sennacherib].”¹²⁹ Photographs posted with the report show a large missing piece of sculpture from the second panel of the reliefs. The carving of the goddess Ninlil, wife of Assur was damaged. Her lower legs, part of her throne, and the face of the lion her throne rests on were removed.

The report also quotes Kovan Ihsan, an archaeologist in the Dohuk Directorate, who states, “Since 2014 there have been efforts to steal and damage 212 archaeological sites in Dohuk.”¹³⁰ There are a reported 456 archaeological sites in the Dohuk Governorate.

The Malthai Rock Reliefs have been damaged on multiple occasions. In May 2017, the reliefs were damaged by drilling, mainly over the faces of Sennacherib. In April 2016, the reliefs were vandalized by the spray painting of a Kurdish flag.

For more information on previous damage to the Malthai Rock Reliefs, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0005** in **Weekly Report 81–82**, **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0011** in **Weekly Report 89–90**, **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 17-0021** in **March 2017 Monthly Report**, and **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 17-0026** in **May 2017 Monthly Report**.

Pattern: Illegal excavation; Vandalism.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of Malthai, as well as the condition of other heritage sites located in regions subject to looting and vandalism.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Rudaw:

February 25, 2018: <http://www.rudaw.net/english/kurdistan/050320186>

March 1, 2018: <https://www.facebook.com/Rudaw.net/videos/1740023202760142/>

Scholarly:

Bahrani, Z. “Maltai Reliefs” The Archmap Project, Iraq. Updated May 8, 2014. Columbia University. http://archmap.org/archmap_2/Site/Collection?resource=233&building_id=2689

Malko, H. “Neo-Assyrian Rock Reliefs: Ideology and Landscapes of an Empire.” Metmuseum.org. <http://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2014/assyria-to-iberia/blog/posts/rock-reliefs>

Ur, J. (2005) “Sennacherib's Northern Assyrian Canals: New Insights from Satellite Imagery and Aerial Photography.” *Iraq* 67: 317-345. http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~jasonur/pdf/Ur_Iraq67_2005.pdf

¹²⁹ <http://www.rudaw.net/english/kurdistan/050320186>

¹³⁰ <http://www.rudaw.net/english/kurdistan/050320186>



Photograph showing the damage to the second panel of Malthai reliefs (Rudaw; March 6, 2018)



The second panel of the Malthai relief, before damage, area outlined in red (ASOR CHI Source; May 2012)



Photograph showing close-up damage to the second panel of the Malthai reliefs, with the majority of damage focused on the carving of Ninlil (Rudaw; March 6, 2018)

IHI 18-0006

Report Date: March 13, 2018

Site Name: Islamic Cemetery

Date of Incident: March 9, 2018

Location: Benawanok, Bradost Area, Erbil Governorate, Iraq

Site Description: Islamic cemetery

Site Date: Islamic Period (600 CE–present day)

Incident Summary: Illegal excavation occurred at an Islamic cemetery.

Incident Source and Description: On March 9, 2018 Kurdistan TV Center posted a video showing illegal excavation to one, or possibly two, Islamic period cemeteries in the Sidekan Region of Erbil Governorate.¹³¹ This report was picked up by other Kurdish Facebook groups, and screenshots of the video were posted with calls to protect cultural heritage in Kurdistan. The name(s) of these cemeteries are unknown, but the upright standing stones mark them as an Islamic cemetery.

Pattern: Illegal excavation; Development disturbances.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Private Facebook Account

Kurdistan TV Center: <https://www.facebook.com/kurdistantvcenter/videos/1926339467407400/>

¹³¹ <https://www.facebook.com/kurdistantvcenter/videos/1926339467407400/>



Video still of damage to an Islamic grave (Kurdistan TV Center; March 9, 2018)



Video still of damage to an Islamic grave (Kurdistan TV Center; March 9, 2018)



Video still of damage to an Islamic grave (Kurdistan TV Center; March 9, 2018)



Video still of damage to an Islamic cemetery (Kurdistan TV Center; March 9, 2018)



Video still of damage to a possible historic site (Kurdistan TV Center; March 9, 2018)



Video still of damage to an Islamic cemetery (Kurdistan TV Center; March 9, 2018)



Video still of damage to an Islamic grave (Kurdistan TV Center; March 9, 2018)

IHI 18-0007

Report Date: March 13, 2018

Site Name: al-Mustafa Mosque (جامع المصطفى)

Date of Incident: March 12, 2018

Location: Salah al-Din Governorate, Iraq

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: ISIS militants reportedly destroyed a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On March 13, 2018 Iraqi News reported that ISIS militants destroyed al-Mustafa Mosque, located on the Tikrit-Kirkuk road, the previous day.¹³² According to Iraqi News, explosives were detonated at the mosque, causing damage but no casualties. No photographs of the damage were available at the time of publication.

Pattern: Military activity: intentional destruction.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Iraqi News:

<https://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/suspected-is-militants-detonate-mosque-in-salahuddin-province/>

¹³² <https://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/suspected-is-militants-detonate-mosque-in-salahuddin-province/>

IHI 18-0008**Report Date:** March 28, 2018**Site Name:** Nebi Yunus Mosque Complex**Date of Incident:** March 19, 2018**Location:** Mosul, Iraq

Site Description: Nebi Yunus Mosque Complex is located on the mound south of the Neo-Assyrian capital of Nineveh. The mound includes a palace built by King Esarhaddon (681–669 BCE), renovated by Ashurbanipal (669–627 BCE), and destroyed in 621 BCE when Nineveh was attacked.¹³³ A Nestorian-Assyrian church was later built on the mound and was eventually became associated with the Prophet Jonah.¹³⁴ In the late 14th century CE, the site was converted into a mosque and was still considered to be the location of Jonah’s tomb, as the prophet is revered in both Christianity and Islam. The mosque was subsequently the subject of a number of restorations, including modern additions. The site was an important pilgrimage destination.

Site Date: Church built ca. 7th century CE; Church rebuilt ca. 14th century CE; Church conversion to mosque ca. 20th century CE

Incident Summary: A NGO installed gates to control access to the grounds of the Nebi Yunus Mosque Complex.

Incident Source and Description: On March 27, 2018 the Ziusudra Archaeological Organization, an NGO, reported that they and members of the Nineveh Archaeological and Cultural Inspectorate installed gates and blocked passages in order to control access to the Nebi Yunus Mosque Complex and the tunnels created by ISIS to access archaeological remains beneath the complex.¹³⁵ Within the ruins of the complex, the NGO used metal doors and other pieces of scrap to seal off passages. To the east of the ruins, the group installed a gate across an opening in a wall that allowed vehicle and pedestrian access to a nearby lot.

Pattern: Site management.

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

Sources:Online Reporting:

Ziusudra Archaeological Organization:

<https://www.facebook.com/ziusudra0/posts/1014818855337254>

¹³³ Scott & McGinnis 1990: 64–67.

¹³⁴ Walker 2011: 309–310.

¹³⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/ziusudra0/posts/1014818855337254>

Scholarly

Scott, M. Louise and J. McGinnis (1990) "Notes on Nineveh," *Iraq* 52: 64–67.

Turner, G. (1970), "Tell Nebi Yunūs: The Ekal Māšarti of Nineveh," *Iraq* 32.1: 68–72.

Walker, J. (2011) "Nineveh," in *Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage*. Gorgias Press. 309–310.



A rubble-filled passage into the Nebi Yunus Mosque Complex (Ziusudra; March 27, 2018)



The blocking across one of the passages at the Nebi Yunus Mosque Complex(Ziusudra; March 27, 2018)



The installation of one of the blockings at the Nebi Yunus Mosque Complex (Ziusudra; March 27, 2018)



The placement of metal over holes in Nebi Yunus Mosque Complex complex (Ziusudra; March 27, 2018)



The entryway to the lot prior to the installation of the gate at the Nebi Yunus Mosque Complex (Ziusudra; March 27, 2018)



A view of the installation of the gate at the Nebi Yunus Mosque Complex (Ziusudra; March 27, 2018)



Preparation of the materials for the gate at the Nebi Yunus Mosque Complex (Ziusudra; March 27, 2018)



A view of the gate installation process at the Nebi Yunus Mosque Complex (Ziusudra; March 27, 2018)



The preparation of the gate at the Nebi Yunus Mosque Complex (Ziusudra; March 27, 2018)



The finishing touches on the gate installation at the Nebi Yunus Mosque Complex (Ziusudra; March 27, 2018)

IHI 18-0009

Report Date: March 22, 2018

Site Name: Sayed Rebar Shrine

Date of Incident: Around March 21, 2018

Location: Zanqara, Daquq District, Kirkuk Governorate, Iraq

Site Description: The Sayed Rebar Shrine consists of a grave and a second rectangular feature that are surrounded by an enclosure wall. The grave is in the northern corner of the space while the rectangular feature is in the southern corner. The grave, rectangular feature, and the wall are all painted green. The space is unroofed. Two additional graves are situated immediately southwest of the shrine.

The shrine is associated with Yarsanism, the followers of which are known as Yarsani, Kakayi, or Ahl al-Haqq. The majority of the Yarsani are Gorani Kurds who live in eastern Iraq and western Iran.¹³⁶

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: Unidentified militants reportedly destroyed a Yarsani shrine.

Incident Source and Description: On March 21, 2018 a Private Twitter Account (@BarzanSadiq) reported that ISIS militants intentionally destroyed a Yarsani shrine in the town of Zanqara.¹³⁷ However, later reports indicated that the perpetrators have not been identified.¹³⁸ Photographs show that the walls of the shrine were partially toppled and that the northern end of the grave within was damaged. Reports indicate that the perpetrators used explosives to damage the shrine. DigitalGlobe satellite imagery confirms that the shrine was severely damaged between January 8, 2018 and March 22, 2018.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Kirkuk Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 18-0010**.

Pattern: Military activity: intentional destruction.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

BAS News: <https://twitter.com/EnglishBasNews/status/978324647145066497>

¹³⁶ Halm 1982.

¹³⁷ Private Twitter Account

¹³⁸ <http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/9fc158cc-e3b6-41d0-b919-43f3f1715c59>

Iraq Now: <http://ku.iraqnow.news/TopArticles/9825>

Kurdistan 24: <http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/9fc158cc-e3b6-41d0-b919-43f3f1715c59>

Private Twitter Account

Scholarly

H. Halm, "AHL-E HAQQ," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 1982, I/6, pp. 635–637, available online at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/ahl-e-haqq-people> (accessed on March 28, 2018).



Video still of Sayed Rebar Shrine before its destruction (Private Twitter Account; February 23, 2018)



The interior of Sayed Rebar Shrine, seen from the southeast (Bas News; March 26, 2018)



The interior of Sayed Rebar Shrine, seen from the east (Private Twitter Account; March 21, 2018)



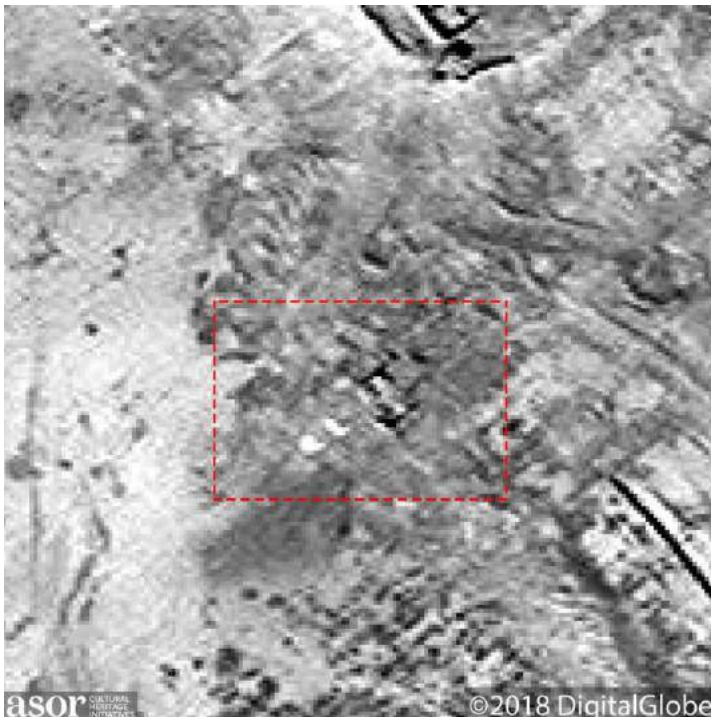
The exterior of Sayed Rebar Shrine, seen from the southeast (Private Twitter Account; March 21, 2018)



The toppled walls of Sayed Rebar Shrine, seen from the east (Private Twitter Account; March 21, 2018)



Sayed Rebar Shrine, along with two gaves to the southwest, prior to damage shown within the red square (DigitalGlobe NextView License; January 8, 2018)



The remains of the severely damaged Sayed Rebar Shrine shown within the red rectangle (DigitalGlobe NextView License; March 22, 2018)

IHI 18-0010

Report Date: March 24, 2018

Site Name: Tell Hama Sufi Shrine

Date of Incident: Around March 24, 2018

Location: Tell Hama, Kirkuk Governorate, Iraq

Site Description: The Tell Hama Sufi Shrine is a rectangular building topped by a dome. The shrine is located on top of Tell Hama, an archaeological site that is home to a large cemetery. The shrine is in close proximity to at least one other shrine as well as a number of other modern buildings.

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: ISIS militants reportedly destroyed a Sufi shrine.

Incident Source and Description: On March 24, 2018 a Private Twitter Account reported that ISIS militants destroyed a Sufi shrine near Daquq. The account published video stills of the destruction of the shrine from a video that was originally circulated by an ISIS-affiliated news group. These images show the planting of explosives next to the grave inside of the shrine and the subsequent explosion, which disintegrated the roof and walls of the building. DigitalGlobe satellite imagery from April 3, 2018 shows that while the exterior walls are still erect, the dome has collapsed. Debris are visible around all sides of the building.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Kirkuk and Salah al-Din Governorates: **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 18-007** and **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 18-0009**.

Pattern: Military activity: intentional performative destruction.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

al-Masdar News: <https://www.almasdarnews.com/article/isis-terrorists-destroy-sufi-shrine-in-southern-kirkuk-photos/>

Private Twitter Account



Video still of placement of explosives in the Tell Hama shrine (Private Twitter Account; March 24, 2018)



Video still of the shrine prior to detonation of the Tell Hama shrine (Private Twitter Account; March 24, 2018)



Video still of the destruction of the Tell Hama shrine (Private Twitter Account; March 24, 2018)



Video still of the aftermath of the explosion at the Tell Hama shrine (Private Twitter Account; March 24, 2018)



Tell Hama shrine prior to destruction (DigitalGlobe NextView License; January 3, 2018)



Tell Hama shrine post destruction outlined in red (DigitalGlobe NextView License; April 3, 2018)

Incident Reports: Libya

LHI 18-0013 UPDATE

Report Date: March 19, 2018

Site Name: al Hamamah

Date of Incident: March 19, 2018

Location: Quseir Yara, Hamamah, Shahat, Cyrenaica, Libya

Site Description: This is a small archaeological site adjacent to the coast similar to a number of the Roman-era farmsteads documented in the Green Mountain region.

Site Date: Roman, 1st century B.C.E.-2nd century C.E.

Incident Summary: Urban encroachment continues to occur on a site.

Incident Source and Description: An ASOR CHI in-country source returned to al Hamamah in Quseir Yara to see if efforts by the DoA offices in both Shahat and Qasr Libya as well as pressure by the municipality had convinced the landowner to stop construction.¹³⁹ According to a report published on the Facebook page of DoA Shahat, these efforts seem to have failed, and the landowner has continued to build foundations on top of the archaeological site.

For previous damage to al Hamamah, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 18-0013** in the **February 2018 Monthly Report**.

Pattern: Development disturbance.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of al Hamamah, as well as the condition of other heritage sites located in regions subject to development disturbances. ASOR CHI is also committed to supporting the efforts of DoA employees and local authorities who work to stop this encroachment while maintaining a dialogue with local citizens.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

DoA Shahat:

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1666169363472774&id=1252747658148282

¹³⁹ https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1666169363472774&id=1252747658148282



New foundations have been laid in concrete block on top of the archaeological site (DoA Shahat; March 19, 2018)

LHI 18-0015

Report Date: March 5, 2018

Site Name: Qasr al-Hajj - Tombs; Qasr al-Hajj - Watchtower

Date of Incident: Between August 31, 2017 and November 13, 2017

Location: Qasr al Hajj, Jebel Nafusa, Tripolitania, Libya

Site Description: These tombs are located approximately 17 km north of the town of Qasr al-Hajj, in a sparsely inhabited area in which water running off of the Jebel Nafusa mountains near Zintan and Jadu collects in the arid pre-desert. The two tombs consist of vertical rock-cut shafts connecting to subterranean chambers that have been decorated with sculpted plaster and frescos. Prior to their destruction, the watchtower had legible rectilinear foundations of stone. Remnants of fresco in the tombs recovered by the Rujban Explorer's Club led by Seddik Elkiesh are exceptional, in that they provide the first evidence of a decorated Roman tomb in the entire Jebel Nafusa region.

Site Date: Roman, Byzantine (1st century BCE–7th century CE)

Incident Summary: Treasure hunters illegally excavated tombs, destroying them in the process.

Incident Source and Description: An in-country source and director of a local NGO notified ASOR CHI as soon as his team discovered evidence of looting. On the basis of the disturbed soil, the illicit excavation appeared to have occurred recently. Given the signs of mechanized equipment, the tomb robbers appear to have used a bulldozer or backhoe to dig out the tombs.

Based on recent DigitalGlobe satellite imagery, the damage occurred between August 31, 2017 and November 13, 2017. The large scars indicate the use of heavy machinery as noted by analysis from the ground. Other areas near these monuments were also disturbed. There is no further damage visible in the most recent image from January 23, 2018.

Pattern: Illegal excavation.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of Qasr al Hajj tombs and watchtower, as well as the condition of other heritage sites located in regions subject to illegal excavations. ASOR CHI is also committed to supporting the efforts of NGOs like the Rujban Explorer's Club in their efforts to document and protect Libyan cultural heritage.

Sources:

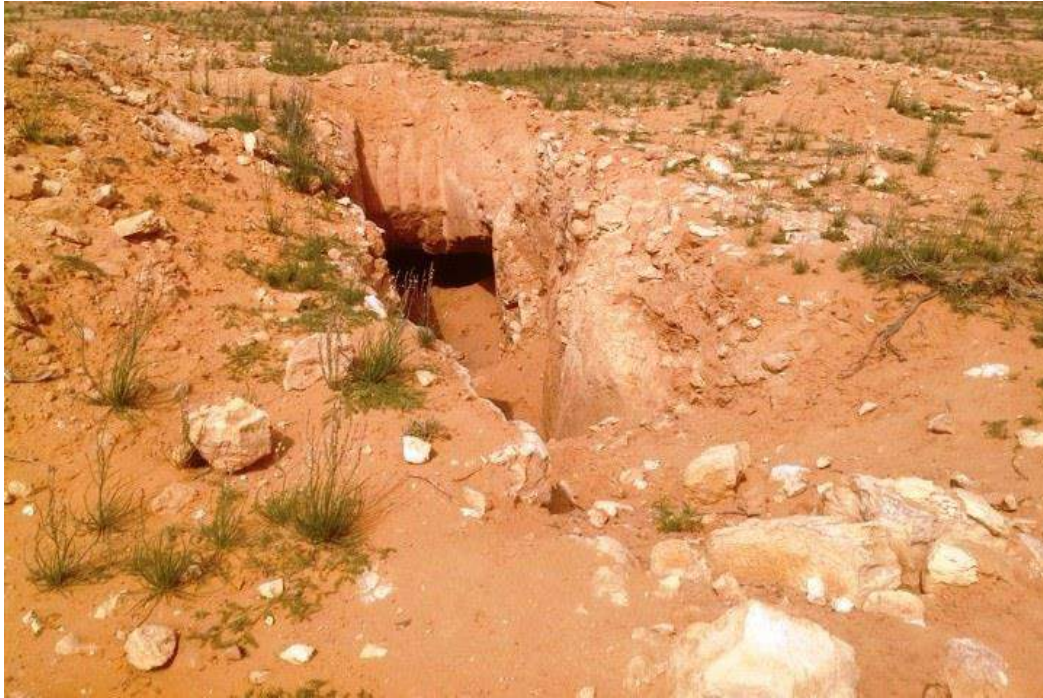
ASOR CHI Source



Exterior of Tomb 1 (March 5, 2018)



Painted interior of Tomb 1 (March 5, 2018)



Exterior of Tomb 2 (March 5, 2018)



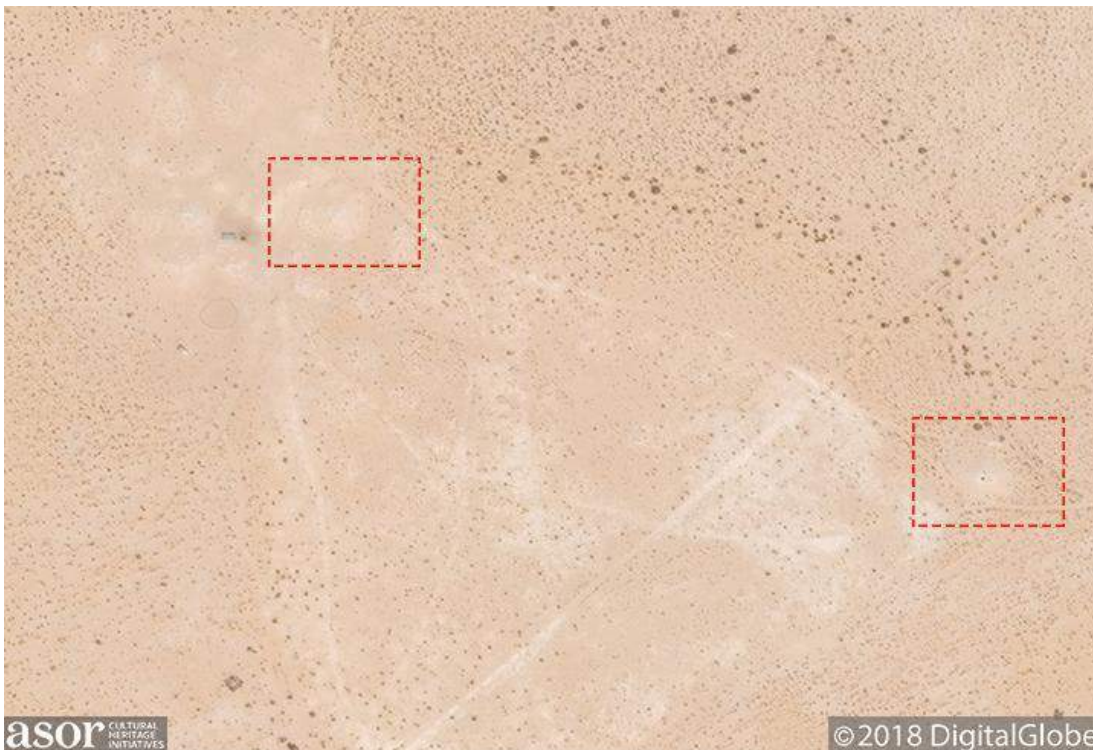
Interior of Tomb 2 (March 5, 2018)



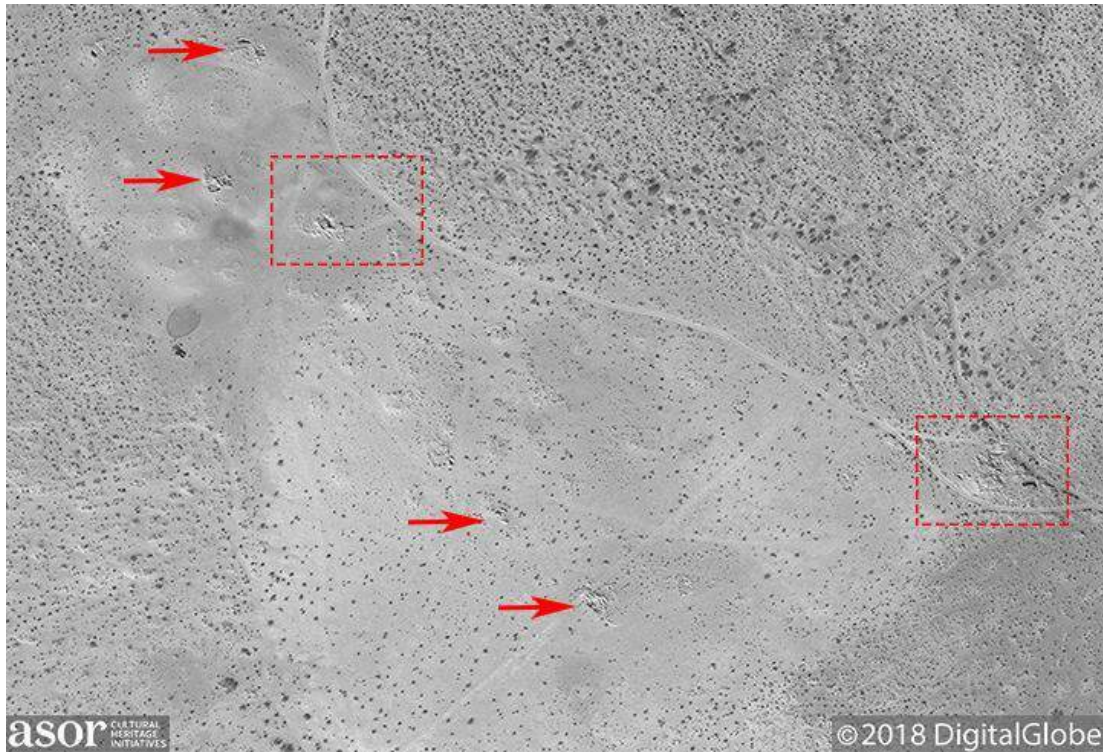
Fragment of decorated plaster from Tomb 1 (March 5, 2018)



Fragment of fresco from Tomb 1 (March 5, 2018)



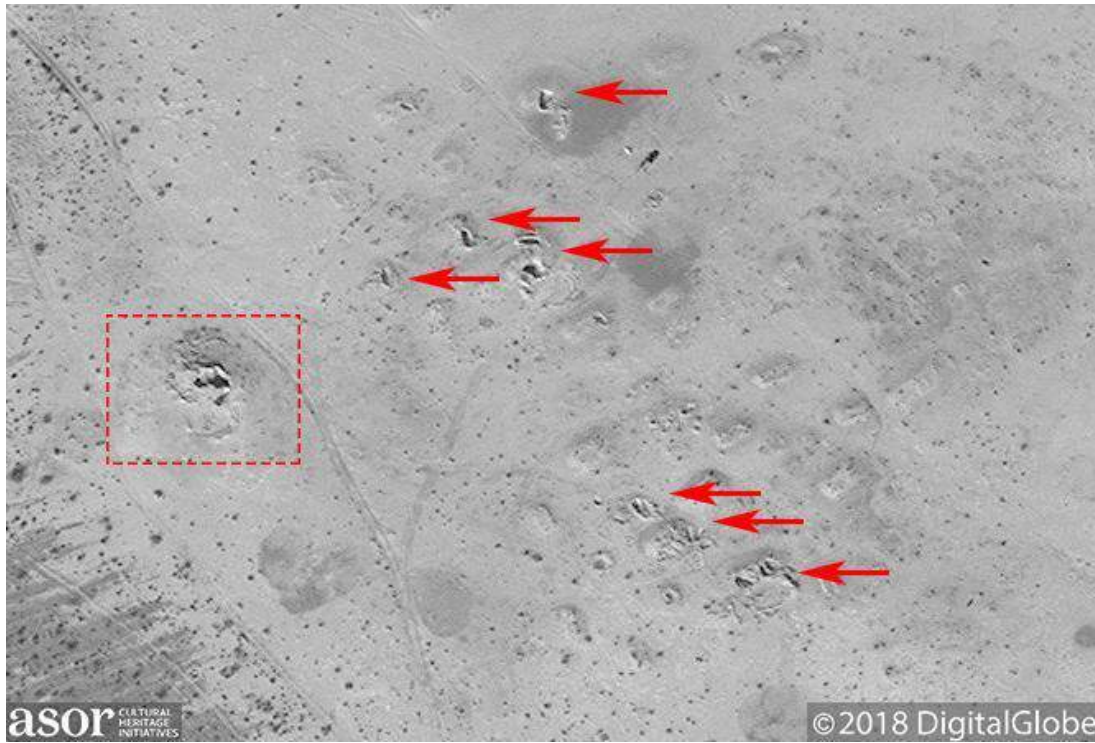
The area of tombs 1 and 2 prior to illegal excavation (DigitalGlobe NextView License; August 31, 2017)



The area of tombs 1 and 2 with visible heavy machinery scars (DigitalGlobe NextView License; November 13, 2017)



The area of the watchtower prior to illegal excavation (DigitalGlobe NextView License; August 31, 2017)



The area of the watchtower with visible heavy machinery scars (DigitalGlobe NextView License; November 13, 2017)

LHI 18-0016

Report Date: March 9, 2018

Site Name: Sabha Castle (Fort Elena; Fortezza Margherita; قلعة سبها)

Date of Incident: March 5, 2018

Location: Sabha, Fezzan, Libya

Site Description: Sabha Castle was originally constructed ca. 1870 during the Ottoman Period. It was expanded in the 1930s during the Italian Colonial era.¹⁴⁰

Site Date: Built 1870 CE, restored during Italian Colonial era.

Incident Summary: Recent fighting damaged a historic castle.

Incident Source and Description: On March 5, 2018 *The Libya Observer* reported that Sabha Castle had suffered damage during recent fighting in the city.¹⁴¹ Photographs accompanying the report show damage to the castle's western wall, including several large holes from shelling. According to *Arabi 21*, the 6th Brigade, ostensibly aligned with the Tripoli-based Government of National Accord, is stationed at the castle.¹⁴²

An employee of the Libyan Department of Antiquities (DoA) based in Sebha, reported to ASOR CHI that members of DoA were unable to approach the castle to evaluate damage due to ongoing fighting. However, much as they did following a previous period of violence in 2014, the employees of DoA are likely to conduct a thorough damage assessment once stability has returned, according to abd al Hamid.

DigitalGlobe satellite imagery from March 9, 2018 confirms these reports of damage to the western section of the castle walls, as well as damage to the northern walls and a possible breach in the southern wall. DoA has condemned the damage to the castle and called on all parties to avoid further damage to the historic site.¹⁴³

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Akhbar Libya: <http://www.akhbarlibya.net/libya-news/976739.html>

¹⁴⁰ <http://www.aljazeera.net/knowledgegate/magazine/2016/2/11/الجزيرة-قلعة-سبها-الليبية-تستغيث-العالم>

¹⁴¹ <https://www.libyaobserver.ly/news/sabha-castle-danger>

¹⁴² <https://arabi21.com/story/1076568/تجدد-الاشتباكات-المسلحة-في-سبها-الليبية-قوات-حفتر-تهدد>

¹⁴³ <http://www.akhbarlibya.net/libya-news/976739.html>

Arabi 21: <https://arabi21.com/story/1076568/تجدد-الاشتباكات-المسلحة-في-سبها-الليبية-وقوات-حفتر-تهدد>

Al Jazeera:

<http://www.aljazeera.net/knowledgegate/magazine/2016/2/11/مراسلو-الجزيرة-قلعة-سبها-الليبية-تستغيث-العالم>

Libya Observer: <https://www.libyaobserver.ly/news/sabha-castle-danger>



Damage to the western wall of Sabha Castle (Libya Observer; March 5, 2018)



Sabha Castle prior to visible damage (DigitalGlobe NextView License; January 12, 2018)



Sabha Castle with visible scorch marks, debris and a hole along the western and northern walls of the castle, as indicated by red arrows. There is also a possible breach in the southern wall (DigitalGlobe NextView License; March 9, 2018)



Damage to the northern wall of Sabha Castle, with a red arrow indicating a hole in the western wall. Additionally, rubble can be seen on the northwest corner of castle (DigitalGlobe NextView License; March 25, 2018)

LHI 18-0017

Report Date: March 15, 2018

Site Name: Temple of Zeus

Date of Incident: March 15, 2018

Location: Cyrene, Shahat, Cyrenaica, Libya

Site Description: The Temple of Zeus is the largest temple at the UNESCO World Heritage site of Cyrene, measuring approximately 70 x 32m. Created in the Doric style, it was built by the Greek settlers of Cyrene and later reused by the Romans. It was destroyed by an earthquake in the 4th Century CE, and then re-erected by a team of Italian archaeologists from 1957-1974.

Site Date: Greek Period (6th Century BCE)

Incident Summary: The DoA conducted a campaign to remove vegetation that threatened the stability of the temple.

Incident Source and Description: According to the official Facebook page of the Libyan Department of Antiquities, (DoA) Shahat, the conservation team of the department conducted a campaign to clear the Temple of Zeus and temple precinct of vegetation. The roots of many of these bushes and trees were beginning to undermine portions of the temple.

Pattern: Site management; Natural impact.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of the Temple of Zeus, as well as the condition of other heritage sites located in regions subject to natural impacts. ASOR CHI is also committed to helping the DoA Shahat, looking for examples of practical site stabilization projects that could be strengthened with ASOR CHI support.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

DoA Shahat:

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1661901890566188&id=1252747658148282



Temple of Zeus before the recent cleaning campaign (DoA Shahat; March 15, 2018)



Temple of Zeus after the recent cleaning campaign (DoA Shahat; March 15, 2018)



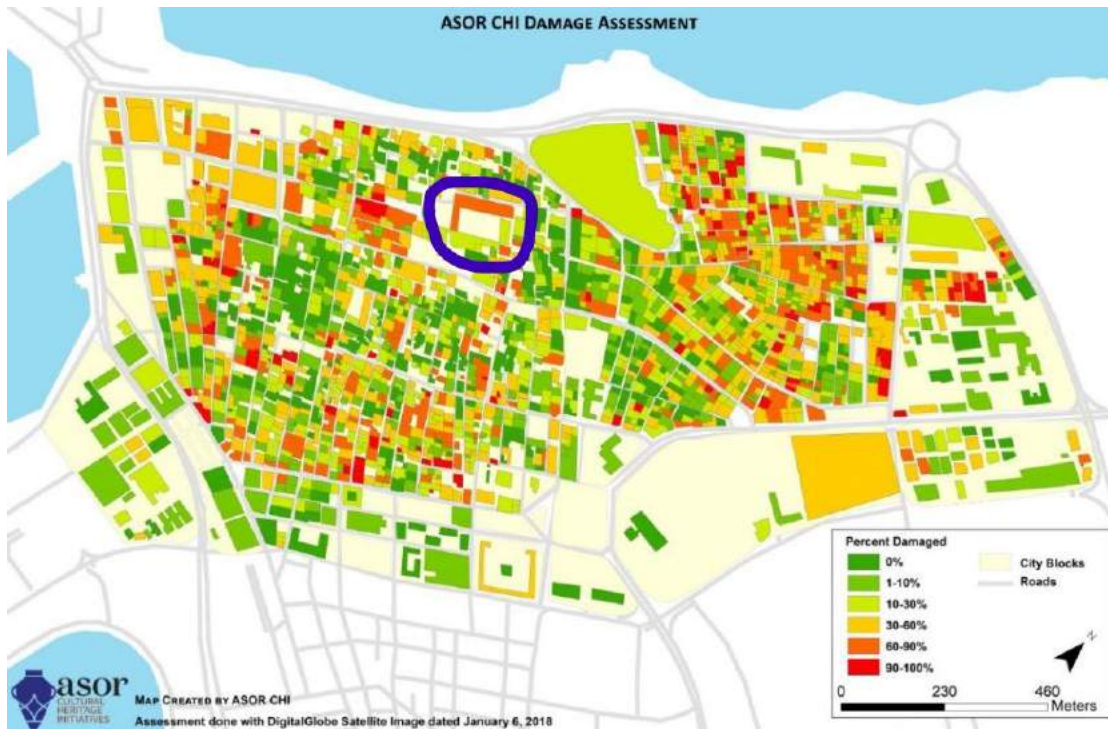
A member of DoA Shahat's conservation team cuts down a tree threatening the site (DoA Shahat; March 15, 2018)



Members of DoA Shahat's conservation team remove another tree undermining the precinct wall (DoA Shahat; March 15, 2018)

LHI 18-0018**Report Date:** March 28, 2018**Site Name:** Souq al Baladi**Date of Incident:** Ongoing since February 1, 2018**Location:** Benghazi, Cyrenaica, Libya**Site Description:** This is a collection of roughly 70 small storefronts (approximately 5 x 10m) that surround a rectangular square. The storefronts were shaded from the sun by an arcade. Much of this site was damaged during the battle of Benghazi in the summer of 2017.**Site Date:** Italian colonial period, 1924 CE**Incident Summary:** Stabilization and restoration work has begun in the Souq al Baladi.**Incident Source and Description:** An ASOR CHI in-country source visited the Souq al Baladi to inspect the progress of stabilization and restoration work. According to the remote damage assessment conducted by ASOR CHI, the northern and western wings of this market complex were more heavily damaged, with approximately 60-90% of the building destroyed. Under the supervision of DoA Benghazi, works now progress to rebuild some of the collapsed arches of the arcade and repair damaged walls. A report of the visit was published on a private facebook account.**Pattern:** Site management: reconstruction.**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of the Souq al Baladi, as well as the condition of other heritage sites located in regions subject to reconstruction. ASOR CHI is also committed to helping the efforts of DOA Benghazi.**Sources:**

Private Facebook Account



ASOR CHI damage assessment of the Old City of Benghazi, with the area of the Souq al Baladi circled in blue (ASOR CHI; January 6, 2018)



Historic photo of the entryway to the square (Private Facebook Account; March 28, 2018)



Members of DoA Benghazi pose by scaffolding erected to stabilize portions of this historic entryway (Private Facebook Account; March 28, 2018)



Works progress to re-erect arches and stabilize others with infill of concrete masonry (Private Facebook Account; March 28, 2018)



Given the extent of the damage, much stabilization and repair work remains to be done (Private Facebook Account; March 28, 2018)



Another view of damaged arcade and storefronts (Private Facebook Account; March 28, 2018)



For some portions of the Souq al Baladi, the damage was less severe and necessary repairs are largely cosmetic (Private Facebook Account; March 28, 2018)



Souq al Baladi before clean-up and restoration (DigitalGlobe NextView License; December 1, 2017)



Souq al Baladi with restoration in progress (DigitalGlobe NextView License; March 18, 2018)

Satellite Imagery and Geospatial Analysis

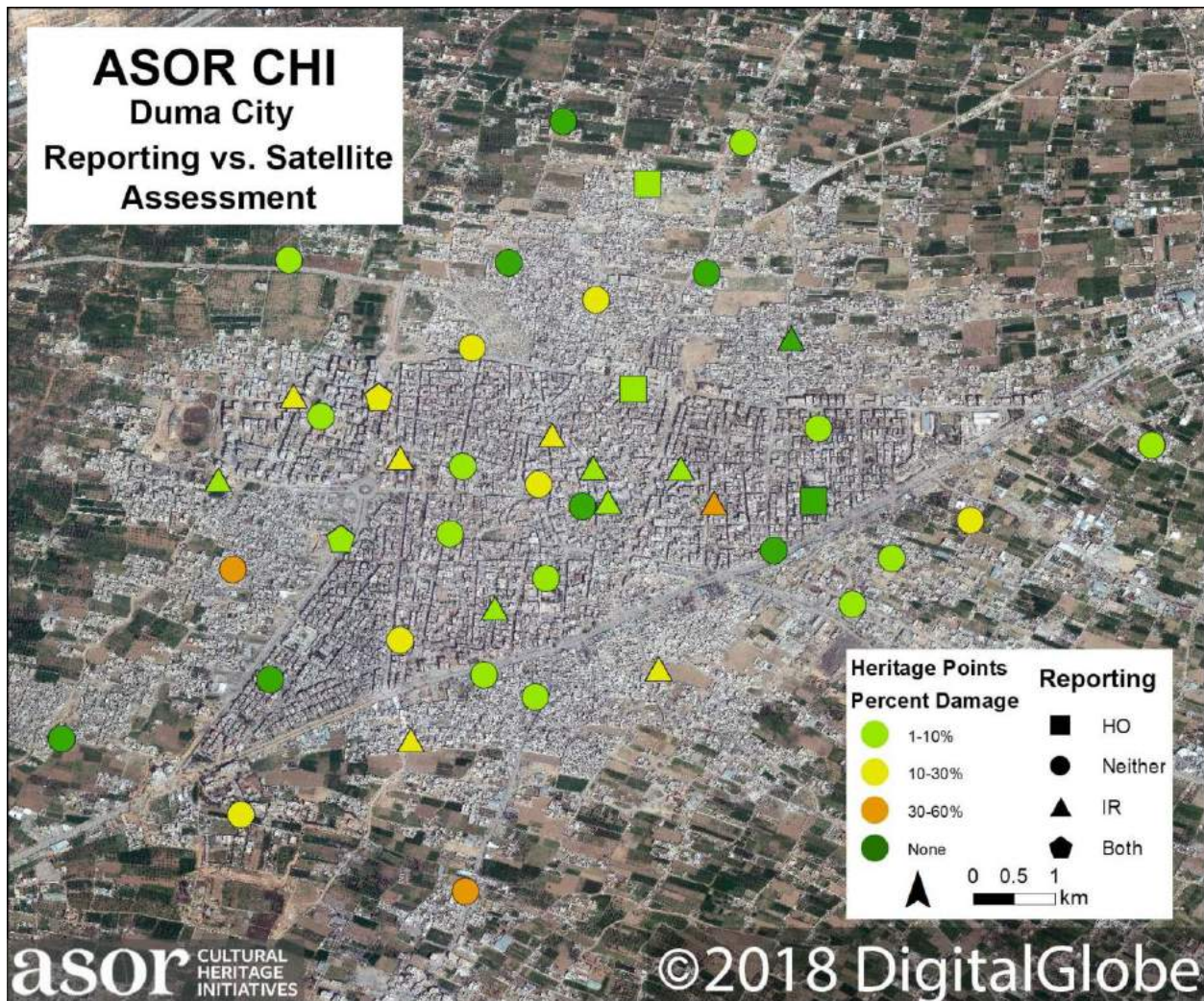
As a result of ongoing bombardment in the Eastern Ghouta region of Rif Dimashq, ASOR CHI's Geospatial Team completed an in-depth, longitudinal analysis of all heritage sites in Douma, one of the hardest hit cities in Eastern Ghouta. In order to make sense of damage trends in Douma since the beginning of the conflict, the Geospatial Team utilized six DigitalGlobe satellite images spanning a six-year period: February 21, 2012, December 23, 2014, June 27, 2016, July 2, 2017, December 31, 2017 and March 4, 2018. When the quality of the image was not high enough to analyze a certain heritage site, a higher quality image close in date was used.

ASOR CHI has catalogued a total of 44 heritage sites in Douma city. One location is a cultural center and all remaining locations are mosques. Seven categories of damage were tracked for each individual location through time: agricultural disturbances, development disturbances, human activity, illegal excavation, military activity, site management, and natural impacts. Two subcategories were also tracked under military activity: explosives or airstrikes. The visible damage in each of the six satellite images was categorized as: earliest image already damaged, first seen, increased, same, or none. Additionally, the percentage of damage for each heritage site in each image was also noted: no visible damage, 1–10% damage, 10–30% damage, 30–60% damage, 60–90%, and 90–100% damage. In this way, we were able to determine during which time periods damage was most severe.

ASOR CHI has previously reported numerous Incident Reports and Heritage Observations for Douma, the majority of which catalogued damage from explosives or airstrikes. Heritage Observations differ from Incident Reports in that they are often unverified or may affect only the area around the heritage site but not the site itself. ASOR CHI does not publish the Heritage Observations. Despite this intensive reporting, the extent of damage to the heritage in Douma is not fully represented by Incident Reports and Heritage Observations. The map below shows the study area and location of heritage sites coded by those which have appeared in an Incident Report, Heritage Observation, both, or neither, along with the satellite assessment percent damage for each heritage site. As of March 2, 2018 there are 20 heritage sites in Douma that show visible damage in satellite imagery, but have not had any media coverage and are therefore not represented in Incident Reports or Heritage Observations.

See associated Incident Reports in earlier Weekly Reports for all heritage sites that were damaged in Douma: **ASOR CHI Incident Reports SHI 16-0045 in Weekly Report 87-88, SHI 16-0189 in Weekly Report 123-124, SHI 17-0055 in April 2017 Monthly Report, SHI 17-0082 in May 2017 Monthly Report, SHI 17-0131 in July 2017 Monthly Report, SHI 17-0221 in November 2017 Monthly Report, SHI 18-0019 in January 2018 Monthly Report, SHI 18-0020 in January 2018 Monthly Report, SHI 18-0021 in January 2018 Monthly Report, SHI 18-0053 in February 2018 Monthly Report, SHI 18-0057 in February 2018 Monthly Report, SHI 18-0058 in February 2018 Monthly Report, and SHI 18-0060 in February 2018 Monthly Report.**

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for heritage sites that were damaged in Douma: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0075, SHI 18-0062, and SHI 18-0065.**



This map shows the discrepancy between sites that are visibly damaged in satellite imagery assessments, along with the percent visible damage, and those that have been reported as damaged in media outlets as of March 23, 2018 (DigitalGlobe NextView License; March 1, 2018)

All damage to heritage sites in Douma has been the result of military activity. In the satellite image from February 21, 2012 four of the 44 sites show 1–10% visible damage from explosives. Therefore, prior to this date, 9% of the catalogued heritage in Douma was damaged. One of the damaged sites is a cultural center and the remaining three are mosques. By December 23, 2014 the number of damaged sites doubled. None of the previously damaged sites had any visible increase in damage, but four additional sites were initially damaged during this time. There is 30–60% visible damage from explosives to al-Manfush Mosque and 1–10% visible damage from explosives to three additional mosques.

38% of cultural heritage sites in Douma were visibly damaged by June 27, 2016, totalling 17 damaged sites. This time period represents the largest percent increase in damage to heritage sites in Douma to date, with a 112% increase in visible damage. 12 of these showed minor damage from explosives. Out of the 17 damaged locations, four showed increased damage. The increased damage to ar-Rawda Mosque was the first verifiable instance of damage from an airstrike in Douma (See [ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0045](#) in [Weekly Report 87-88](#)). Two mosques were 30–60%

damaged by this time, both from explosives. Between June 27, 2016 and July 2, 2017 six mosques exhibited new damage, all but one from explosives. Al-Nasaan Mosque was reportedly damaged by a SARG airstrike during this time period (See **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0055** in **April 2017 Monthly Report**). Three mosques showed increased damage, with damage to two as a result of explosions and to one from earthen embankments.

Only two previously intact features were damaged between July 2, 2017 and December 31, 2017, namely Halima Mosque and al-Ansar Mosque. By this time, 18 locations exhibited 1–10% visible damage, four exhibited 10–30% damage, and two exhibited 30–60% damage in satellite imagery. There is an uptick in initial damage to sites between December 31, 2017 and March 4, 2018. 11 sites were first damaged by explosives within this two-month time frame. Additionally, several mosques exhibited visible increases in military damage. Seven of these showed increased signs of damage as a result of explosives, including one damaged by an airstrike, and three showed increased damage but the cause could not be reliably deduced from satellite imagery. By March 4, 2018 all but nine of the heritage sites in Douma exhibited some form of damage. 48% showed minor damage, with 1–10% of the feature compromised. 27% of the sites exhibited 10–30% visible damage, and 7% of the structures were 30–60% damaged.

As evidenced by the above analysis, there has been significant damage to the heritage of Douma throughout the course of the Syrian conflict. Although there has been extensive reporting in ASOR CHI Incident Reports and Heritage Observations, the full extent of damage is not fully captured by those alone. This discrepancy underscores the importance of analyzing satellite imagery for damage. One such example of this is al-Iman Mosque, which was not reported in Incident Reports or Heritage Observations due to a lack of media coverage. Instead, ASOR CHI's Geospatial Team discovered the damage through analysis of satellite imagery. Between December 23, 2014 and June 27, 2016, heavy shelling damaged the roof, dome, and possibly minaret of al-Iman Mosque, as seen in the images below.



Al-Iman Mosque prior to any visible damage (DigitalGlobe NextView License; December 23, 2014)



Red arrows indicate damage to al-Iman Mosque from heavy shelling (DigitalGlobe NextView License; June 27, 2016)

SNHR Vital Facilities

On March 10, 2018 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) released a vital facilities report for February 2018. According to SNHR, there were 156 attacks against vital civilian facilities. The sites attacked include 10 mosques and two churches.¹⁴⁴

- On February 2, 2018 reported SARG helicopters dropped barrel bombs on al-Kabir Mosque in Ghadafa, Idlib Governorate, damaging the mosque. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0040**
- On February 4, 2018 reported SARG warplanes fired a missile near al-Kabir Mosque in Misraba, Rif Dimashq Governorate, partially destroying the mosque. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0041**
- On February 5, 2018 reported SARG warplanes fired missiles near al-Nasaan Mosque in Douma, Rif Dimashq Governorate, damaging the mosque.
- On February 5, 2018 mortar shells of unknown origin landed on the Mariamite Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Damascus, Damascus Governorate, damaging the church.
- On February 7, 2018 reported SARG warplanes fired missiles at al-Kabir Mosque in Zamalka, Rif Dimashq Governorate, severely damaging the mosque. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0047**
- On February 8, 2018 reported ISIS militants fired shells at Amr ibn al-Jarrah Mosque in Hayt, Daraa Governorate, moderately damaging the mosque.

¹⁴⁴ [http://sn4hr.org/wp-content/pdf/english/At least 156 incidents of attacks on civilian centers in Syria i%20n February 2018 e n.pdf](http://sn4hr.org/wp-content/pdf/english/At%20least%20156%20incidents%20of%20attacks%20on%20civilian%20centers%20in%20Syria%20i%20n%20February%202018%20e%20n.pdf)

- On February 8, 2018 reported SARG warplanes fired missiles near St. George Greek Orthodox Church in Irbeen, Rif Dimashq Governorate, partially destroying the church. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0048**
- On February 8, 2018 reported SARG warplanes fired missiles at Ahmad ibn Hanbal Mosque in Jisreen, Rif Dimashq Governorate, partially destroying the mosque. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0050**
- On February 15, 2018 reported Iraqi Shiia militia fighters set fire to Omar ibn al-Khattab Mosque in Suwayyah, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, severely damaging the mosque.
- On February 17, 2018 reported Russian warplanes fired a missile near al-Kabir Mosque (Abu Bakr al-Siddiq Mosque) in Hazano, Idlib Governorate, damaging the mosque. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0055**
- On February 20, 2018 reported SARG or Russian warplanes fired missiles at al-Tawba Mosque in Zamalka, Rif Dimashq Governorate, damaging the mosque.
- On February 27, 2018 reported SARG forces launched a rocket at Umm Habiba Mosque in Douma, Rif Dimashq Governorate, heavily damaging the mosque. The mosque was also reportedly damaged in a SARG airstrike on February 17, 2018. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0060**

Heritage Timeline

- March 30, 2018 *Rudaw* published an article titled **“In pictures: Syriac Heritage Museum showcases Iraq’s rich Christian past”** (by A.C. Robinson). The Syriac Heritage Museum in Erbil showcases artifacts from various Iraqi Christian denominations.
<http://www.rudaw.net/english/kurdistan/270320186>
- March 29, 2018 *CNN* published an article titled **“Two Spaniards arrested over smuggling of artifacts looted by ISIS”** (by Lorenzo D’Agostino and Judith Vonberg). Spanish police have arrested two men for allegedly smuggling artifacts looted from sites in Libya. The artifacts have been traced back to the sites of Apollonia and Cyrene.
<https://www.cnn.com/2018/03/29/europe/spain-arrests-isis-artifacts-libya-intl/index.html>
- **Heritage for Peace** published its bi-weekly newsletter titled **“Damage to Syria’s Heritage - March 29, 2018.”**
<http://www.heritageforpeace.org/syria-culture-and-heritage/damage-to-cultural-heritage/previous-damage-newsletters/5195-2/>
- March 28, 2018 *BBC News* published an article titled **“Latest Trafalgar Square Fourth plinth artwork unveiled.”** A recreation of an Assyrian lamassu sculpture destroyed by ISIS in 2015 is the latest artwork to be unveiled on the “Fourth plinth” in Trafalgar Square in London. The sculpture, by New York artist Michael Rakowitz, is titled “Invisible Enemy Should Not Exist” and is made out of 10,500 tins of Iraqi date syrup.
<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-43565870>

- *BBC News* published a report titled “**Spain police recover artefacts looted by IS in Libya.**” Two experts in ancient art have been arrested in Barcelona after they were accused of looting Libyan artifacts.
<http://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-europe-43571615/spain-police-recover-artefacts-looted-by-is-in-libya>
- UNESCO published an article titled “**UNESCO, EU and art market together ramp up fight against illicit trafficking of cultural objects.**” UNESCO, EU Member States and art market representatives joined other international organizations, NGOs, and experts at UNESCO Headquarters on March 20–21, 2018 for the conference “Engaging the European Art Market in the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural property.”
<https://en.unesco.org/news/unesco-eu-and-art-market-together-ramp-fight-against-illicit-trafficking-cultural-objects>
- *The New York Review of Books* published an article titled “**Rebuilding Mosul, Book by Book**” (by Shawn Carrié and Pasha Magid). Two residents of Mosul opened the Book Forum cafe following years of ISIS rule in the city that prohibited such establishments.
<http://www.nybooks.com/daily/2018/03/28/rebuilding-mosul-book-by-book/>
- *Kurdistan 24* published an article titled “**Ezidi Peshmerga, Iraqi forces standoff over raising of Iraqi flag at Ezidi shrine near Shingal**” (by Baxtiyar Goran). Yezidi Peshmerga fighters prevented Iraqi and Popular Mobilization Force (PMF) fighters from flying the Iraqi flag at the Sherfedin Shrine near Jebel Sinjar, considered by Yezidis to be one of the most sacred places on earth.
<http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/ce3a8e64-eb3a-4b69-a961-82a99f2418ac>
- *Libya 24* published an article titled “**US Mission Concludes Workshop on Exploration of Libya's Monuments**” (by Alia Ahmed). The American Archaeological Mission in Libya held a workshop in Tunisia to train participants in studying crime scenes at cultural heritage sites.
<https://libya24.tv/news/139940>
- *Chrome Radio* published a podcast titled “**A sense of place**” (by Jasmine Gani & Alexy Karenowska). Alexy Karenowska, Director of Technology at the Institute for Digital Archaeology at Oxford University, discusses “how 3D printing and machining technologies can help restore and replicate monuments damaged or destroyed during conflict.”
<https://soundcloud.com/chromeradio/chrome360-syria-a-sense-of-place-jasmine-gani-alex-karenowska?in=chromeradio/sets/chrome360-syria-march-2018>

- March 27, 2018 *Phys.org* published an article titled “**Insights into early modern life.**” A discussion of recent discoveries made at the site of Ur, current excavated by a team from Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, led by Adelheid Otto.
<https://phys.org/news/2018-03-insights-early-urban-life.html>
- March 26, 2018 *The Daily Mail* published an article titled “**In 'city of shanasheel', Iraqi heritage crumbles from neglect.**” Historic buildings in Basra suffer from neglect, lack of maintenance, and illegal construction.
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-5544775/In-city-shanasheel-Iraqi-heritage-crumbles-neglect.html>
- *Arts* published a paper titled “**Ancient Artifacts vs. Digital Artifacts: New Tools for Unmasking the Sale of Illicit Antiquities on the Dark Web**” (by Katie Paul). According to the abstract, “While art and antiquities have long served as a market with susceptibilities to laundering, the emergence of Dark Web markets, identification-masking software, and untraceable cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin have opened new doors to potential vulnerabilities.”
<http://www.mdpi.com/2076-0752/7/2/12>
 - *The Libya Observer* published an article titled “**Libya General Association of Culture decries attack on Arab Publishing House**” (by Abdulkader Assad). Several Libyan citizens, who claimed to own the land on which the historic Arab Publishing House is built, have demolished part of the Tripoli building.
<https://www.libyaobserver.ly/culture/libya-general-association-culture-decries-attack-arab-publishing-house>
 - *UN Environment* published an article titled “**Rising from the rubble: Iraq’s Mosul takes steps to deal with war debris.**” A two-day workshop in Mosul University co-hosted by UN Environment and UN Habitat on March 19–20, 2018 brought together over 50 experts from key Iraqi government departments implementing debris removal efforts in Mosul. Experts on demining and explosives, historic buildings, legal matters, the environment, and representatives from local communities, academic institutions and the private sector were also present to discuss restoration efforts in the city.
<https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/story/rising-rubble-iraqs-mosul-takes-steps-deal-war-debris>
 - *The Libya Observer* published an article titled “**Attempt to smuggle ancient objects outside Libya thwarted**” (by Safa Alharathy). The Libyan Office for the Protection of Archaeological Sites reported that it foiled an attempt to smuggle 20 artifacts looted from sites in the Akakus mountains.
<https://www.libyaobserver.ly/inbrief/attempt-smuggle-ancient-objects-outside-libya-thwarted>

- March 25, 2018 *The Times of Israel* published an article titled “**Syria accuses Israel of stealing artifacts from Damascus.**” Syria’s UN Ambassador Bashar Jaafari accused Israel and Turkey of stealing Jewish artifacts from the historic Jobar Synagogue in Damascus.
<https://www.timesofisrael.com/syria-accuses-israel-of-stealing-artifacts-from-damascus/>
- March 24, 2018 *Xinhua* published an article titled “**Spotlight: Libyan archaeological sites threatened by theft and armed conflict**” (by Mahmoud Darwesh & Nawas Darraji). Ancient sites in Libya, including Sabratha, remain under threat by armed groups and looting.
http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-03/24/c_137062930.htm
- March 22, 2018 *Sydney Morning Herald* published an article titled “**Australia urged to sign up and help save the world's cultural heritage**” (by Neelima Choahan). Professor Peter Stone, UNESCO Chair in Cultural Property Protection and Peace at Newcastle University, has been an active voice urging governments, including Australia, to make cultural property protection an integral part of military training.
<https://www.smh.com.au/national/australia-urged-to-sign-up-and-help-save-the-world-s-cultural-heritage-20180308-p4z3i5.html>
- *Enab Baladi* published an article titled “**The Ruins of Raqqa Tell the People’s Story of Hope.**” Raqqa’s ancient ruins provide a source of hope for the city’s inhabitants.
<https://english.enabbaladi.net/archives/2018/03/the-ruins-of-raqqa-tell-the-peoples-story-of-hope/>
 - *BBC News* published a video report titled “**The sisters rebuilding Mosul University’s library**” (by Shaimaa Khalil & Dina Demrardash). Two medical students assisted with collecting books for the Mosul University Central Library after its collection was partially destroyed by ISIS.
<http://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-middle-east-43488371/the-sisters-rebuilding-mosul-university-s-library>
- March 21, 2018 *Reuters* published an article titled “**This man is trying to rebuild Mosul. He needs help – lots of it**” (by Raya Jalani & Michael Georgy). Abdelsattar al-Hibbu, the municipality chief of Mosul, “faces the titanic task of rebuilding Iraq’s second largest city from the ruins of war.” Al-Hibbu has previously said that Mosul requires \$75 million just to maintain basic services.
<https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/iraq-mosul-official/>

- The Institut des Cultures d’Islam will host an exhibit titled “**Bagdad mon amour.**” The exhibit will feature works by Iraqi artists inspired by events from antiquity to the present, and is concerned with artistic strategies for reinventing Iraqi heritage.
<https://www.institut-cultures-islam.org/bagdad-mon-amour/>
 - *Al Monitor* published an article titled “**Hebrew prophet’s tomb in Iraq saved from collapse**” (by Judit Neurink). The Alliance for the Restoration of Cultural Heritage (ARCH) has assisted with the restoration of the Tomb of the Prophet Nahum in al-Qosh. ASOR CHI’s Allison Cuneo is quoted.
<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/03/nahums-tomb-in-iraq-restoration-begins.html>
- March 20, 2018
- The Architects’ Journal* published an article titled “**Competition: Baghdad Design Centre**” (by Merlin Fulcher). An open international ideas contest has been launched to transform Baghdad’s abandoned Old Governorate Building into a new design center.
<https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/competitions/competition-baghdad-design-centre/10029288.article>
- *BBC News* published an article titled “**Meet the dogs being trained to sniff out looted ancient treasures**” (by Trystan Young). Dogs are being trained to detect artifacts in an attempt to tackle cultural heritage trafficking.
<http://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-us-canada-43471287/meet-the-dogs-being-trained-to-sniff-out-looted-ancient-treasures>
- March 19, 2018
- The Atlantic* published an article titled “**It’s Disturbingly Easy to Buy Iraq’s Archeological Treasures**” (by Sigal Samuel). A discussion of the booming trade in looted Iraqi antiquities.
<https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/03/iraq-war-archeology-invasion/555200/>
- March 18, 2018
- Rudaw* published an article titled “**Iraqi enthusiasts search for relics of royal past.**” A weekly auction held at a cafe in Baghdad has become a popular place to bid on memorabilia from the era of Hashemite rule.
<http://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/iraq/18032018>
- *The Libya Observer* published an article titled “**Union of Libyan World Heritage Municipalities meets in Sabratha**” (by Safa Alharathy). The Union of Libyan World Heritage Municipalities has called for government measures to protect Libyan sites registered as World Heritage Sites “stressing the need for coordination and coherence between the relevant authorities in this matter.”
<https://www.libyaobserver.ly/inbrief/union-libyan-world-heritage-municipalities-meets-sabratha>

- *Rai News 24* published an article titled “**Iraq, missione archeologica italiana scopre porto del III millennio a.C. (Iraq, Italian archaeological mission discovers port from 3rd millennium BCE).**” Archaeologists excavating at Abu Tbeirah have discovered a port dating to the 3rd millennium BCE. This is the oldest port discovered in Iraq.
<http://www.rainews.it/dl/rainews/articoli/iraq-missione-archeologica-italiana-scopre-porto-III-millennio-avanti-cristo-233f009b-bc3b-41db-b94d-c49c6ae196a0.html>

- March 16, 2018 *The Journal of Social Archaeology* published an article titled “**The ritualization of heritage destruction under the Islamic State**” (by Sofya Shahab & Benjamin Isakhan). According to the abstract, “this article develops the conceptual framework of the ritualization of heritage destruction to analyse and interpret the targeting of pre-monotheistic heritage sites and artefacts by the Islamic State.”
<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1469605318763623>

- March 15, 2018 *CNN* published an article titled “**How seven years of war turned Syria's cities into 'hell on Earth'**” (by Sheena McKenzie). An overview of immense destruction in major cities throughout Syria.
<https://www.cnn.com/2018/03/15/middleeast/syria-then-now-satellite-intl/index.html>

- *Middle East Eye* published an article titled “**Where the books weren't burned: Baghdad's ancient library**” (by Tom Westcott). Al-Qadiriyya Library in Baghdad holds 80–85,000 books, some almost 1000 years old.
<http://www.middleeasteye.net/in-depth/features/where-books-weren-t-burned-baghdad-s-secret-library-334560080>

- *The New York Times* published an article titled “**Remembering Aleppo: A City in Ruins**” (by Yousour al-Hlou). As Syria enters its eighth year of civil war, Lina Sergie Attar, a Syrian-American architect, reflects on the devastation of Aleppo.
<https://www.nytimes.com/video/world/middleeast/100000005336300/remembering-aleppo-a-city-in-ruins.html>

- *Kurdistan 24* published an article titled “**Daniel Libeskind: Architect of The Kurdistan Museum**” (by Laurie Mylroie). American architect Daniel Libeskind is designing The Kurdistan Museum in conjunction with the Kurdistan Regional Government. The museum will be located at the base of the Erbil Citadel.
<http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/interview/7c1c25f3-f679-47e3-af18-67c8591563b2>

March 14, 2018

Xinhua published an article titled “**Libya soon to get back stolen antiquities seized in Spain.**” The Libyan Archaeological Authority reported that a collection of antiquities stolen from the archaeological site of Cyrene and seized in Spain will soon be returned to Libya.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-03/14/c_137037066.htm



Libya Herald published an article titled “**Rebuilding Benghazi conference on 5-10 May welcomes international participation**” (by Sami Zaptia). The “International Conference and Exhibition for Rebuilding Benghazi” will be held from May 5–10, 2018 at Benghazi’s Tibesti Hotel. The conference is sponsored by the House of Representatives, the Central Bank of Libya, the Municipality of Benghazi, the Benghazi Chamber of Commerce, and the University of Benghazi.

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2018/03/14/rebuilding-benghazi-conference-on-5-10-may-welcomes-international-participation/>



The Bull & Bear published an article titled “**Syrian students’ association launches speaker series**” (by Ryan London). McGill University’s Syrian Students’ Association and Centre Culturel Syrien has launched a speaker series called “One Syria.” For the first session, architect Ziad Demian spoke on the importance of post-war reconstruction plans for Syria.

<http://bullandbearmcgill.com/syrian-students-association-launches-speaker-series/>

March 13, 2018

Horizon Magazine published an article titled “**War can destroy cultural heritage twice – in conflict and in clean-up**” (by Aisling Irwin). People can inadvertently destroy cultural heritage for a second time when cleaning up conflict sites after a war ends, according to archaeologist Margarete van Ess. She argues that databases and education are the best basis for safeguarding sites for the future.

https://horizon-magazine.eu/article/war-can-destroy-cultural-heritage-twice-conflict-and-clean_en.html



ITV published an article titled “**Red Cross: Syria destruction 'on a scale not seen since Second World War'.**” Red Cross chief executive Mike Adamson likened the damage caused during the ongoing Syrian civil war to the aerial bombardment of London and Dresden during World War II.

<http://www.itv.com/news/2017-03-13/red-cross-syria-destruction-on-a-scale-not-seen-since-second-world-war/>

- DGAM published an article titled “**Signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Foundation for the Protection of the Cultural Heritage _Palmyra.**” The DGAM and the Russian Foundation for the Protection of the Cultural Heritage of Palmyra signed a Memorandum of Understanding aimed at “providing the necessary support in the field of restoration and rehabilitation of Syrian archaeological sites and cultural property.”
<http://dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=2382>
 - *The Baghdad Post* published an article titled “الاستخبارات العسكرية تعلن إحباط عملية كبيرة لتهرب الآثار (Military Intelligence announces thwarting of large-scale antiquities smuggling ring).” The Iraqi Directorate of Military Intelligence announced that officers have arrested members of an antiquities smuggling ring in Wasit Governorate and recovered 22 artifacts, including coins and statues, were recovered.
<http://www.thebaghdadpost.com/ar/story/91591/-الاستخبارات-العسكرية-تعلن-إحباط-عملية-كبيرة-لتهرب-الآثار>
 - *The Christian Science Monitor* published an article titled “**After centuries of cultural theft, why more nations are returning looted artifacts**” (by Husna Haq). The trend towards repatriation of artifacts—looted or otherwise—to their countries of origin has accelerated over the past decade “thanks to increased awareness of past cultural injustices and renewed respect for national sovereignty.”
<https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Progress-Watch/2018/0313/After-centuries-of-cultural-theft-why-more-nations-are-returning-looted-artifacts>
 - *The Art Newspaper* published an article titled “**How refugees are conserving Iraq and Syria's extraordinary monumental heritage**” (by John Darlington). The World Monuments Fund has opened a centre in Mafraq, Jordan to train refugees in conservation stonemasonry.
<https://www.theartnewspaper.com/comment/we-need-to-invest-in-people>
- March 12, 2018
- Heritage for Peace** published its bi-weekly newsletter titled “**Damage to Syria's Heritage – 12 March 2018.**”
<http://www.heritageforpeace.org/syria-culture-and-heritage/damage-to-cultural-heritage/previous-damage-newsletters/damage-to-syrias-heritage-12-march-2018/>

- *Rudaw* published an article titled “**UAE offers reconstruction of Al-Nuri Mosque and Al-Hadba Minaret in Mosul.**” The United Arab Emirates has offered to reconstruct both al-Nuri Mosque and al-Hadba Minaret in Mosul, based on the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi’s “faith in both ‘brotherly’ countries’ relations.”
<http://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/iraq/120320181>

- March 10, 2018 *The Guardian* published an article titled “**Dogs trained to sniff out ancient treasures looted from Syria**” (by Dalya Alberge). The research programme known as “K-9 Artifact Finders,” involving the University of Pennsylvania’s Penn Vet Working Dog Centre, hopes to use dogs to root out cultural artifacts in hidden in shipping containers, cargo crates, the mail and luggage. ASOR CHI’s Michael Danti is quoted.
<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2018/mar/11/dogs-trained-to-sniff-out-ancient-treasures-looted-from-syria>

- The **UNESCO World Heritage Center** published issue number 86 of the “**World Heritage**” newsletter. Articles include “**Reconstruction of Syrian heritage: Rethinking the past and the future.**”
<http://en.calameo.com/read/0033299721336e74edda2>

- March 9, 2018 *Rudaw* published an article titled “**Friar trains Iraqis to preserve 'treasures' rescued from ISIS**” (by Sammy Ketz). A discussion of the work of Father Najeeb Michael, who saved manuscripts from ISIS militants and now works to train fellow Iraqis to preserve their heritage.
<http://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/iraq/09032018>

- *Ahram Online* published an article titled “**The politics of cultural heritage**” (by Nadine Loza). The author asks, “How can Western museums reconcile respect for cultural property with hogging the world’s antiquities?”
<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContentP/4/292450/Opinion/The-politics-of-cultural-heritage---.aspx?platform=hootsuite>

- *Arché Orient* published an article titled “**La guerre d’Alep 2012-2016. Destruction de la maison Ghazalé (The War of Aleppo 2012-2016. Destruction of Beit Ghazale)**” (by Jean-Claude David). A discussion of the destruction of Beit Ghazale, a historic house and museum in Aleppo. <https://archeorient.hypotheses.org/8296>

- *Iraqi News* published an article titled “**Iraq searches for U.K. ship that sank a century ago**” (by Mohamed Mostafa). The Department of Antiquities and Heritage in Basra, in cooperation with Basra University, will launch a search for a British ship laden with antiquities that sank in the Tigris River during World War I.
<https://www.iraqinews.com/features/iraq-search-u-k-antiquities-laden-ship-sank-century-ago/>

March 8, 2018

Bas News published an article titled “**KRG Seeking Return of Looted Antiquities.**” Mala Awat, Director-General of Antiquities of the KRG, reports that requests to have artifacts stolen in the 1990s from Kurdish museums returned have gone unanswered.

<http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/kurdistan/421049>



Al Monitor published an article titled “**Iraq’s legendary copper markets fade away**” (by Wassim Basseem). Traditional coppersmiths in Baghdad’s Souq al-Safafer discuss the decline in the popularity of the craft.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/03/iraqs-copper-markets-lose-glimmer.html>



Reuters published an article titled “**Benghazi looks to preserve historic buildings shattered by war**” (by Ayman al-Warfalli). Benghazi will host an international conference this month in an effort to drum up support for the restoration of the city’s historic center, which has sustained significant damage since 2014.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security-benghazi/benghazi-looks-to-preserve-historic-buildings-shattered-by-war-idUSKCN1GJ2CC>

March 7, 2018

GIM International published an article titled “**The Digital Revival of Ancient Palmyra.**” A new book titled *Reviving Palmyra in Multiple Dimensions: Images, Ruins and Cultural Memory* provides a collection of data submitted by an archaeologist, a geomaticist-photogrammetrist and an electrical engineer, who used photographs, drawings, 3D models and virtual worlds to “revive Palmyra.”

<https://www.gim-international.com/content/article/the-digital-recollection-of-ancient-palmyra>

March 5, 2018

Heritage Daily published an article titled “**From Hearing to Signing: What’s Happened While Libya Awaited Their MOU**” (by Katie A. Paul). Looting and trafficking of antiquities in Libya has continued since the June 2017 hearing that discussed a potential Memorandum of Understanding between the US and Libya.

<https://www.heritagedaily.com/2018/03/hearing-signing-whats-happened-libya-awaited-mou/118545>



Al-Iraq News published an article titled “**واع/البرلمان يصوت على مقترح قانون (Parliament votes on the proposed law to make Babylon Iraq's cultural capital).**” Iraq’s House of Representatives has voted to make Babylon Iraq’s “Cultural Capital.”

<http://www.al-iraqnews.com/news/index.php?news=222271>

- *Libya Observer* published an article titled “**Sabha Castle is in danger**” (by Safa Alharathy). The Libyan Antiquities Authority condemned the destruction of Sabha's historic castle after its walls were reportedly severely damaged by missiles during the clashes in the city.
<https://www.libyaobserver.ly/news/sabha-castle-danger>

- March 2, 2018 UNESCO published an article titled “**Qatar Fund for Development boosts UNESCO’s Heritage Emergency Fund with US \$2 million contribution.**” The Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD) and UNESCO signed a new agreement to supplement the financing of UNESCO’s Heritage Emergency Fund (HEF) with \$2 million USD.
<https://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1791>

- March 1, 2018 UNESCO published an announcement for a conference titled “**Engaging the European Art Market in the Fight Against the Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property.**” A joint EU-UNESCO conference will be held in Paris from March 20–21, 2018.
<https://en.unesco.org/events/engaging-european-art-market-fight-against-illicit-trafficking-cultural-property>

- February 28, 2018 *Asharq al-Awsat* published an article titled “**Rain in Iraq Ends Drought, Uncovers Historic Ruins.**” Recent heavy rains have revealed artifacts from the Parthian to Islamic eras near the site of Borsippa.
<https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1189666/rain-iraq-ends-drought-uncovers-historic-ruins>

- *The Conversation* published an article titled “**Virtual archaeology: how we achieved the first long-distance reconstruction of a cultural artefact**” (by Tim Collins). Using 3D computational geometry, researchers were able to reunite two fragments of the same cuneiform tablet kept in the British Museum and in the Musée d’Art et d’Histoire in Geneva.
<http://theconversation.com/virtual-archaeology-how-we-achieved-the-first-long-distance-reconstruction-of-a-cultural-artefact-91725>