

# ASOR Cultural Heritage Initiatives (CHI): Planning for Safeguarding Heritage Sites in Syria and Iraq<sup>1</sup>

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May 2018 Monthly Report — May 1–31, 2018

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<sup>1</sup> 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
  - Alleged Free Syrian Army (FSA) fighters vandalized the Shrine of Sheikh Zaid located in the Zaidiya Cemetery in Afrin, Aleppo Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0105.**
  - Alleged Free Syrian Army (FSA) fighters looted the Shrine of Sheikh Junayd in Qarabash, Aleppo Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0108**
  - Alleged Turkish army forces destroyed the grave of the Kurdish writer Nuri Dersimi and damaged Henan Mosque in Mesh'ale, Aleppo Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0116**
- Damascus Governorate
  - New photographs show damage to al-Habib al-Mustafa Mosque in Yarmouk neighborhood, Damascus, Damascus Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0099**
  - Reported SARG forces recaptured the Jerusalem Mosque in Yarmouk neighborhood, Damascus, Damascus Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0104**
  - Satellite imagery revealed damage to al-Wasim Mosque in Yarmouk neighborhood, Damascus, Damascus Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0106**
  - Satellite imagery shows damage to the Palestinian Martyrs Cemetery in Yarmouk neighborhood, Damascus, Damascus Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0107**
  - The dome of the Palestinian Mosque collapsed in Yarmouk neighborhood, Damascus, Damascus Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0109**
  - Satellite imagery revealed damage to an unnamed mosque in al-Salae neighborhood, Damascus, Damascus Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0110**
  - Satellite imagery revealed damage to Omar ibn al-Khattab Mosque in al-Qadam neighborhood, Damascus, Damascus Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0111**
  - Satellite imagery revealed damage to al-Rahman Mosque in Yarmouk neighborhood, Damascus, Damascus Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0113**
- Hama Governorate
  - Satellite imagery revealed ongoing illegal excavations at Apamea, in Qalaat al-Mudiq, Hama Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0100**
  - A reported SARG airstrike allegedly damaged Abu Bakr al-Sadiq Mosque in Kafr Zaita, Hama Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0103**
- Homs Governorate
  - Video footage shows graffiti at the Roman Theater in Palmyra, Homs Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0117**

- Idlib Governorate
  - Alleged Russian warplanes reportedly shelled Hamza bin Abd al-Mutallem Mosque in Jisr al-Shughour, Idlib Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0101**
  - Satellite imagery and photographs show new damage to Tell Danit in Idlib Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0102**
- Rif Dimashq Governorate
  - Satellite imagery revealed damage to Ibrahim Khalil Mosque in Hajar al-Aswad, Rif Dimashq Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0112**
  - Satellite imagery revealed damage to al-Zubair Mosque in Hajar al-Aswad, Rif Dimashq Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0114**
  - Satellite imagery revealed damage to an unnamed mosque in Hajar al-Aswad, Rif Dimashq Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0115**

## Iraq

- Ninawa Governorate
  - An unnamed group rebuilt al-Juwayjati Mosque in Mosul, Ninawa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 18-0011**

## Libya

- Fezzan
  - Satellite imagery revealed damage to Sabha Castle in Sabha, Fezzan. **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 18-0021**

## Military and Political Context

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

1. Deir ez Zor Governorate:
  - On May 1, US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) resumed military operations against ISIS-held areas of Deir ez Zor Governorate. The SDF had previously paused operations in January 2018 when Turkey and Turkish-backed Syrian opposition forces attacked Kurdish-held areas of Aleppo Governorate including the city of Afrin.<sup>2</sup>
  - On May 3, the US-led Coalition announced the start of “Operation Roundup,” focused on targeting remnants of ISIS in eastern Syria. The operation will take place in coordination with Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), in order to secure the southern portion of the Syria-Iraq border.<sup>3</sup>
  - On May 3–6, ISIS claimed to down a Russian helicopter west of the city of Mayadeen. According to the Russian Ministry of Defense, the helicopter crashed as a result of technical failure.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-sdf/u-s-backed-syrian-forces-resume-battle-against-islamic-state-idUSKBN1I2390> ; [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/us-backed-force-resumes-offensive-against-isis-in-syria/2018/05/01/9af129f2-4d2f-11e8-b966-bfb0da2dad62\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/us-backed-force-resumes-offensive-against-isis-in-syria/2018/05/01/9af129f2-4d2f-11e8-b966-bfb0da2dad62_story.html) ; <https://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1515213/coalition-partner-forces-look-to-deal-final-blow-to-isis-in-syria/source/GovDelivery/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/06/syria-situation-report-may-2-29-2018.html>

<sup>4</sup> <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/06/syria-situation-report-may-2-29-2018.html>

- On May 7, SARG and pro-regime forces launched an assault against ISIS in the Badiya region, located near the border with Homs Governorate. The forces were reportedly able to capture several areas in western areas of Deir ez Zor.<sup>5</sup>
  - On May 22, ISIS militants attacked SARG positions in the Badiya desert, killing more than two dozen SARG troops and pro-regime forces.<sup>6</sup>
  - On May 24, Syrian state media (SANA) reported that US-led Coalition airstrikes had struck several regime military positions between al-Bukamal (Abu Kamal) and Hmeimeh. According to SANA, only material damage occurred as a result of the strikes.<sup>7</sup>
  - On May 27, clashes between ISIS and pro-regime forces killed four Russian military personnel. The reported “surprise” attack took place near al-Mayadeen.<sup>8</sup>
2. Aleppo Governorate:
- On May 9, a US-backed SDF official reported that US forces had set up a new military base in Manbij. A *Reuters* photographer captured photographs of the new base, which also reportedly houses French troops. The base was built after Turkish forces launched a military offensive in the Afrin region.<sup>9</sup>
  - On May 16–21, the SDF began a “large-scale, forced conscription campaign through a series of arrests” after the SDF-affiliated Raqqa Civil Council and SDF military intelligence came to an agreement allowing for forced conscription of civilians in Manbij on May 19.<sup>10</sup>
  - On May 30, Turkish state-run media reported that the US and Turkey agreed on a “three-step plan” for withdrawing the Kurdish YPG from the city of Manbij.<sup>11</sup>
  - On May 31, a motorcycle bombing struck the town of Jarablus, killing at least four civilians and wounding more than 20 others.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.eurasiareview.com/09052018-syrian-army-launches-massive-assault-in-western-deir-ez-zor/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.yahoo.com/news/us-led-strike-hits-regime-positions-east-syria-014406210.html>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.yahoo.com/news/us-led-strike-hits-regime-positions-east-syria-014406210.html>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-russia-casualty/four-russian-military-personnel-killed-in-syrias-deir-al-zor-ifax-idUSKCN1IS085> ; <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/27/world/middleeast/russia-syria-isis.html>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-sdf/u-s-set-up-base-in-syrias-manbij-after-turkish-threats-local-official-idUSKBN1IA1H4>

<sup>10</sup> <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/06/syria-situation-report-may-2-29-2018.html>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-turkey/turkey-u-s-reach-deal-on-plan-for-withdrawal-of-ypg-militia-from-syrias-manbij-idUSKCN1IV0PW>

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.orient-news.net/en/news\\_show/149522/Motorcycle-bomb-kills-civilians-in-Jarablus](http://www.orient-news.net/en/news_show/149522/Motorcycle-bomb-kills-civilians-in-Jarablus)

### 3. Rif Dimashq Governorate:

- On May 3, an estimated 5,000 Syrian opposition forces and their families were evacuated from the southern Damascus towns of Beit Sahim, Babila, and Yalda neighborhood. The evacuees were transported to opposition-held areas of northern Syria. ISIS fighters in the same area remain under siege by SARG and pro-regime forces.<sup>13</sup>
- On May 7, clashes between SARG and ISIS killed more than 30 SARG soldiers after ISIS launched a counter-offensive in areas south of Damascus. SARG forces now control 60% of Hajar al-Aswad and 80% of the Yarmouk Palestinian refugee camp/neighborhood. Dozens of civilians have also been killed as a result of the ongoing violence.<sup>14</sup>
- On May 8, missiles struck a SARG military base in the town of Kiswah. Syrian state media accused Israel of launching the attack. According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), the strike targeted an “Iranian military” facility and killed 15 people including eight Iranian nationals.<sup>15</sup>

### 4. Damascus Governorate:

- On May 1, 200 Hayat Tahrir al-Sham fighters and their relatives evacuated the Yarmouk neighborhood in southern Damascus. The evacuees arrived near the city of Aleppo, the same area where 42 hostages were released from Idlib Governorate. HTS fighters and their families would continue to Idlib Governorate.<sup>16</sup>
- On May 9, a car bombing in Maysat Square killed at least one person and injured others in the capital Damascus. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack.<sup>17</sup>
- On May 19–21, pro-regime forces announced the complete control of Damascus following the evacuation of between 1,000–1,500 ISIS fighters from southern areas of the city including the Yarmouk neighborhood and al-Hajar al-Aswad district. Civilians from the formerly ISIS-held areas were evacuated to Idlib Governorate.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria/syrian-rebels-start-pull-out-from-south-damascus-idUSKBN1I40KJ>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.yahoo.com/news/30-regime-forces-killed-fighting-syria-capital-monitor-091604224.html> ; <http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=91419> ; <https://www.newsdeeply.com/syria/articles/2018/05/01/the-civilian-cost-of-syrias-new-battle-against-isis>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-israel/syrian-state-media-says-israel-attacked-just-after-us-quit-iran-deal-idUSKBN1I92MI> ; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-israel/syrian-observatory-israeli-raid-in-syria-killed-iranians-idUSKBN1IA16U> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/06/syria-situation-report-may-2-29-2018.html>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-deal/insurgents-start-leaving-south-damascus-pocket-release-hostages-idUSKBN1I2384>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-damascus/syrian-state-tv-blast-kills-one-wounds-others-in-damascus-idUSKBN1IA18L>

<sup>18</sup> <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/06/syria-situation-report-may-2-29-2018.html> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-44189516> ; <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/21/world/middleeast/syria-damascus-rebels.html> ; [https://www.washingtonpost.com/classic-apps/syrian-government-declares-capital-fully-under-its-control/2018/05/21/53313b10-5d2f-11e8-a4a4-c070ef53f315\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/classic-apps/syrian-government-declares-capital-fully-under-its-control/2018/05/21/53313b10-5d2f-11e8-a4a4-c070ef53f315_story.html)

## 5. Idlib Governorate:

- During the reporting period, Turkey deployed forces along front lines in Idlib Governorate as part of an agreement with Russia and Iran to reduce violence in the area.<sup>19</sup>
- On May 1, a deal reached between HTS and the Syrian regime allowed for the evacuation of residents of two pro-regime Shia villages, al-Foua and Kefraya, in Idlib Governorate. As of May 1, critically ill patients were being taken out of the villages via ambulance. A reported 42 hostages were freed, and arrived via bus to SARG territory near the city of Aleppo.<sup>20</sup>
- On May 16, Turkish forces reportedly constructed the twelfth and final outpost in Idlib Governorate surrounding the territory still largely held by Syrian opposition forces.<sup>21</sup>

## 6. Homs Governorate:

- On May 2, Syrian opposition forces agreed to surrender the towns of Rastan, Talbiseh, and Houla, as well as surrounding villages. According to the agreement, Syrian opposition forces who wish to remain in the area will fall under state control and will hand over their weapons. Those forces not in agreement will be evacuated, along with their families, to opposition-held areas in northern Syria.<sup>22</sup>
- On May 7, Syrian opposition forces and civilians evacuated the town of al-Rastan following several weeks of aerial bombardment and shelling. The forces and civilians would be relocated to opposition-held areas of Idlib Governorate.<sup>23</sup>
- On May 16, remaining opposition fighters began withdrawing from the “last rebel-held enclave in central Syria,” — a large enclave located around the towns of Rastan, Talbiseh, and Houla. The evacuation will result in Syrian regime control of the territory located between the cities of Homs and Hama.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/05/turkish-troops-set-observation-posts-syrias-idlib-180518133109677.html>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-deal/insurgents-start-leaving-south-damascus-pocket-release-hostages-idUSKBN1I2384>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/turkey-builds-final-outpost-protective-ring-around-syrias-idlib-1244292087>

<sup>22</sup> <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/06/syria-situation-report-may-2-29-2018.html> ; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria/syrian-rebels-start-pull-out-from-south-damascus-idUSKBN1I40KJ> ; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-homs/rebels-agree-withdrawal-deal-for-enclave-near-syrias-homs-idUSKBN1I329Y>

<sup>23</sup> <http://syriadirect.org/news/rebel-forces-and-civilians-begin-evacuating-besieged-homs-countryside-%E2%80%98we-don%E2%80%99t-want-another-ghouta%E2%80%99/> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-44034514> ; [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/syrian-government-seizes-last-rebel-enclave-in-northern-homs/2018/05/15/da04af5e-5835-11e8-9889-07bcc1327f4b\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/syrian-government-seizes-last-rebel-enclave-in-northern-homs/2018/05/15/da04af5e-5835-11e8-9889-07bcc1327f4b_story.html)

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria/syrian-rebels-pull-out-of-their-last-besieged-area-idUSKCN1IH14K>

- On May 24, Syrian state media reported that its air defense had repelled a missile attack targeting the Dabaa military airport, located southwest of the city of Homs. It was not clear what force may have carried out the missile attack, however the Syrian regime blamed Israel.<sup>25</sup>
7. Latakia Governorate,
    - On May 3, a Russian military aircraft crashed into the Mediterranean Sea after taking off from Hmeimim Airbase, killing both pilots onboard.<sup>26</sup>
  8. Quneitra Governorate:
    - On May 9–10, the Israeli military reported that Iran launched a “barrage of 20 missiles” at Israeli positions in the Golan Heights. According to Israel, several of the rockets were intercepted while others fell short of their targets. No casualties or injuries were reported on the Israeli side. However, Syrian state news accused Israel of firing on Syrian targets near the town of Quneitra. According to SOHR, the strikes on the Golan Heights followed Israeli aerial bombardment in the town of Baath, a demilitarized zone. Israel has been increasing its military presence in the Golan Heights following continuing warnings by the country against the growing Iranian military presence in Syria.<sup>27</sup>
  9. Raqqa Governorate:
    - On May 24, US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) reported that they had arrested a French Islamic State leader in Raqqa Governorate.<sup>28</sup>
  10. Daraa Governorate:
    - On May 19–21, pro-regime forces deployed from Damascus to Daraa following the conclusion of military operations, south of the capital.<sup>29</sup>
    - On May 24–25, Iranian-backed pro-regime forces moved from the city of Daraa towards the northern towns of Izraa, Athman, and Kirbet Ghazala. The Syrian opposition group al-Banyan al-Marsous, based in Daraa, ambushed an “unspecified” Iranian pro-regime convoy en route from Daraa to Athman.<sup>30</sup>
    - On May 24, Syrian opposition group Jaish al-Islam arrested 20 ISIS militants in eastern Daraa Governorate.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-homs/syrian-air-defense-intercepts-missile-attack-on-airport-state-media-idUSKCN1IP3A4> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/06/syria-situation-report-may-2-29-2018.html>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2018/05/03/middleeast/russia-military-plane-crash-syria-intl/index.html>

<sup>27</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/iranian-forces-fire-rockets-at-israeli-military-in-first-direct-attack-ever-israeli-army-says/2018/05/09/62e3a526-52f7-11e8-a6d4-ca1d035642ce\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/iranian-forces-fire-rockets-at-israeli-military-in-first-direct-attack-ever-israeli-army-says/2018/05/09/62e3a526-52f7-11e8-a6d4-ca1d035642ce_story.html) ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-44063022> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/06/syria-situation-report-may-2-29-2018.html>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-islamic-state-fr/u-s-backed-syrian-forces-arrest-french-islamic-state-leader-sdf-idUSKCN1IP345>

<sup>29</sup> <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/06/syria-situation-report-may-2-29-2018.html>

<sup>30</sup> <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/06/syria-situation-report-may-2-29-2018.html>

<sup>31</sup> <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/06/syria-situation-report-may-2-29-2018.html>

- On May 25, al-Omari Brigade, a former US-backed opposition group, arrested 19 ISIS fighters in Daraa Governorate. The ISIS fighters were reportedly attempting to cross from SARG-held Suwayda Governorate, to the ISIS-held Yarmouk Base in Daraa Governorate.<sup>32</sup>
- On May 29, a pro-regime commander stated that the Syrian army had “completed preparations” for an “imminent” assault against opposition-held areas in Daraa Governorate. The Daraa region has been under a “de-escalation” agreement negotiated by Jordan, Russia, and the United States.<sup>33</sup>

Other Key Points:

- During the reporting period, the US-led coalition conducted airstrikes in the areas of al-Bukamal (Abu Kamal), and Shaddadi.<sup>34</sup>
- During the reporting period, UN members expressed alarm that Syria would be next to assume the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament (CD), a non-UN body that holds its meetings at the UN. Syrian officials have been accused of using chemical weapons against civilians during the ongoing conflict. Presidency by Syria would require consent from all members of the CD.<sup>35</sup>
- On May 6, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan stated that Turkey would carry out two new military operations in Syria, expanding the previous military operations known as Euphrates Shield and Olive Branch.<sup>36</sup>
- On May 10, Israel announced that it had fired on “almost all” of Iran’s military infrastructure in Syria — a total of 70 sites. Targets included: intelligence sites associated with pro-regime and Iranian forces, a Quds Force logistics headquarters, a military logistics compound in the town of Kiswah, an Iranian military compound north of Damascus, a Quds Force munition storage warehouse at Damascus airport, a Quds Force intelligence system and post, and Syrian observation, military posts, and munitions in the Golan demilitarized zone. SOHR reported casualties, including Syrian and pro-regime military forces, as a result of the strikes.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/06/syria-situation-report-may-2-29-2018.html>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-palestinians-sirens/gaza-militants-launch-barrages-across-border-israel-hits-back-with-air-strikes-idUSKCN1IU0BX> ; [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/the\\_americas/syrian-government-vows-to-fight-rebels-despite-us-warning/2018/05/28/f4d7c908-625b-11e8-81ca-bb14593acaa6\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/the_americas/syrian-government-vows-to-fight-rebels-despite-us-warning/2018/05/28/f4d7c908-625b-11e8-81ca-bb14593acaa6_story.html) ; [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/the\\_americas/syrian-government-vows-to-fight-rebels-despite-us-warning/2018/05/28/f4d7c908-625b-11e8-81ca-bb14593acaa6\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/the_americas/syrian-government-vows-to-fight-rebels-despite-us-warning/2018/05/28/f4d7c908-625b-11e8-81ca-bb14593acaa6_story.html)

<sup>34</sup> See: “US DOD News Release Military Strikes Hit ISIS in Syria, Iraq”. *Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve*. News Release No: [1532602](#), [1527434](#), [1525500](#)

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-44279149> ; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-usa/u-s-plans-walkout-as-syria-takes-reins-of-u-n-disarmament-forum-idUSKCN1IU0Q5>

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-turkey/turkeys-erdogan-says-will-carry-out-new-military-operations-after-syria-offensives-idUSKBN1I70KN>

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/10/world/middleeast/israel-iran-syria-military.html> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-44063022>



- On May 29, the country of Georgia announced that it was severing diplomatic ties with Syria after the Assad regime announced that it would recognize two territories that broke away from the state in the early 1990s. Russia also recognizes the two states, South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and fought a short war over the regions with Georgia in 2008. The US strongly condemned the action.<sup>38</sup>
- On May 31, Syrian president Bashar al-Assad warned the US-backed SDF that the regime would use force if necessary to recapture the areas held by the group in Syria. Assad stated that the first option in dealing with the SDF, which he referred to as the “only problem left in Syria,” is to open negotiations. If negotiations are unsuccessful, he warned, then the areas would be liberated by force. Assad also warned American forces in the country that they should leave.<sup>39</sup>
- On May 31, a Lebanese official confirmed that Lebanon is working with the Assad regime to repatriate thousands of Syrian refugees who want to return to Syria. Some several hundred refugees have already been bussed to Syria from the Shebaa area of southern Lebanon in cooperation with Damascus.<sup>40</sup>

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

1. Baghdad Governorate:
  - On May 2, ISIS militants killed at least eight unarmed civilians in a gun attack in the town of Tarmiya, north of Baghdad.<sup>41</sup>
  - On May 16, a suicide attack killed several people in the region of Tarmiya. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack.<sup>42</sup>
  - On May 23, a suicide bombing struck the majority-Shia district of Shula in northwest Baghdad, killing at least four people and wounding 15 more. ISIS later took responsibility for the attack via the group’s Amaq News Agency.<sup>43</sup>
2. Ninawa Governorate:
  - On May 6, gunmen assassinated Iraqi parliament candidate Farouq Zarzur al-Juburi at his home in the town of al-Qayyarah. ISIS later claimed responsibility for the attack, releasing a message via the app Telegram stating that al-Juburi, a Sunni Muslim, was killed because he was an atheist.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-georgia-syria/georgia-to-sever-diplomatic-ties-with-syria-after-recognition-of-separatists-idUSKCN1IU22U> ; <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2018/05/282820.htm>

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/05/syria-assad-vows-retake-areas-held-backed-kurds-180531072938002.html> ; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-assad/assad-raises-prospect-of-clashes-with-u-s-forces-in-syria-idUSKCN1IW0K3>

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-lebanon-refugees/lebanon-working-for-return-of-thousands-of-syrian-refugees-security-official-idUSKCN1IW26R>

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-attacks-islamic-s/islamic-state-claims-responsibility-for-gun-attack-north-of-baghdad-idUSKBN1I31N9>

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-security/several-killed-wounded-in-suicide-bombing-north-of-baghdad-idUSKCN1IH1KR>

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-blast/at-least-four-killed-15-wounded-in-baghdad-bomb-blast-idUSKCN1I03I7> ; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-blast-claim/islamic-state-claims-responsibility-for-baghdad-blast-groups-news-agency-amaq-idUSKCN1IP2AJ>

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/isis-claims-assassination-of-iraq-election-candidate-1.728051> ; <https://www.afp.com/en/news/826/claims-assassination-iraq-election-candidate-doc-14m1234>

3. Kirkuk Governorate:

- On May 16, the head of Iraq's electoral commission reported that several polling stations in the city of Kirkuk were under siege by gunmen, and employees of the station were being held hostage. The attack took place four days after the national election.<sup>45</sup>

4. Diyala Governorate:

- On May 23, ISIS militants reportedly clashed with locals in the village of Suleiman Bag. According to local police, 15 ISIS militants took part in the clashes, resulting in the deaths of three militants and eight local civilians.<sup>46</sup>
- On May 31, ISF arrested five ISIS members and an ISIS chief explosives expert after a security operation in the town of Khanaqin. The man arrested, known as Abu Yassin, reportedly was behind several recent bombings in Diyala Governorate.<sup>47</sup>

Other Key Points:

- During the reporting period, the US-led Coalition conducted airstrikes in the areas of Baghdad, Hawijah, Kirkuk, Qaim, Qayyarah, Rawah, Rutbah, and Tal Afar.<sup>48</sup>
- During the reporting period, Iraqi forces supported by Iraqi and American intelligence carried out an "unprecedented" cross-border raid into Syria, capturing five top ISIS commanders in Deir ez Zor Governorate.<sup>49</sup>

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

1. Tripolitania:

- On May 2, a group of militants attacked the head offices of Libya's electoral commission in the city of Tripoli, killing at least 12 people and setting fire to the building. Security forces responded to the militants, who included at least one suicide bomber. ISIS later took responsibility for the attack.<sup>50</sup>
- Between May 20–23, approximately 140 East African migrants escaped from captivity in the town of Bani Walid. According to the UN, the migrants were being held by "notorious trafficker" Mousa Diab. The smugglers reportedly opened fire on the migrants as they tried to escape, injuring about ten of them. Hundreds of migrants are suspected to remain in captivity in Bani Walid.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iraq-election-kirkuk/iraqi-election-commission-says-kirkuk-voting-stations-under-siege-idUSKCN1IH1YA>

<sup>46</sup> <http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/fa97c06f-a5df-4817-8512-3db58796da7d>

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.iraqnews.com/features/iraq-arrests-islamic-states-chief-ied-engineer-in-diyala/> ; <http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/51e52cda-d4f5-4737-bb63-86336c64f5f7>

<sup>48</sup> See: "US DOD News Release Military Strikes Hit ISIS in Syria, Iraq". *Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve*. News Release No: [1532602](#), [1525500](#)

<sup>49</sup> <https://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2018/05/09/ISIS-leader-Abu-Bakr-al-Baghdadi-travels-in-east-Syria-with-tight-knit-group.html> ; <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/09/world/middleeast/iraq-isis-islamic-state-arrest.html>

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security/suicide-attack-targets-libyan-electoral-commission-offices-in-tripoli-spokesman-idUSKBN1I3131> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-43977697>

<sup>51</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-libya/east-african-migrants-escape-from-captors-in-libyan-smuggling-hub-idUSKCN1IQ1XR>

## 2. Cyrenaica:

- On May 8, a car bombing struck a checkpoint west of the oil port Ras Lanuf, killing two people and wounding two more. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack, however Islamist militants have staged similar attacks in the region.<sup>52</sup>
- On May 15, Libyan National Army (LNA) forces attacked opposition targets on five frontlines in the city of Derna, the only major town in eastern Libya not under LNA control, using artillery and aircraft. The LNA has reportedly surrounded Derna.<sup>53</sup>
- On May 24, a car bombing struck a busy street in the center of Benghazi, killing at least seven people and wounding 10 more. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack.<sup>54</sup>
- On May 28, LNA forces reportedly captured the “western entrance” of Derna, as well as “four other sites in the city’s vicinity,” namely al-Fatayeh Industrial Zone, Nusseibeh Bint Kaab Mosque, a diving club, and al-Sadawa Pepsi Factory.<sup>55</sup>
- On May 31, the United Nations humanitarian office reported an escalation in the fighting in Derna. The UN also reported “severe water, food and medicine shortages, and electricity and water were completely cut off for the city’s 125,000 residents.” The UN also stated that armed forces have taken positions in civilian areas, are dressed in civilian clothes, and that civilians were being prevented from leaving the city.<sup>56</sup>

## 3. Fezzan Governorate:

- On May 11–13, rival tribes clashed in the city of Sabha. The fighting has resulted in civilian casualties.<sup>57</sup>

### Other Key Points:

- On May 29, “rival Libyan factions” agreed to create political framework necessary to prepare for UN-backed elections in December that would end the seven-year conflict.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security/two-dead-in-car-bombing-at-checkpoint-near-libyas-oil-crescent-official-idUSKBN1190YB>

<sup>53</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security/haftars-forces-make-push-on-opposition-held-libyan-city-of-derna-idUSKCN1IG22Q> ; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security/fighting-escalates-in-libyas-derna-u-n-says-idUSKCN1IW0UJ>

<sup>54</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security/at-least-seven-killed-by-car-bomb-in-benghazi-libya-idUSKCN1IP3XF>

<sup>55</sup> <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/libya-haftar-forces-take-control-of-entrance-to-derna/1159170>

<sup>56</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security/fighting-escalates-in-libyas-derna-u-n-says-idUSKCN1IW0UJ>

<sup>57</sup> <http://www.libyanexpress.com/tribal-fighting-for-sabha-citadel-leaves-over-30-casualties-in-libyas-south/>

<sup>58</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security-meeting/libyan-factions-agree-to-december-10-elections-at-paris-talks-idUSKCN1IU188> ; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security/libyas-december-election-goal-faces-political-legal-security-hurdles-idUSKCN1IV22I>

**Other key points during the reporting period:**

- On May 25, Turkish police detained 51 suspected ISIS members in Istanbul. All detainees were reported to be foreign nationals.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-security-islamic-state/turkey-detains-51-suspected-islamic-state-members-police-idUSKCN1IQ109>

## Incident Reports: Syria

**SHI 18-0099**

**Report Date:** May 2, 2018

**Site Name:** al-Habib al-Mustafa Mosque (جامع الحبيب المصطفى)

**Date of Incident:** April 30–May 1, 2018

**Location:** Yarmouk neighborhood, Damascus, Damascus Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Mosque

**Site Date:** Unknown

**Incident Summary:** New photographs show damage to a mosque.

**Incident Source and Description:** On May 1, 2018 a local reporting Facebook page published two photographs showing damage to al-Habib al-Mustafa Mosque.<sup>60</sup> There is no mention of when or how the damage was sustained. The photographs show the interior of the mosque, with fittings and furniture strewn about, fallen plaster, and sandbags stacked against a wall. On April 30, 2018 another local reporting group published a photograph purporting to show damage to the same mosque.<sup>61</sup> The photograph shows fighters standing in a heavily damaged prayer hall.

DigitalGlobe satellite imagery indicates that initial military damage to the mosque occurred between November 6, 2012 and December 23, 2014. During this time period, the roof of the mosque was damaged by heavy shelling, resulting in at least three holes. The minaret also collapsed onto the roof.

Between April 17, 2015 and August 24, 2015 there was increased military damage to the surrounding infrastructure, although there was no visible increase in damage to the mosque. Damage to the surrounding area increased dramatically again by June 27, 2016. The mosque's roof appears to have suffered structural damage during this period.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Damascus Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0104, SHI 18-0106, SHI 18-0107, SHI 18-0109, SHI 18-0110, SHI 18-0111, and SHI 18-0113.**

**Pattern:** Military activity: occupation/militarization, explosives.

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<sup>60</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/Syrianewsdaily/posts/820939814769088>

<sup>61</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/yarmouk.media/posts/1650161045099016>

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

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

Syria News Daily: <https://www.facebook.com/Syrianewsdaily/posts/820939814769088>

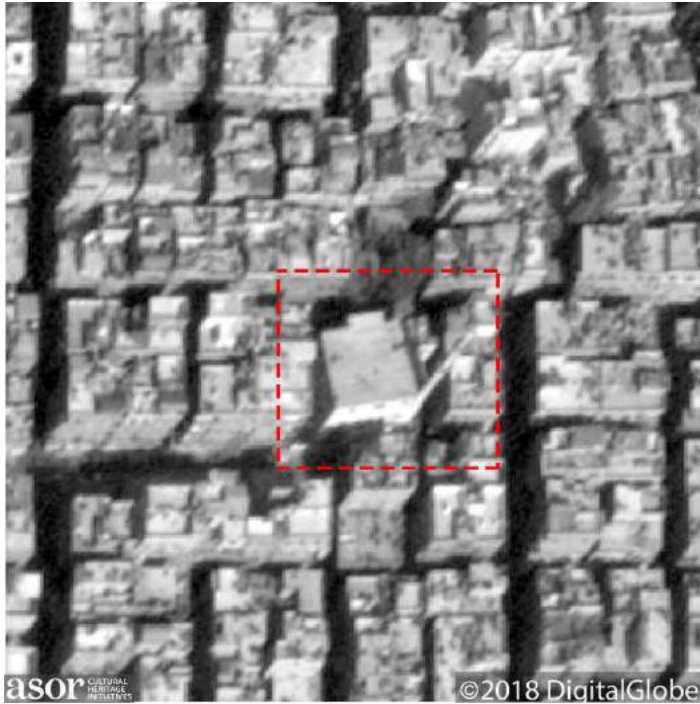
Yarmouk Media: <https://www.facebook.com/yarmouk.media/posts/1650161045099016>



Fighters in the interior of al-Habib al-Mustafa Mosque (Yarmouk Media Network/Facebook; April 30, 2018)



Sandbags stacked in the interior of al-Habib al-Mustafa Mosque (Syria News Daily/Facebook; May 1, 2018)

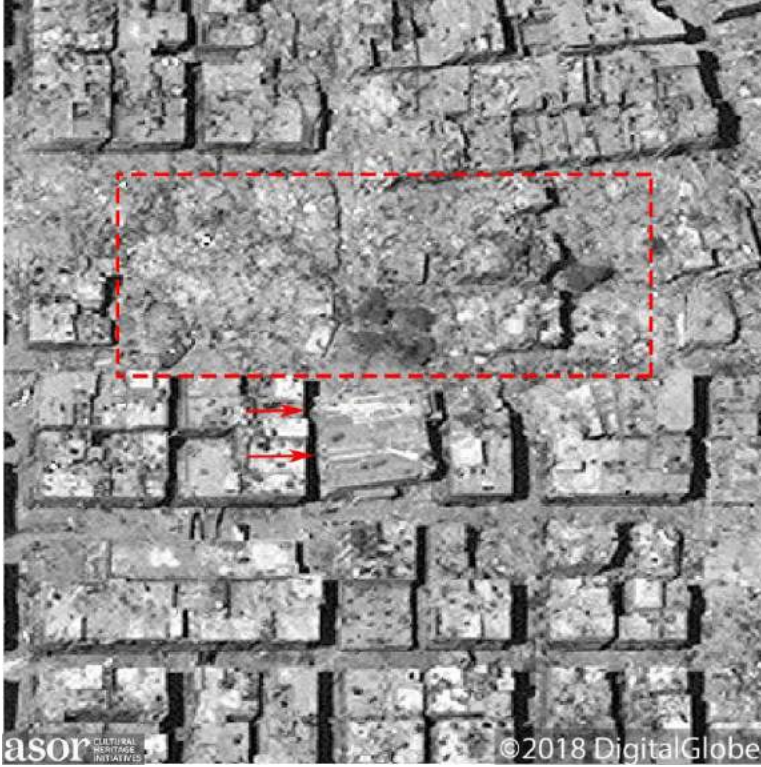


Al-Habib al-Mustafa Mosque prior to visible damage, shown within the red square (DigitalGlobe NextView License; November 6, 2011)



At least three holes in the roof of al-Habib al-Mustafa Mosque are indicated by red arrows, as well as the collapse of the minaret onto the southeastern part of the roof (DigitalGlobe NextView License; December 23, 2014)





Severe damage immediately north of al-Habib al-Mustafa Mosque from military bombardment shown in the red rectangle. There is also possible structural to the roof of the mosque, with roof beams becoming visible and indicated by two red arrows (DigitalGlobe NextView License; June 27, 2016)

## SHI 18-0100

**Report Date:** May 3, 2018

**Site Name:** Apamea

- City Wall
- Eastern Cathedral
- House of Consoles

**Date of Incident:** Ongoing

**Location:** Qalaat al-Mudiq, Hama Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Apamea - Founded ca. 300 BCE by Seleucus Nicator, a general under Alexander the Great, Apamea flourished until its destruction by the Sasanians in the mid-6th century CE.<sup>62</sup> By the 1st century CE, Apamea had a population of over 100,000.<sup>63</sup> Despite damage from several earthquakes in the Late Antique era and attacks on the city by Sasanian forces, a number of monumental structures are still standing, including the mile-long colonnade, Roman villas, multiple churches, civic buildings, city gates, and one of the largest theaters of the Roman empire. Apamea is currently on the Tentative List of UNESCO World Heritage sites.<sup>64</sup>

- City Wall – The walls of Apamea stretch 6.5 km, with foundations dating to 100 BCE. Bastions were added during the 6th century CE.<sup>65</sup>
- Eastern Cathedral – The Eastern Cathedral was built in the 5th century CE on the remains of an earlier pagan building.<sup>66</sup> An inscription dates the cathedral's entry court to 533 CE, when sections of the building were rebuilt following a series of earthquakes. In addition to the tetraconch-style church, which supposedly held a fragment of the True Cross (upon which Jesus was crucified), the cathedral complex included the archbishop's palace, a number of tombs, and other buildings.<sup>67</sup>
- House of Consoles – The House of Consoles is a Roman-era villa arranged around a large peristyle of six-by-nine columns, with a gallery running along three of the four sides.<sup>68</sup> Construction of the site likely began in the 2nd century CE following an earthquake that occurred in 115.<sup>69</sup> The building appears to have been rebuilt in the 4th century. Certain sections of the house were damaged and rebuilt following earthquakes in 526, 528, and 588, until it was finally abandoned sometime after 630.

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<sup>62</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/1297/>

<sup>63</sup> Burns 2010: 50.

<sup>64</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/sy>

<sup>65</sup> Balty 1981: 169.

<sup>66</sup> Burns 2010: 64.

<sup>67</sup> Darke 2010: 150.

<sup>68</sup> Burns 2010: 64.

<sup>69</sup> Balty 1982: 21–22.

**Site Date:** Apamea – ca. 300 BCE–1300 CE

- City Wall – built ca. 100 BCE, expanded in 6th century
- Eastern Cathedral – built ca. 5th century CE, expanded in 533 CE
- House of Consoles – ca. 2nd century CE, rebuilt 4th century

**Incident Summary:** Satellite imagery revealed ongoing illegal excavations at archaeological site.

**Incident Source and Description:** On May 3, 2018 SMART News Agency published video footage of Apamea and reported that illegal excavations at the site are ongoing.<sup>70</sup> The video includes footage of the North Gate, the northern section of the Cardo Maximus, the North Baths, and the city wall. Most of the footage does not show new damage, with the exception of a possible looting pit at an unknown location and damage to a bastion on the northern city wall.

DigitalGlobe satellite imagery indicates that between April 3, 2017 and April 29, 2018 illegal excavations continued at the site of Apamea. The image covers approximately 75% of the total site area. The northwestern city wall has been damaged by illegal excavations with at least two towers destabilized. The majority of the new illegal excavations are located on the eastern side of the site, close to the Eastern Cathedral and the House of Consoles. The newer illegal excavations appear as long trenches and often further expand previous looting pits.

The Eastern Cathedral was previously affected by illegal excavations, as noted in images from December 22, 2011, December 15, 2012, and August 24, 2015. The most recent incursions into the area are on the southeastern corner, the section theorized to have been used for the episcopal administration of the church complex. The House of Consoles was damaged by excavations on its northwestern corner.

The recent illegal excavations also cover the area to the north and east of the archaeological monument. Other affected areas include the central portion of the archaeological site and the southwestern quarter. The site has been damaged by illegal excavations since 2011.

For more information on previous damage to Apamea, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 14-0024** in **Weekly Report 7**, **SHI 14-0085** in **Weekly Report 16–17**, **SHI 14-0108** in **Weekly Report 21–22**, **SHI 15-0130** in **Weekly Report 57–58**, **SHI 15-0141** in **Weekly Report 63–64**, and **SHI 16-0093** in **Weekly Report 97–98**.

**Pattern:** Illegal excavation.

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

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<sup>70</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-89lcl\\_gwHU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-89lcl_gwHU)

## Sources:

### Online Reporting:

SMART News Agency: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-89lcl\\_gwHU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-89lcl_gwHU)

UNESCO: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/1297/> ;  
<https://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/sy>

### Scholarly:

Balty, J. (1982) "La maison 'à consoles' d'Apamée." *Les annales archéologiques arabes syriennes*, Vol. 32. Damas: Direction générale des antiquités et des musées. 9–44.

Balty, J. (1981) *Guide D'Apamée*. Centre Belge de recherches archéologiques à Apamée de Syrie. Bruxelles.

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

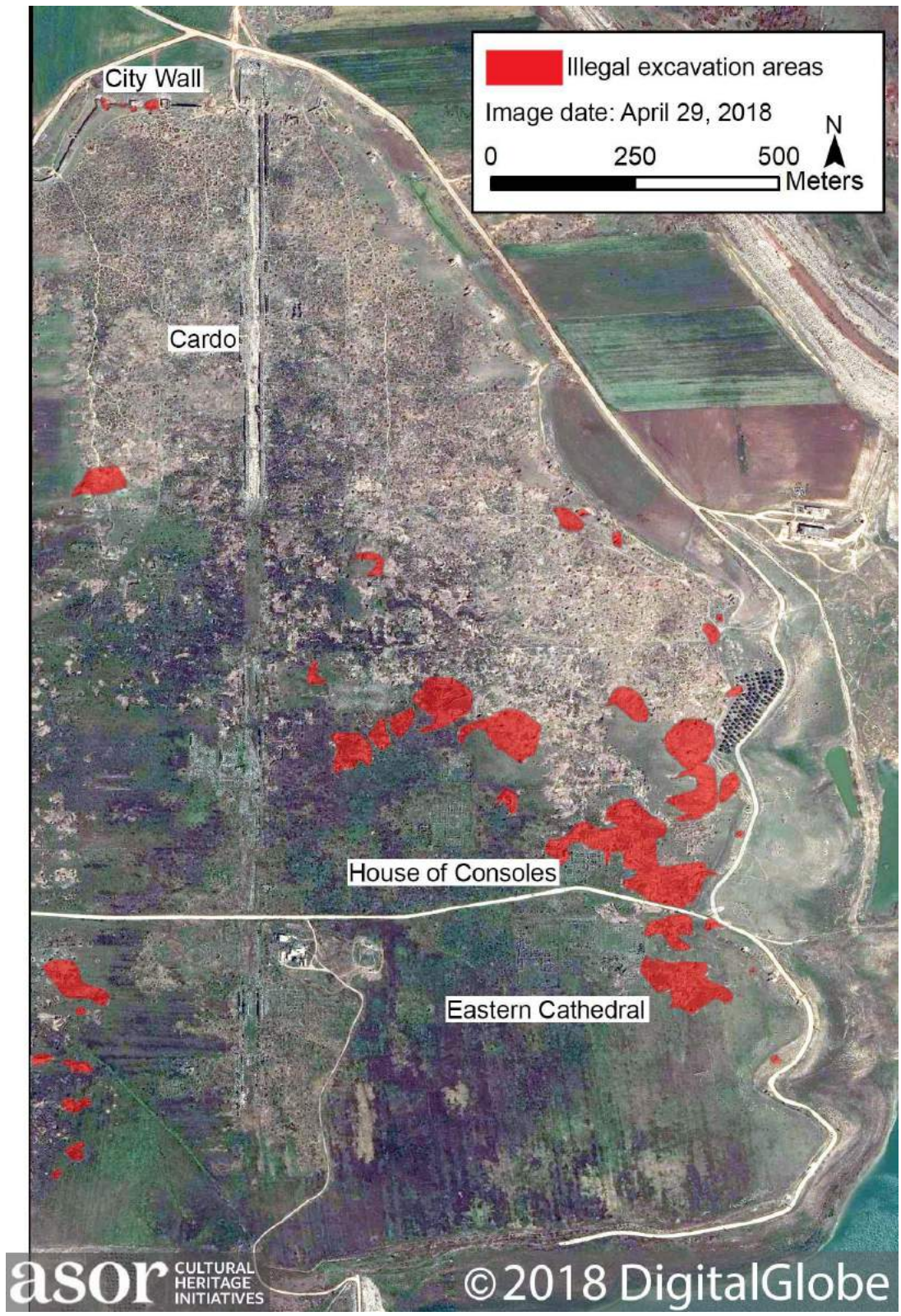
Darke, D. (2010) *Syria*. Bradt Travel Guides.



Video still of piles of dirt at one of the bastions on the northwestern wall (SMART News Agency; May 3, 2018)



Video still of possible looting pit at an unidentified location at Apamea (SMART News Agency; May 3, 2018)



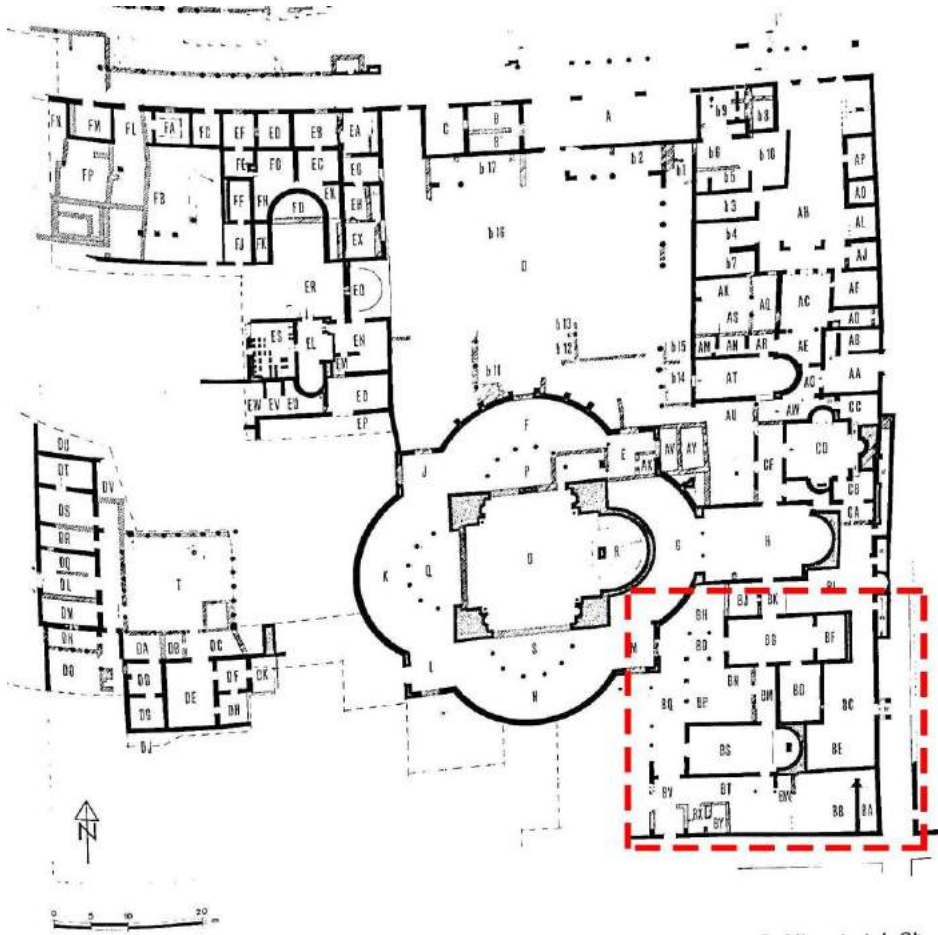
Recent illegal excavations at Apamea (ASOR CHI/DigitalGlobe NextView License; April 29, 2018)



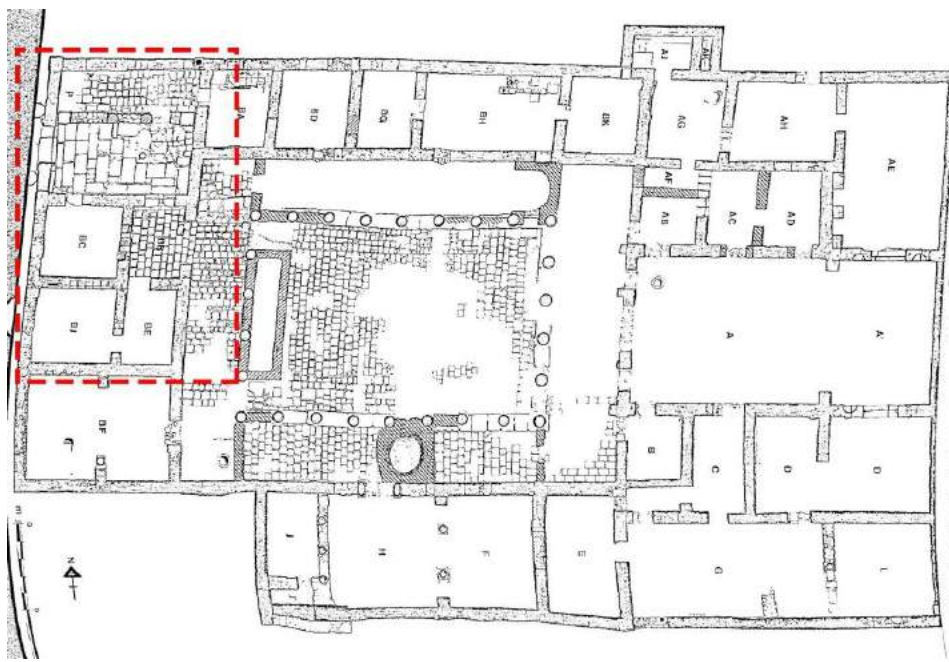
The north city wall prior to recent damage (DigitalGlobe NextView License; April 3, 2017)



Damage to the north city wall noted with arrows (DigitalGlobe NextView License; April 29, 2018)



Plan of Eastern Cathedral with affected area outlined in red (Balty 1981: 107, fig. 111)



Plan of House of Consoles with affected area outlined in red (Balty 1981: 122, fig. 129)





The Eastern Cathedral and House of Consoles prior to recent damage (DigitalGlobe NextView License; April 3, 2017)



The Eastern Cathedral and House of Consoles with expanded illegal excavation in surrounding area (DigitalGlobe NextView License; April 29, 2018)

**SHI 18-0101**

**Report Date:** May 6, 2018

**Site Name:** Hamza bin Abd al-Mutalleb Mosque (مسجد حمزة بن عبد المطلب)

**Date of Incident:** May 6, 2018

**Location:** Jisr al-Shughour, Idlib Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Mosque

**Site Date:** Unknown

**Incident Summary:** Alleged Russian warplanes reportedly shelled a mosque.

**Incident Source and Description:** On May 6, 2018 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that Russian warplanes shelled Hamza bin Abd al-Mutalleb Mosque in Jisr al-Shughour, “partially damaging its building and furniture.”<sup>71</sup> A photograph accompanying the report shows damaged window frames on the floor of the mosque interior.

For previous damage to Hamza bin Abd al-Mutalleb Mosque, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0069** in **Weekly Report 137-140**.

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives - airstrike.

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

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

SNHR:

<http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/05/06/russian-forces-shelled-mosque-jisr-al-shoghour-city-idlib-suburbs-may-6/>

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<sup>71</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/05/06/russian-forces-shelled-mosque-jisr-al-shoghour-city-idlib-suburbs-may-6/>



Damage to furniture in the interior of Hamza bin Abd al-Mutalleb Mosque (SNHR; May 6, 2018)

## SHI 18-0102

**Report Date:** May 7, 2018

**Site Name:** Tell Danit (دينيت تل)

**Date of Incident:** Ongoing

**Location:** Idlib Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Archaeological site with remains dating from the Aramaean through Byzantine periods.<sup>72</sup>

**Site Date:** ca. 1100 BCE through Byzantine Period

**Incident Summary:** Satellite imagery and photographs show new damage to an archaeological site.

**Incident Source and Description:** DigitalGlobe satellite imagery from March 12, 2018 shows an increase in bulldozing around the archaeological mound of Tell Danit. Bulldozing continued through May 29, 2018 (the date of the most recent satellite image) on the southern and northern sides of the mound. A bulldozer is also visible in the most recent image. Soil removal has increased on the northern and southern sides of the mound since July 17, 2017. According to The Day After-Heritage Protection Initiative (TDA-HPI), this soil is being moved and sold to farmers and more areas for illegal excavation to take place have been uncovered.<sup>73</sup>

On March 27, 2018 the Ensemble Pour Les Antiquités Facebook page posted a series of photographs showing the illegal removal of soil from around the base of the archaeological mound.<sup>74</sup> The photographs show bulldozers and trucks in action, as well as fresh cuts into the tell and several mounds of freshly dug soil ready for transport.

For more information on previous damage to Tell Danit, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0163** and **The Day After-Heritage Protection Initiative** report on the site in the **September 2017 Monthly Report**.

**Pattern:** Development disturbances; Illegal excavation.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of Tell Danit, as well as the condition of other heritage sites located in regions subject to development disturbances.

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<sup>72</sup> Shaath, S. (1981-2), pp. 215.

<sup>73</sup> <http://hpi.tda-sy.org/en/2018/05/05/5-نيسان-2018-تقرير-موقع-تل-دينيت-الآثرى-5-نيسان/>

<sup>74</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/wassem.alkhalaf/posts/1851463961565399>

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

Ensemble Pour Les Antiquités:

<https://www.facebook.com/wassem.alkhalaf/posts/1851463961565399>

The Day After-Heritage Protection Initiative: <http://hpi.tda-sy.org/en/2018/05/05/-/تقرير-2018-موقع-تل-دينيت-الاثري-5-نيسان/>

Scholarly:

Shaath, S. (1981–2) “Tell Denit.” *Archiv für Orientforschung* 28: 215–217.



Tell Danit with previous soil removal on the northern side (DigitalGlobe NextView License; July 17, 2017)



Additional soil removal on the southern and northern side of Tell Danit (DigitalGlobe NextView License; March 12, 2018)



Ongoing bulldozing south and north of Tell Danit with a bulldozer noted with the red arrow (DigitalGlobe NextView License; May 29, 2018)



Bulldozer moving soil from around the base of Tell Danit (Ensemble Pour Les Antiquités; March 27, 2018)



Bulldozer piling up soil for removal near the base of Tell Danit (Ensemble Pour Les Antiquités; March 27, 2018)





Fresh bulldozer cuts at the base of Tell Danit, with soil piled up for removal (Ensemble Pour Les Antiquités; March 27, 2018)



Bulldozer moving soil from near the base of Tell Danit (Ensemble Pour Les Antiquités; March 27, 2018)



Bulldozer moving soil from near the base of Tell Danit (Ensemble Pour Les Antiquités; March 27, 2018)



Bulldozer loading soil from Tell Danit onto truck for removal (Ensemble Pour Les Antiquités; March 27, 2018)



Soil piled up for removal near the base of Tell Danit (Ensemble Pour Les Antiquités; March 27, 2018)

**SHI 18-0103**

**Report Date:** May 12, 2018

**Site Name:** Abu Bakr al-Sadiq Mosque (مسجد أبي بكر الصديق; al-Kabir Mosque)

**Date of Incident:** May 11, 2018

**Location:** Kafr Zaita, Hama Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Mosque

**Site Date:** Unknown

**Incident Summary:** A reported SARG airstrike allegedly damaged a mosque.

**Incident Source and Description:** On May 11, 2018 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that SARG warplanes fired missiles near Abu Bakr al-Sadiq Mosque (al-Kabir Mosque) in Kafr Zaita, “destroying it almost completely.”<sup>75</sup> No photographs or video footage of the damage have been published. ASOR CHI has not been able to corroborate this incident using satellite imagery.

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives - airstrike.

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

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

SNHR:

<http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/05/12/syrian-regime-forces-bombed-al-kabir-mosque-kafr-zita-city-hama-suburbs-may-11/>

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<sup>75</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/05/12/syrian-regime-forces-bombed-al-kabir-mosque-kafr-zita-city-hama-suburbs-may-11/>

**SHI 18-0104**

**Report Date:** May 15, 2018

**Site Name:** Jerusalem Mosque (al-Quds Mosque)

**Date of Incident:** May 14, 2018

**Location:** Yarmouk neighborhood, Damascus, Damascus Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Mosque

**Site Date:** Unknown

**Incident Summary:** SARG forces recaptured mosque.

**Incident Source and Description:** On May 14, 2018 a Private Twitter Account reported that SARG and pro-regime forces captured Jerusalem Mosque in the Yarmouk neighborhood of Damascus. This report was confirmed by pro-government media sources.<sup>76</sup> Photographs published on Twitter show the mosque with a large hole in one side and slight damage to the minaret.

DigitalGlobe satellite imagery indicates that the Jerusalem Mosque was initially damaged between April 20, 2018 and May 3, 2018. Rubble and damage as a result of explosives near the southwest corner of the mosque is visible. Between May 3, 2018 and May 11, 2018 increased structural damage to the western and southern facades of the mosque, is apparent in the satellite imagery, likely the result of explosives. Additionally, a hole appeared on the northwest side of the roof of the mosque.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Damascus Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0099, SHI 18-0106, SHI 18-0107, SHI 18-0109, SHI 18-0110, SHI 18-0111, and SHI 18-0113.**

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives.

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

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<sup>76</sup> <https://southfront.org/syrian-army-liberates-quds-mosque-in-yarmouk-refugee-camp-area-in-southern-damascus-map/>

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

Private Twitter Account

South Front:

<https://southfront.org/syrian-army-liberates-quds-mosque-in-yarmouk-refugee-camp-area-in-southern-damascus-map/>



Damage to the Jerusalem Mosque (Private Twitter Account; May 14, 2018)



Damage to Yarmouk neighborhood with the Jerusalem Mosque in background (Private Twitter Account; May 14, 2018)





The Jerusalem Mosque, shown within a red rectangle prior, to any visible damage (DigitalGlobe NextView License; April 20, 2018)



Initial damage to the southwest corner of the Jerusalem Mosque (DigitalGlobe NextView License; May 3, 2018)



Increased damage to the Jerusalem Mosque indicated by red arrows. A hole is visible on the northwestern side of the roof of the mosque and the buildings south and west of the mosque have been destroyed (DigitalGlobe NextView License; May 11, 2018)

## SHI 18-0105

**Report Date:** May 18, 2018

**Site Name:** Shrine of Sheikh Zaid (مزار شيخ زيد)

**Date of Incident:** Unknown

**Location:** Zaidiya Cemetery, Afrin, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Islamic shrine dedicated to Sheikh Zaid.

**Site Date:** Unknown.

**Incident Summary:** Alleged Free Syrian Army (FSA) fighters vandalized a shrine.

**Incident Source and Description:** On May 18, 2018 a Private Twitter Account reported that Turkish-backed FSA fighters had damaged and vandalized the Shrine of Sheikh Zaid in a cemetery in Afrin. Photographs shows that the contents of the tomb were removed and strewn around the tomb exterior. The grave within was dug up and removed. It was not clear when the damage initially took place.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Aleppo Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0108** and **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0116**.

**Pattern:** Military activity: intentional destruction; Vandalism.

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

### Sources:

#### Online Reporting:

Private Twitter Account

Al Etihad Press: <http://aletihadpress.com/2018/05/18/عفرين-التغيير-الديموغرافي-مستمر-وحتى/>



Vandalism of Shrine of Sheikh Zaid (Private Twitter Account; May 18, 2018)



Vandalism of the exterior of Shrine of Sheikh Zaid, within contents of tomb removed  
(Private Twitter Account; May 18, 2018)



Vandalism of the interior of Shrine of Sheikh Zaid (Private Twitter Account; May 18, 2018)



Vandalism of the exterior of Shrine of Sheikh Zaid (Private Twitter Account; May 18, 2018)

**SHI 18-0106**

**Report Date:** May 21, 2018

**Site Name:** al-Wasim Mosque (جامع الوسيم)

**Date of Incident:** Between May 3 and May 11, 2018

**Location:** Yarmouk neighborhood, Damascus, Damascus 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-Wasim Mosque occurred between April 20 and April 27, 2018. During this time period, a hole appeared in the southwest section of the mosque roof, likely the result of heavy shelling. The mosque's minaret collapsed between May 3 and May 11, 2018.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Damascus Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0099, SHI 18-0104, SHI 18-0107, SHI 18-0109, SHI 18-0110, SHI 18-0111, and SHI 18-0113.**

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives.

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





Al-Wasim Mosque, shown within the red square, prior to visible damage (DigitalGlobe NextView License; April 20, 2018)



Initial military damage to the roof of al-Wasim Mosque, as indicated by the red arrow (DigitalGlobe NextView License; April 27, 2018)



The collapse of the minaret of al-Wasim Mosque, indicated by two red arrows (DigitalGlobe NextView License; May 11, 2018)

**SHI 18-0107**

**Report Date:** May 22, 2018

**Site Name:** Palestinian Martyrs Cemetery

**Date of Incident:** Between May 11–21, 2018

**Location:** Yarmouk neighborhood, Damascus, Damascus Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Cemetery

**Site Date:** Unknown

**Incident Summary:** Satellite imagery shows damage to a cemetery.

**Incident Source and Description:** DigitalGlobe satellite imagery indicates that increased military activity resulted in damage to the Palestinian Martyrs Cemetery during the reporting period. Between May 3 and May 11, 2018 explosives struck the northwest part of the cemetery. The most severe damage occurred between May 11, 2018 and May 21, 2018. The southern area of the cemetery was almost entirely obliterated, destroying many graves. During this same time period, a road was constructed along the southern boundary of the cemetery and a linear trench appeared in the northern portion of the cemetery. On May 23, 2018 a Private Twitter Account published a photograph showing the recent damage to the Palestinian Martyrs Cemetery as viewed from the ground.

On April 19, 2018 SARG forces began an offensive using surface-to-surface missiles, barrel and cluster bombs, and mortar fire in more than 580 air raids in order to clear an enclave held by ISIS in Yarmouk neighborhood in southern Damascus.<sup>77</sup> The UK-based Action Group for Palestinians of Syria reported that 60% of the neighborhood had been destroyed in the government offensive by April 27.<sup>78</sup> On May 19, pro-government forces launched a new assault on the neighborhood with airstrikes and surface-to-surface missiles.<sup>79</sup> On May 29, Russian and pro-government sources reported a ceasefire with ISIS, and claimed to have fully recaptured the neighborhood on May 21.<sup>80</sup>

On May 27, *The Washington Post* reported that “insurgents...excavated graves in a cemetery in a refugee camp [neighborhood] in the Syrian capital Damascus in search of the remains of three Israeli soldiers who have been missing since Israel’s invasion of Lebanon 36 years

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<sup>77</sup> [https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/04/syria-yarmouk-camp-war-stomachs-annihilation-1804232121\\_11918.html](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/04/syria-yarmouk-camp-war-stomachs-annihilation-1804232121_11918.html)

<sup>78</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/04/estimated-60-percent-yarmouk-destroyed-violence-group-180427102610652.html>

<sup>79</sup> <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/05/20/islamic-state-fighters-evacuate-damascus-enclave-bashar-assad/>

<sup>80</sup> <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/syria-bashar-assad-retake-damascus-suburbs-isis-capital-completely-safe/>

ago.” The articles cited Anwar Raja, chief information officer for the Yarmouk-based Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.<sup>81</sup> According to Raja, the insurgents’ aim was to find the remains of the soldiers and transfer them to Israel. Israel refused to comment on the claims. ASOR CHI is unable to verify the accuracy of these claims.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Damascus Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0099, SHI 18-0104, SHI 18-0106, SHI 18-0109, SHI 18-0110, SHI 18-0111, and SHI 18-0113.**

For more information on damage to the Palestinian Martyrs Cemetery during the Southern Damascus Offensive, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0096** in the **April 2018 Monthly Report.**

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives - airstrike.

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

#### **Sources:**

##### Online Reporting:

##### Al Jazeera:

April 24, 2018: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/04/syria-yarmouk-camp-war-stomachs-annihilation-180423212111918.html>

April 27, 2018: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/04/estimated-60-percent-yarmouk-destroyed-violence-group-180427102610652.html>

May 20, 2018: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/05/activists-isil-fighters-withdraw-yarmouk-180520164633499.html>

##### Private Twitter Account

##### The Telegraph:

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/05/16/syrian-russian-forces-launch-large-scale-attack-palestinian/>

##### The Washington Post:

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/official-syrian-militants-dug-up-graves-to-find-israelis/2018/05/27/7f9c2c74-61ac-11e8-81ca-bb14593acaa6\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/official-syrian-militants-dug-up-graves-to-find-israelis/2018/05/27/7f9c2c74-61ac-11e8-81ca-bb14593acaa6_story.html)

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<sup>81</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/official-syrian-militants-dug-up-graves-to-find-israelis/2018/05/27/7f9c2c74-61ac-11e8-81ca-bb14593acaa6\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/official-syrian-militants-dug-up-graves-to-find-israelis/2018/05/27/7f9c2c74-61ac-11e8-81ca-bb14593acaa6_story.html)



Damage to the Palestinian Martyrs Cemetery (Private Twitter Account; May 23, 2018)



Previous damage to the Palestinian Martyrs Cemetery (DigitalGlobe NextView License; April 27, 2018)



An airstrike crater is visible within the red circle and additional military damage is visible in the central area of the Palestinian Martyrs Cemetery (DigitalGlobe NextView License; May 11, 2018)



Extreme damage to the Palestinian Martyrs Cemetery as a result of military activity. An airstrike crater is indicated by a red circle. The southern half of the cemetery was almost entirely obliterated and a road was constructed along the boundary. There is a possible trench in the northern part of the cemetery (DigitalGlobe NextView License; May 21, 2018)



## SHI 18-0108

**Report Date:** May 22, 2018

**Site Name:** Shrine of Sheikh Junayd (مزار الشيخ جنيد)

**Date of Incident:** Unknown

**Location:** Qarabash (Feqiran), Aleppo Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** A shrine dedicated to a local Yezidi figure known as Sheikh Junayd (d. 1934). The shrine is visited every Friday evening by local Yezidis.<sup>82</sup>

**Site Date:** 2011 CE

**Incident Summary:** Alleged FSA fighters looted a shrine.

**Incident Source and Description:** On May 21, 2018 a Private Twitter Account reported that Turkish-backed (FSA) fighters had looted and vandalized the Shrine of Sheikh Junayd and surrounding cemetery in the village of Qarabash. Photographs and video footage show the sign bearing the dedication on the exterior of the shrine has been thrown to the ground. The gravestone in the shrine interior has been smashed.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Aleppo Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0105** and **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0116**.

**Pattern:** Military activity: intentional destruction; Vandalism.

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

### Sources:

#### Online Reporting:

Ezdina News: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nAPN73RG\\_qU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nAPN73RG_qU)

Êzîdî Press: <https://twitter.com/EzidiPress/status/998681081225281537>

Private Twitter Account

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<sup>82</sup> Maisel 2017: 68-9.

Scholarly:

Maisel, S. *Yezidis in Syria: Identity Building Among a Double Minority*. Lexington Books.



Video still showing the destroyed gravestone of Sheikh Junayd (Private Twitter Account; May 21, 2018)



Video still showing the destroyed gravestone of Sheikh Junayd (Private Twitter Account; May 21, 2018)



The gravestone of Sheikh Junayd prior to its destruction (Êzîdî Press; May 21, 2018)



The exterior of the shrine of Sheikh Junayd prior to the vandalism (Êzîdî Press; May 21, 2018)

**SHI 18-0109**

**Report Date:** May 22, 2018

**Site Name:** Palestinian Mosque (مسجد فلسطين)

**Date of Incident:** Between May 3 and May 10, 2018

**Location:** Yarmouk neighborhood, Damascus, Damascus Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Mosque

**Site Date:** Unknown

**Incident Summary:** Satellite imagery shows the collapsed dome of a mosque.

**Incident Source and Description:** DigitalGlobe satellite imagery indicates that the dome of the Palestinian Mosque collapsed between May 3 and May 10, 2018. The cause of the collapse is unknown, though it may be the result of earlier damage from April 2018 that was likely caused by explosives. On May 11, 2018 a Private Twitter Account published photographs of the Palestinian Mosque and the surrounding area and reported that the damage was due to SARG shelling and barrel bombing of the area.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Damascus Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0099, SHI 18-0104, SHI 18-0106, SHI 18-0107, SHI 18-0110, SHI 18-0111, and SHI 18-0113.**

For previous damage to the Palestinian Mosque, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0087** in **April 2018 Monthly Report**.

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives.

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

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

Private Twitter Account



Damage to the Palestinian Mosque and the surrounding area, including the collapse of the dome (Private Twitter Account; May 11, 2018)



Damage to the Palestinian Mosque and the surrounding area, including the collapse of the dome (Private Twitter Account; May 11, 2018)



Previously reported damage to the Palestinian Mosque indicated by red arrows (DigitalGlobe NextView License; May 3, 2018)



The collapse of the Palestinian Mosque's dome as indicated by a red arrow (DigitalGlobe NextView License; May 11, 2018)



**SHI 18-0110**

**Report Date:** May 23, 2018

**Site Name:** Unnamed Mosque

**Date of Incident:** Between April 20, 2018 and May 3, 2018

**Location:** al-Salae neighborhood, Damascus, Damascus Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Mosque

**Site Date:** Unknown

**Incident Summary:** Satellite imagery shows damage to a mosque

**Incident Source and Description:** DigitalGlobe satellite imagery indicates that damage to an unidentified mosque in al-Salae neighborhood occurred between April 20 and May 3, 2018. During this time period, at least three holes were visible in the southwest quadrant of the mosque roof. These are possibly the result of heavy shelling.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Damascus Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0099, SHI 18-0104, SHI 18-0107, SHI 18-0109, SHI 18-0111, and SHI 18-0113.**

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives.

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



The unnamed mosque prior to military damage (DigitalGlobe NextView License; April 20, 2018)



Several holes southwest of the unnamed mosque's dome indicated by a red arrow (DigitalGlobe NextView License; May 11, 2018)

**SHI 18-0111**

**Report Date:** May 23, 2018

**Site Name:** Omar ibn al-Khattab Mosque (مسجد عمر بن الخطاب)

**Date of Incident:** Between April 20, 2018 and May 3, 2018

**Location:** al-Qadam neighborhood, Damascus, Damascus Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Mosque

**Site Date:** Unknown

**Incident Summary:** Satellite imagery shows damage to a mosque.

**Incident Source and Description:** DigitalGlobe satellite imagery indicates that damage to Omar ibn al-Khattab Mosque in al-Qadam neighborhood occurred between April 20 and May 3, 2018. The southwestern corner of the mosque appears to have been structurally damaged, possibly from explosives. There is a hole present in the north-central area of the roof.

The Omar ibn al-Khattab Mosque was been damaged on at least one other occasion. Video footage published on July 28, 2012 shows damage and debris in the interior of the mosque, reportedly the result of a SARG airstrike.<sup>83</sup>

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Damascus Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0099, SHI 18-0104, SHI 18-0106, SHI 18-0107, SHI 18-0109, SHI 18-0110, and SHI 18-0113.**

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives.

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

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

al-Qadam al-Dimashqi: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wcfKD3YEEag>

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<sup>83</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wcfKD3YEEag>



Omar ibn al-Khattab Mosque prior to visible damage, shown within the red square (DigitalGlobe NextView License; April 20, 2018)



Structural damage to the southwest corner of Omar ibn al-Khattab Mosque, as well as a hole in the roof, indicated by red arrows (DigitalGlobe NextView License; May 3, 2018)

**SHI 18-0112**

**Report Date:** May 23, 2018

**Site Name:** Ibrahim al-Khalil Mosque (مسجد ابراهيم الخليل)

**Date of Incident:** Between April 27, 2018 and May 3, 2018

**Location:** Hajar al-Aswad, Rif Dimashq Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Mosque

**Site Date:** ca. 2000 CE

**Incident Summary:** Satellite imagery revealed damage to a mosque.

**Incident Source and Description:** DigitalGlobe satellite imagery indicates that damage to Ibrahim al-Khalil Mosque in Hajar al-Aswad occurred between April 27, 2018 and May 3, 2018. There is a large hole visible in the roof of the mosque just west of the minaret. The damage from the hole extends down the southern facade of the building. This damage was likely caused by explosives. A photograph published on May 5, 2018 shows damage in the area around the mosque following its capture from ISIS militants by SARG forces.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Rif Dimashq Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0114** and **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0115**.

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives.

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

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

Private Twitter Account



A photograph of damage to the area around Ibrahim al-Khalil Mosque (Private Twitter Account; May 5, 2018)



Ibrahim al-Khalil Mosque prior to visible damage (DigitalGlobe NextView License; April 27, 2018)



Indicated by a red arrow is a large hole extending down the southern facade of Ibrahim al-Khalil Mosque, just west of the minaret (DigitalGlobe NextView License; May 3, 2018)

**SHI 18-0113**

**Report Date:** May 23, 2018

**Site Name:** al-Rahman Mosque

**Date of Incident:** Between April 27, 2018 and May 3, 2018

**Location:** Yarmouk neighborhood, Damascus, Damascus Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Mosque

**Site Date:** Unknown

**Incident Summary:** Satellite imagery shows damage to a mosque.

**Incident Source and Description:** DigitalGlobe satellite imagery indicates that damage to al-Rahman Mosque occurred between April 27 and May 3, 2018. At least three holes appeared in the roof of the mosque, possibly the result of heavy shelling. Additionally, between May 3 and May 11, 2018, there was severe damage to the surrounding area from airstrikes and shelling, possibly further damaging the mosque.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Damascus Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0099, SHI 18-0104, SHI 18-0106, SHI 18-0107, SHI 18-0109, SHI 18-0110, and SHI 18-0111.**

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives.

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





Al-Rahman Mosque prior to visible damage (DigitalGlobe NextView License; April 27, 2018)



At least three holes are visible in the roof of al-Rahman Mosque, as indicated by red arrows (DigitalGlobe NextView License; May 11, 2018)

**SHI 18-0114****Report Date:** May 23, 2018**Site Name:** al-Zubair Mosque (مسجد الزبير)**Date of Incident:** Between April 20 and May 21, 2018**Location:** Hajar al-Aswad, 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-Zubair Mosque occurred between April 20, 2018 and April 27, 2018. During this time period, the southeast corner of the mosque roof collapsed, probably as the result of heavy shelling. Between April 27 and May 3, 2018, another hole appeared in the north-central area of the roof. A second, larger hole immediately southwest of the initial hole appeared between May 3 and May 11, 2018. Finally, between May 11 and May 21, 2018, the roof of the eastern entryway to the mosque was damaged by shelling.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Rif Dimashq Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0112** and **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0115**.

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives.

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



Initial damage to al-Zubair mosque with the collapse of the southeast part of the roof, indicated by a red arrow (DigitalGlobe NextView License; April 27, 2018)



Increased military damage to the northern part of the roof of al-Zubair Mosque (DigitalGlobe NextView License; May 3, 2018)



A much larger hole from shelling immediately north of the dome of al-Zubair Mosque and a large hole in the roof of the northeast entrance hall (DigitalGlobe NextView License; May 21, 2018)

**SHI 18-0115**

**Report Date:** May 23, 2018

**Site Name:** Unnamed Mosque

**Date of Incident:** Between May 3, 2018 and May 10, 2018

**Location:** Hajar al-Aswad, 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 an unidentified mosque in Hajar al-Aswad occurred between May 3 and May 10, 2018. During this time period, a large hole appeared in the central area of the mosque's roof, likely the result of heavy shelling. Additionally, the building immediately east of the mosque was entirely destroyed, possibly by 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 18-0112** and **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0114**.

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives.

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



The unnamed mosque prior to increased military damage (DigitalGlobe NextView License; April 27, 2018)



A red arrow indicates the large hole in the unnamed mosque's roof, and the building to the east has been reduced to rubble (DigitalGlobe NextView License; May 11, 2018)

**SHI 18-0116**

**Report Date:** May 24, 2018

**Site Name:** Henan Mosque and the Grave of Nuri Dersimi

**Date of Incident:** May 2018

**Location:** Mesh'ale, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Henan Mosque is located in a cemetery south of the village of Mesh'ale in the Afrin area. It is a major pilgrimage site, believed to be the resting place of one of David's brothers. Today it is one of the largest cemeteries in the region. One of the graves belongs to Nuri Dersimi (d. 1973), a Kurdish writer and revolutionary from Turkey who lived in the area. He is said to have financed the renovation and expansion of the shrine in 1964. Local sources say that the shrine was at one time Yezidi but has since been converted into a Muslim shrine complete with a mosque.<sup>84</sup>

**Site Date:** Unknown

**Incident Summary:** Alleged Turkish army forces destroyed the grave of a Kurdish writer and damaged a mosque.

**Incident Source and Description:** On May 21, 2018 Rudaw published video footage of the interior of Henan Mosque.<sup>85</sup> The mosque looks to have been emptied of its contents but for a few furnishings which have been scattered around. The accompanying article states that Turkish forces and/or Turkish backed-FSA fighters also destroyed the grave of Kurdish revolutionary Nuri Dersimi. On May 22, ANF News also reported on the destruction of Dersimi's grave. However, the accompanying photograph was included in an earlier article in Partiya Yekitiya Demokrat, which reported on the destruction of the grave on March 28, 2018.<sup>86</sup> Although the two incidents have been reported together, the grave may then have been destroyed in late March, while the mosque, according to the video, seems to have been looted by "gangs" sometime in May.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Aleppo Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0105** and **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0108**.

**Pattern:** Military activity: intentional destruction; Theft.

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<sup>84</sup> Maisel (2016), p. 68.

<sup>85</sup> <http://www.rudaw.net/kurmanci/kurdistan/2105201810>

<sup>86</sup> <https://anfenglish.com/news/turkish-army-destroys-another-historic-site-in-afrin-26833> ; <https://pydrojava.net/arabic/archives/32988>

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

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

ANF News: <https://anfenglish.com/news/turkish-army-destroys-another-historic-site-in-afrin-26833>

Partiya Yekitiya Demokrat: <https://pydrojava.net/arabic/archives/32988>

Rudaw: <http://www.rudaw.net/kurmanci/kurdistan/2105201810>

Scholarly:

Maisel, S. (2016) *Yezidis in Syria: Identity Building Among a Double Minority*. Lexington Books.



An undated photograph of Nuri Dersimi's intact grave (Partiya Yekitiya Demokrat; March 28, 2018)





A photograph of shows Nuri Dersimi's vandalized grave (ANF News; May 22, 2018)

**SHI 18-0117**

**Report Date:** May 28, 2018

**Site Name:** Palmyra Theater

**Date of Incident:** November 2017–May 2018

**Location:** Palmyra, Homs Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Palmyra's 2nd century CE Severan period theater is located southwest of the Great Colonnade. The theater is unfinished, consisting only of the lowest level of seating.<sup>87</sup>

**Site Date:** 2nd century CE

**Incident Summary:** Video footage shows graffiti at an ancient site.

**Incident Source and Description:** Video footage of the Roman Theater at Palmyra published by Channel 4 News shows Arabic and Farsi graffiti in black and green paint on several columns on the northeastern side of the peristyle enclosing the theater.<sup>88</sup> More graffiti is visible on the background of the theater stage. This graffiti is not present in video footage published in November 2017.<sup>89</sup> The graffiti appears to have been left by pro-regime forces and possible visitors to the site.

For previous damage to the Roman Theater at Palmyra, see **ASOR CHI Incident Reports SHI 15-0096** in **Weekly Report 45**, **SHI 15-0104** in **Weekly Report 47–48**, **SHI 16-0026** in **Weekly Report 79–80**, **SHI 16-0041** in **Weekly Report 85–86**, **SHI 16-0041 UPDATE** in **Weekly Report 87–88**, **SHI 17-0012** in the **January 2017 Monthly Report**, and **SHI 17-0032** in the **March 2017 Monthly Report**.

**Pattern:** Vandalism.

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

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<sup>87</sup> Sear 2006: 321; Ball 2000: 296.

<sup>88</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j\\_vfgRgrMqQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j_vfgRgrMqQ)

<sup>89</sup> <https://www.almasdarnews.com/article/palmyra-ruins-stolen-destroyed-director-palmyra-museum/>

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

Al Masdar News:

<https://www.almasdarnews.com/article/palmyra-ruins-stolen-destroyed-director-palmyra-museum/>

Channel 4 News: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j\\_vfgRgrMqQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j_vfgRgrMqQ)

Scholarly:

Ball, W. (2000). *Rome in the East: The Transformation of the an Empire*. Routledge.

Sear, F. (2006). *Roman Theatres: An Architectural Study*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.



Video still showing graffiti on a column on the northeastern side of the peristyle enclosing the Roman Theater (Channel 4 News; May 28, 2018)



Video still showing graffiti on columns on the northeastern side of the peristyle enclosing the Roman Theater (Channel 4 News; May 28, 2018)



Video still of graffiti on the northeastern archway leading from the Theater enclosure to the Colonnade (Channel 4 News; May 28, 2018)



Video still of damage to stage of the Theater, as well as graffiti on the stage background (Channel 4 News; May 28, 2018)



Video still of graffiti and damage to the northeastern arched entrance to the Theater, as well as to a section of the surrounding peristyle (Channel 4 News; May 28, 2018)

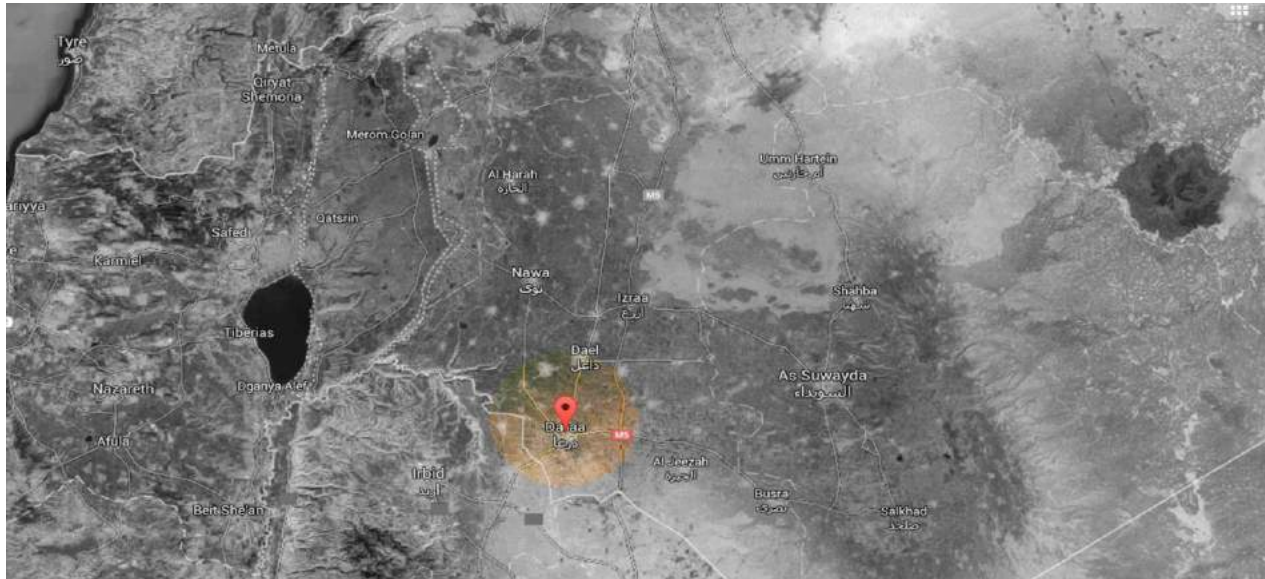


Video still of a possible explosives detonator among seating in Theater (Channel 4 News; May 28, 2018)

## The Day After Heritage Protection Initiative

### Site Monitors Project

### Damage Report on Roman Amphitheater in Bosra Al-Sham - May 2, 2018



On Thursday, 4/26/2018, a severe thunderstorm unleashed an unprecedented downpour on Bosra al Sham that lasted 3 days, flooding the Roman theater and the east and west courtyards either sides of the orchestra. Water quickly accumulated and rose over 3.5m high.

Water seeping into the stadium through cracks and damaged parts of the west courtyard may severely impact the stability of the structure. The cracks and the destruction were due to the barrel bombing on Tuesday 12/22/2015, when a regime helicopter dropped two highly explosive barrels on Bosra al Sham citadel housing the Roman Theater. The bombing caused severe and extensive destruction in the west section of the citadel as follows:

- 1- The wall between the second and fifth towers of the citadel was completely destroyed.
- 2- A large crater was left in front of the entrance to the Museum of Popular Traditions (ethnographic museum) in the fifth tower.

- 3- A barrel bomb penetrated the second level in front of the entrance to the fifth tower causing a large segment to collapse and block walkways.
- 4- The whole arch above the entrance to the Museum of Popular Traditions was destroyed.
- 5- The floor paving stones of the second tower were shattered by the blasts.
- 6- The arches in the walls in front of the second tower cracked and some collapsed while others are at risk of collapse.
- 7- The floor of the hallway between the second and fifth towers suffered severe damage with cracks in the paving stones.
- 8- The columns surrounding the orchestra (the actors' stage) overlooking the historical Roman amphitheater from the west have collapsed.
- 9- The entrance to the orchestra (the actors' stage) from the south, which connects the first and second levels, was destroyed.
- 10- A crater was left in the floor of the orchestra overlooking the amphitheater from the west.

This collectively led to the accumulation of rainwater in the west and east courtyards and the Roman theater, posing a real risk of collapse to the northwest wall of the Roman theatre.





Water covers the orchestra floor, the stage, and a large segment of the first and second-class seats in the Roman stadium.



The west courtyard is under nearly 1.5m of water.



Another view of the west courtyard under water. Note the destruction caused by airstrikes.



The east courtyard is under 1.5m of water.



Water covers the destroyed parts of the west courtyard.



West courtyard after the airstrikes.



West courtyard after the airstrikes.



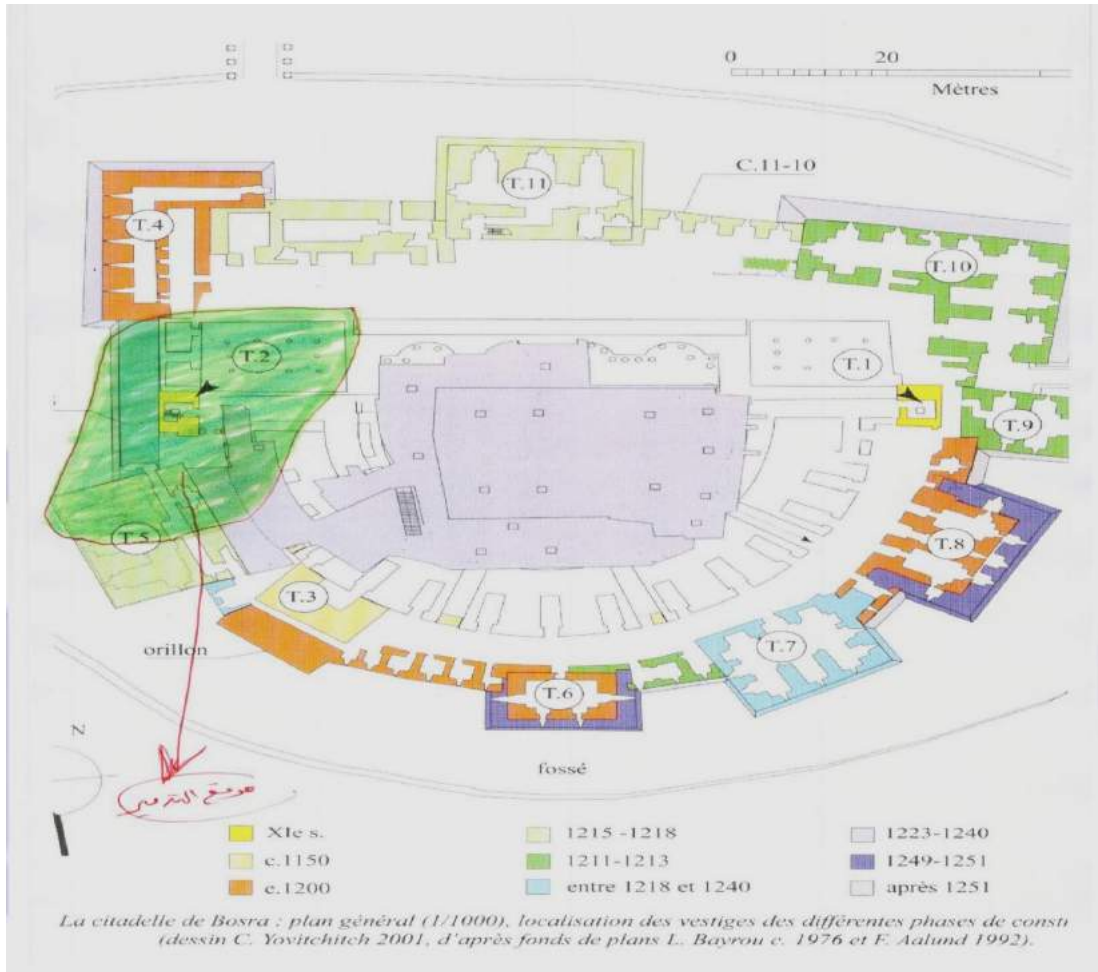
The crater next to the fifth tower left by barrel bombs



The arch connecting the second and fifth towers is destroyed.



The citadel's western wall near the fifth tower is destroyed.



The targeted area is highlighted in green on the citadel's layout map

Images showing collapsed outer walls of the trench surrounding the citadel due to the massive floods









Reported by:  
Arch. Ibrahim Muqdad (Bosra al Sham Antiquities Department)

**Site Monitors Project Coordinator**  
**Dr. Amr Al-Azm**



## Incident Reports: Iraq

**IHI 18-0011**

**Report Date:** May 31, 2018

**Site Name:** al-Juwayjati Mosque (جامع الجويجاتي)

**Date of Incident:** May 17, 2018

**Location:** Mosul, Ninawa Governorate, Iraq

**Site Description:** An historic mosque constructed in 1625 CE by Haj Abdullah al-Jweiji, which housed one of the the first libraries of Iraq. It has an area of 250 square meters.<sup>90</sup>

**Site Date:** 1625 CE, renovated 1959

**Heritage Response Summary:** An unnamed group rebuilt a mosque.

**Heritage Response Source (organization) and Description of Work:** On May 17, 2018 a Private Facebook Account reported that reconstruction and restoration efforts at al-Juwayjati Mosque are complete, with the exception of the mosque's minaret. Photographs indicate that the damage to the exterior of the mosque has been repaired. The minaret has not been reconstructed, but rubble around the exterior of the mosque has been removed.

**Description of Previous Damage to Site:** On July 3, 2017, al-Mosuliya released video footage showing damage to the exterior of al-Juwayjati Mosque.<sup>91</sup> The exterior of the building suffered light to moderate gunfire or shrapnel damage. The top half of the minaret was damaged. DigitalGlobe satellite imagery suggests that this damage occurred between April 15 and April 26, 2017 as the result of an explosion in the street along the western facade of the mosque.

For previous reports on damage see **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 17-0056 in July Monthly Report**.

**Operating Organization:** Unknown

**Pattern:** Conservation treatment; Rebuilding.

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<sup>90</sup> al-Faraj, Q.H. (2012) المكتبات العامة الموصلية منذ القرن الثامن عشر و حتى القرن العشرين (Mosul public libraries from the 18th century until the 20th century). Iraq.

<sup>91</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w4-pl0s1x4M>

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

Al-Mosuliya: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w4-pI0s1x4M>

Private Facebook Account

Scholarly:

al-Faraj, Q.H. 2012. المكتبات العامة الموصلية منذ القرن الثامن عشر و حتى القرن العشرين (Mosul public libraries from the 18th century until the 20th century). Iraq.



Reconstruction of al-Juwayjati Mosque with the un-reconstructed minaret (Private Facebook Account; May 17, 2018)



Reconstruction of al-Juwayjati Mosque with the un-reconstructed minaret (Private Facebook Account; May 17, 2018)



Reconstruction of al-Juwayjati Mosque with the un-reconstructed minaret (Private Facebook Account; May 17, 2018)



Reconstruction of the courtyard of the mosque (Private Facebook Account; May 17, 2018)





Reconstruction of the courtyard of the mosque (Private Facebook Account; May 17, 2018)



Reconstruction of the interior of the mosque (Private Facebook Account; May 17, 2018)



Reconstruction of the interior of the mosque (Private Facebook Account; May 17, 2018)



Reconstruction of the interior of the mosque (Private Facebook Account; May 17, 2018)



Reconstruction of the interior of the mosque (Private Facebook Account; May 17, 2018)



Reconstruction of the interior of the mosque (Private Facebook Account; May 17, 2018)

## Incident Reports: Libya

**LHI 18-0021**

**Report Date:** May 15, 2018

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

**Date of Incident:** April 25 to May 16, 2018

**Location:** Sabha, Fezzan, Libya

**Site Description:** Sabha Castle was originally constructed ca. 1870 CE during the Ottoman Period. It was expanded in the 1930s during the Italian Colonial era.<sup>92</sup>

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

**Incident Summary:** Satellite imagery revealed damage to an historic castle.

**Incident Source and Description:** On May 12, 2018 Fezzan Libya Org reported that Tebu forces in the city of Sabha captured Sabha Castle from 6th Infantry and Awlad Suleiman forces.<sup>93</sup> On the same day, it was reported that 6th Infantry and Awlad Suleiman forces had recaptured Sabha Castle from Tebu tribal forces.<sup>94</sup> On May 13, Fezzan Libya Org reported that Tebu tribal forces had captured the Sabha Castle for the second time.<sup>95</sup> Photographs show extensive damage to the exterior northern wall and towers of the castle.

Hafsa Abdul Hamid of the Sebha office of the Libyan Department of Antiquities (DoA) reported on May 17 that she and her colleagues were unable to visit the castle to assess damage due to ongoing fighting. Nevertheless, DoA plans to conduct a site damage assessment when conditions permit, just as they have done previously following fighting near the castle that occurred in 2014.

DigitalGlobe satellite imagery confirms that there was increased military damage to the north-central tower, the northeast tower, and along the northern wall of Sabha Castle between April 25, 2018 and May 16, 2018. There is also increased damage to the western wall of the castle, including a large hole, visible in satellite imagery from May 21, 2018.

For information on previous damage to the site of Sabha Castle, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 18-0016** in the **March 2018 Monthly Report, LHI 18-0016 UPDATE** in the **April 2018 Monthly Report**.

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<sup>92</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.net/knowledgegate/magazine/2016/2/11/العالم-الليبية-تستغيث-العالم-الجزيرة-قلعة-سبها-الليبية-تستغيث-العالم>

<sup>93</sup> <https://twitter.com/FezzanLibyaOrg/status/995265256661413888>

<sup>94</sup> <https://twitter.com/FezzanLibyaOrg/status/995328337328398336>

<sup>95</sup> <https://twitter.com/FezzanLibyaOrg/status/995526721481986048>

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives, occupation/militarization.

**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 military activity.

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

Fezzan Libya Org:

May 12, 2018: <https://twitter.com/FezzanLibyaOrg/status/995265256661413888> ; <https://twitter.com/FezzanLibyaOrg/status/995328337328398336>

May 13, 2018: <https://twitter.com/FezzanLibyaOrg/status/995526721481986048>



A photograph shows extensive damage to Sabha Castle (Fezzan Libya Org; May 14, 2018)





Previously reported damage to Sabha Castle indicated by red arrows (DigitalGlobe NextView License; March 25, 2018)



Increased damage visible on the northern wall of Sabha Castle. The central tower appears to have suffered from shelling and explosives, as evidenced by the holes and visible structural damage. There also appears to be damage to the northeast tower and the extent of damage to the western wall is clearly visible by a new hole, indicated by a red arrow (DigitalGlobe NextView License; May 21, 2018)

## Satellite Imagery and Geospatial Analysis

Since their liberation, Mosul, Iraq and Raqqa, Syria, have undergone clean-up efforts that are visible in recent satellite imagery. Streets have been cleared and some debris has been removed from the area. ASOR CHI's GeoSpatial team focused on analyzing these efforts in and around the Old City area of each city to assess possible removal of heritage debris or stabilization of materials. Six phenomena were recorded for all heritage sites in each Old City: Damage: No Reconstruction, Clean-Up Visible, Removal of Feature, Removal of feature by ISIS, No Visible Damage, or Reconstruction. Mosul was assessed using imagery from after the conflict from August 18, 2017, April 6, 2018, and May 6, 2018 compared to pre-conflict imagery from December 29, 2013 and during conflict imagery from April 1, 2016, after many of the intentional destructions by ISIS were carried out. The heritage in Raqqa was assessed using imagery from March 17, 2018, and April 8, 2018 compared to earlier imagery from April 8, 2011, February 20, 2016, May 24, 2017 and October 2, 2017.

In Mosul, 90 heritage locations in and around the Old City were analyzed for reconstruction and clean-up efforts since the end of the conflict. 42 (47%) of the assessed heritage locations show visible damage, but do not show any visible clean-up or reconstruction in the satellite imagery. These heritage locations are displayed in the map below using red circles. 21 of the 90 locations show visible clean-up efforts, such as the clearing of rubble with bulldozers, but no actual reconstruction.

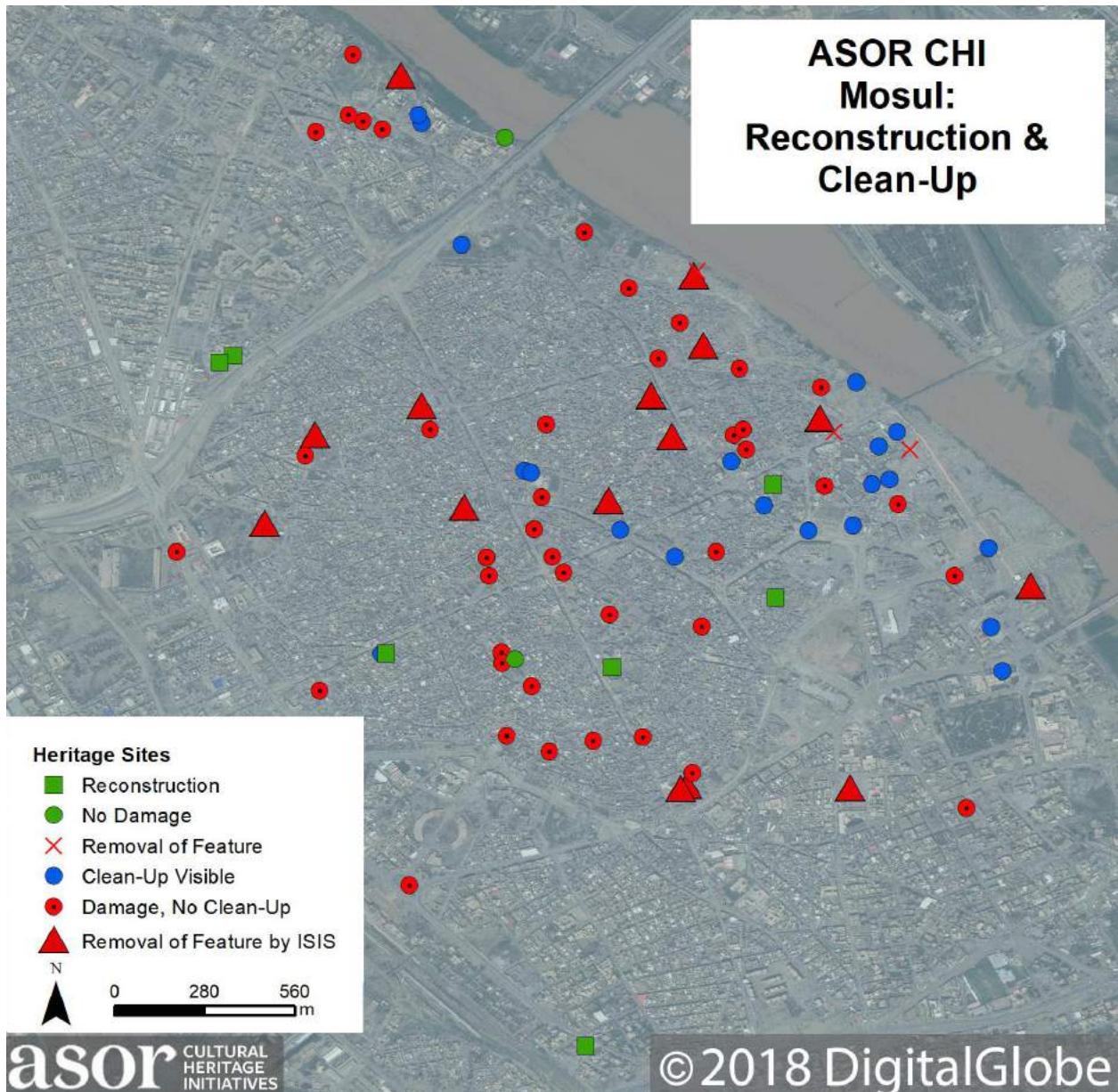
Three heritage locations, Suq al-Alwah Mosque, Sheikh al-Shut Mosque<sup>96</sup>, and Khan Hamu al-Qadu<sup>97</sup>, have been removed rather than reconstructed. The remains of Suq al-Alwah Mosque were removed between November 14 and December 13, 2017. It had previously been assessed at 60 to 90% damaged due to explosives and airstrikes. Two sites do not show any visible damage and only seven heritage locations exhibit reconstruction efforts, such as the repairing of holes in roofs from heavy shelling. Al-Mahmudin Mosque, shown below, exhibited reconstruction efforts between February 19 and March 12, 2018. During this time frame, the northern part of the roof was repaired and a new roof put in place. ISIS destroyed 15 heritage locations, often in intentional destructions between the summer of 2014 and mid 2015 such as Al-Nebi Jarjis Shrine<sup>98</sup>. After the shrine was destroyed it was converted into a paved parking lot. Overall, the cleanup of heritage locations appears focused on the southeastern and south-central quadrants of the Old City of Mosul, although the majority of roadways throughout the study area have been cleared.

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<sup>96</sup> The removal of Sheikh al-Shut Mosque was discussed in the July 2017 Report IHI 17-0064.

<sup>97</sup> The removal of Khan Hamu al-Qadu was discussed in the February 2018 Report IHI 18-0003.

<sup>98</sup> For more information on the destruction of Al-Nebi Jarjis Shrine see Weekly Report 39 in IHI 15-0031 and the July 2017 Report in IHI 17-0058.



Overview map of heritage sites in the Old City area of Mosul showing reconstruction efforts (ASOR CHI/DigitalGlobe NextView License; May 6, 2018)



Suq al-Alwah Mosque in Mosul prior to its removal (DigitalGlobe NextView License; November 14, 2017)



Within the red square is the former location of the Suq al-Alwah Mosque after its removal (DigitalGlobe NextView License; December 13, 2017)



Al-Mahmudin Mosque with a missing roof section indicated by red arrows (DigitalGlobe NextView License; February 8, 2018)



Red arrows indicate reconstruction to the mosque's roof (DigitalGlobe NextView License; March 12, 2018)

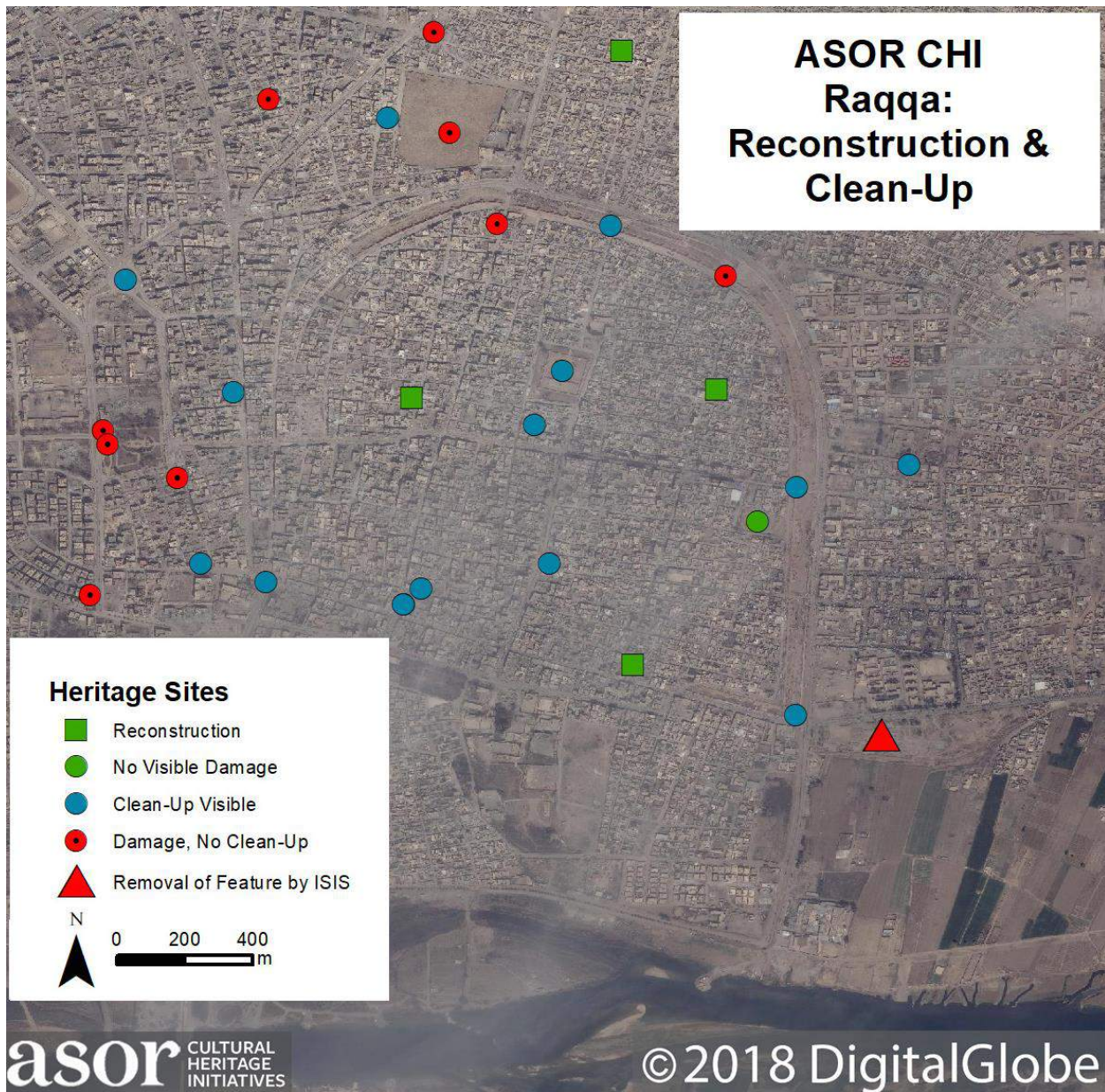
In Raqqa, 32 heritage locations were analyzed in and around the Old City for reconstruction efforts. Through April 8, 2018 no heritage features have been removed as a result of the clean-up process. Only two sites in this area of Raqqa show no visible damage, namely the archaeological site of Qasr al-Banat and al-Muna Mosque. There are nine (28%) heritage locations in Raqqa that exhibit visible damage in satellite imagery, but do not show any clean-up or reconstruction efforts. Significantly, 16 locations (50%) show visible clean-up efforts. One heritage site, Shrine to Uwais al-Qurani and Ammar Bin Yasser (CHI # 955) was removed during the conflict by ISIS.<sup>99</sup>

In addition to those 16 locations, there has been significant clearing of rubble in many of the streets in Raqqa. For example, the activist group Raqqa Is Being Slaughtered Silently uploaded photographs of the Armenian Catholic Church of the Martyrs and the surrounding streets. The streets have been visibly cleared but the church itself remains significantly rubble-filled. Images of the church before and after the rubble removal are below.

Five sites in the area show visible reconstruction efforts: Hinni Mosque, Othman bin Affan Mosque, Abdul Salam al-Ajili Mosque, Zaib bin Haritha Mosque, and an unnamed mosque. Some of these efforts consist of the repair of holes in the roofs of the structures, but one site in particular shows actual re-building efforts. The unnamed mosque exhibited both clean-up and reconstruction efforts in imagery from February 19 and March 17, 2018, as shown below. Overall, the Old City of Raqqa has seen the most clean-up, while heritage locations outside of the Old City wall have not been cleared of debris. ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of heritage sites in Mosul and Raqqa as de-mining and clean-up activities progress.

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<sup>99</sup> For more information on the removal of the Shrine to Uwais al-Qurani and Ammar Bin Yasser see Weekly Report 59-60 SHI 15-0132.



Overview map of heritage sites in the Old City area of Raqqa showing reconstruction efforts (ASOR CHI/DigitalGlobe NextView License; April 8, 2018)



The Armenian Catholic Church and the surrounding rubble-filled streets (RBSS; October 18, 2017)



The Church is still in poor condition, although the surrounding streets have been cleared of rubble (RBSS; May 14, 2018)





The damaged unnamed mosque complex shown in the red rectangle with significant damage (DigitalGlobe NextView License; February 19, 2018)



A red arrow indicates visible clean-up south of the mosque and a red rectangle indicates the reconstructed portion of the mosque (DigitalGlobe NextView License; March 17, 2018)

## SNHR Vital Facilities Report

On May 9, 2018 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) released a vital facilities report for April 2018.<sup>100</sup> According to SNHR, there were 46 attacks against vital civilian facilities. The sites attacked include six mosques.

- On April 5, 2018 a SARG warplane reportedly fired a missile at al-Rahman Mosque in al-Bara, Idlib Governorate, partially destroying the mosque and its furniture. The mosque was rendered out of commission. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0080**
- On April 7, 2018 a car bomb reportedly exploded near al-Kabir Mosque in al-Bab, Aleppo Governorate, moderately damaging the building. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0081**
- On April 19, 2018 a car bomb reportedly exploded near Suhaib al-Rumi Mosque in Idlib, Idlib Governorate, severely damaging the mosque and rendering it out of commission. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0084**
- On April 21, 2018 SARG or Russian warplanes reportedly fired missiles at Palestine Mosque in Yarmouk, Damascus Governorate, partially destroying the mosque. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0087**
- On April 28, 2018 SARG forces reportedly fired shells near al-Harata Mosque in al-Shafa, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, moderately damaging the building. ASOR CHI was unable to corroborate this report using DigitalGlobe satellite imagery.
- On April 29, 2018 a Russian warplane reportedly fired a missile at al-Kabir Mosque in Ma'ar Zita, Idlib Governorate, partially destroying the mosque and rendering it out of commission. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0097**

## SNHR Videos

On May 8, 2018 the Syrian Network for Human Rights published several videos on Youtube showing damage to mosques that occurred between January and July 2014.

- On January 1, 2014 an alleged SARG barrel bombing reportedly resulted in damage to Abu Suleiman al-Darani Mosque in Darayya, Rif Dimashq Governorate.<sup>101</sup>
- On January 19, 2014 alleged shelling by a SARG tank reportedly resulted in damage to Ali bin Abi Talib Mosque in Rankus, Rif Dimashq Governorate.<sup>102</sup>
- On February 26, 2014 alleged SARG shelling reportedly resulted in damage to an unnamed mosque in al-Rami, Idlib Governorate.<sup>103</sup>
- On March 23, 2014 alleged SARG shelling reportedly resulted in damage to al-Safa wa al-Marwa Mosque in Aleppo, Aleppo Governorate.<sup>104</sup>
- On July 19, 2014 alleged SARG shelling reportedly resulted in damage to Urwa al-Barqi Mosque in the Hanano neighborhood of Aleppo, Aleppo Governorate.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2018/05/09/52173/>

<sup>101</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hb9zPu26lU>

<sup>102</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=szpuINg07Zg>

<sup>103</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-bpQ-jfgFxQ>

<sup>104</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wVm6W0-5Zw>

<sup>105</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DA\\_rmphwrrA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DA_rmphwrrA)

## Heritage Timeline

May 31, 2018

*BBC* published an article titled “**Monuments man: The Barnsley stonemason training Syrians in the art of restoration**” (by Kirsty Lang). A master stonemason from the UK is training Syrian refugees in Jordan in traditional stone carving.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/17yC9PcBsZVTs6mXvk4BTjr/monuments-man-the-barnsley-stonemason-training-syrians-in-the-art-of-restoration>



*The National* published an article titled “**A view from the bridge that spans millennia and cultural and physical divides is a particularly inspiring one**” (by Jonathan Gornall). First excavated 90 years ago, a Sumerian-era bridge in modern-day Tello, is now exposed and neglected. Eight female Iraqi heritage professionals took part in a training program at the British Museum and will be involved in a joint effort to protect the bridge and continue excavations at the site. <https://www.thenational.ae/opinion/comment/a-view-from-the-bridge-that-spans-millennia-and-cultural-and-physical-divides-is-a-particularly-inspiring-one-1.735695>

May 30, 2018

*Live Science* published an article titled “**Lost City of Irisarig Comes to Life in Ancient Stolen Tablets**” (by Owen Jarus). Looted cuneiform tablets smuggled into the US as part of the Hobby Lobby collection shed light on the Sumerian city of Irisarig, thought to be located near modern Afak in al-Qadisiyyah Governorate, Iraq.

<https://www.livescience.com/62688-lost-city-of-irisarig-ancient-tablets.html>



*Syria Direct* published an article titled “**While the Islamic State fades in Syria, its legacy of antiquities smuggling flourishes**” (by Barrett Limoges). A discussion of widespread looting and smuggling of artifacts during and after ISIS rule in Syria and Iraq.

<http://syriadirect.org/news/while-the-islamic-state-fades-in-syria-its-legacy-of-antiquities-smuggling-flourishes/>

May 28, 2018

*Channel 4 News* published a report titled “**Palmyra: Inside Syria's ancient city desecrated by war**” (by Alex Thomson). This report includes new video footage of several monuments in Palmyra, including the Theater, the Colonnade, and the Museum, as well as damage to the modern city of Tadmor.  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j\\_vfgRgrMqQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j_vfgRgrMqQ)

- **UNESCO** published a press release titled “**Major international conference on circulation of cultural property and shared heritage: what new perspectives?**” A UNESCO conference in Paris on June 1, 2018 will explore “new modalities to respond to the debate on displaced cultural artefacts.”  
<https://en.unesco.org/news/major-international-conference-circulation-cultural-property-and-shared-heritage-what-new>

- *Gulf News* published an article titled “**Old Damascus property transfer raises ire of residents.**” The Governorate of Damascus has transferred ownership of al-Hamrawi neighborhood in the Old City of Damascus to “Dimashq Al Cham Holding,” the investment branch of Damascus Governorate. The company aims at “managing the municipality’s numerous real estate properties while transforming them into economically profitable projects.”  
<https://gulfnews.com/news/mena/syria/old-damascus-property-transfer-raises-ire-of-residents-1.2227885>

- **UNESCO** published the May 2018 issue of *World Heritage*. The focus of issue 87 is on the fight against the illicit traffic of cultural objects.  
<http://whc.unesco.org/en/review/87>

May 27, 2018

*Reuters* published an article titled “**In Mosul, young volunteers help bring city back to life**” (by Ayat Basma). A group of Iraqi university students is leading a campaign to restore Mosul University Central Library.  
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-mosul-volunteers/in-mosul-young-volunteers-help-bring-city-back-to-life-idUSKCN1IS05X>

May 26, 2018

*Forbes* published an article titled “**We Can Do More To Help Yazidis And Other Victims And Survivors Of Religious Persecutions**” (by Ewelina U. Ochab). The author argues that “religious persecution must receive adequate international attention as an issue on its own and not in conjunction with other issues.”

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/ewelinaochab/2018/05/26/we-can-do-more-to-help-yazidis-and-other-victims-and-survivors-of-religious-persecutions/#525d24041f2d>



*The New Yorker* published an article titled “**A Traveller’s Record of Syrian Monuments Before the War**” (by John Gendall). Photographs of ancient Syrian sites taken by photographer Peter Aaron in 2009 will be displayed as part of an exhibition at the Venice Architecture Biennale from May 26 to November 25, 2018.

<https://www.newyorker.com/culture/photo-booth/a-record-of-syrian-monuments-before-isis>

May 25, 2018

The **US Attorney’s Office for the Central District of California** published a press release titled “**United States Moves to Forfeit Antiquity from Time of Roman Empire that was Looted from Syria and Recovered from High Desert Home.**” The United States has filed an asset forfeiture complaint against a Byzantine mosaic believed to have been looted from the Idlib area and illegally imported into the US.

<https://www.justice.gov/usao-cdca/pr/united-states-moves-forfeit-antiquity-time-roman-empire-was-looted-syria-and-recovered>

May 21, 2018

*NPR* published an article titled “**3D Scans Help Preserve History, But Who Should Own Them?**” (by Laura Sydell) 3D scans of monuments and artifacts help to preserve endangered cultural heritage, but there is controversy over their ownership and the motives of companies like Google who fund projects and host images.

<https://www.npr.org/sections/alltechconsidered/2018/05/21/609084578/3d-scans-help-preserve-history-but-who-should-own-them>

- *Anadolu Agency* published an article titled “**Artifacts dating to 5000 BC discovered in Iraq's Dohuk**” (by Idris Okuducu). Hassan Ahmad Kasim, Director of Dohuk University’s Archaeology Department, announced that German and Iraqi archaeologists have discovered numerous artifacts in the town of Simele.  
<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/culture-and-art/artifacts-dating-to-5000-bc-discovered-in-iraqs-dohuk/1152895>
  
- May 20, 2018 *Yahoo News* published an article titled “**On a Damascus rooftop, tinting silk a fading craft**” (by Maher al-Mounes). The traditional Syrian art of silk dyeing is in decline, with only a handful of artists practicing the craft nationwide.  
<https://www.yahoo.com/news/damascus-rooftop-tinting-silk-fading-craft-030236355.html>
  
- *AP News* published an article titled “**Iraqi, Syrian guides bring views to Philadelphia museum**” (by Natalie Pompilio). Three Iraqi natives and a Syrian woman have been enlisted as guides to share a modern cultural perspective with visitors to new Middle Eastern galleries at the Penn Museum in Philadelphia.  
<https://www.apnews.com/d2ed4804074d4347a6275df7ef4227f7>
  
- May 19, 2018 *Heritage for Peace* published its bi-weekly newsletter titled “**Damage to Syria's Heritage - 19 May 2018.**”  
<http://www.heritageforpeace.org/syria-culture-and-heritage/damage-to-cultural-heritage/previous-damage-newsletters/damage-to-syrias-heritage-19-may-2018/>
  
- May 18, 2018 *Open Democracy* published an article titled “**Heritage Peacebuilding in Iraq**” (by Mehiyar Kathem). “After years of funding being pumped to Iraq’s NGO sector based on US military needs, local civil society is rebuilding itself based on Iraqi priorities, not least of which is heritage.”  
<https://www.opendemocracy.net/north-africa-west-asia/mehiyar-kathem/heritage-peacebuilding-in-iraq>
  
- *DGAM* published an article titled “اعلان عن مسابقة توظيف في المديرية العامة للآثار والمتاحف (Announcement of a recruitment competition in the Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums).” The DGAM is looking to fill a number of vacant positions.  
<http://dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=177&id=2393>

- May 17, 2018 *Al Monitor* published an article titled “**Mosul's Great Mosque to be restored to its former glory**” (by Adnan Abu Zeed). Work to reconstruct al-Nuri Mosque and al-Hadba Minaret in Mosul will start in June 2018. The UAE has committed \$50.4 million over five years for the project. UNESCO is also a signatory to the reconstruction agreement.  
<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/05/construction-on-mosuls-symbolic-mosque-to-start-next-month.html>
- May 16, 2018 **Brown University** published an article titled “**NEH grant will enable Brown researcher to digitally preserve Syrian tablets**” (by Gillian Kiley). An NEH grant will allow Matthew Rutz, associate professor of Egyptology and Assyriology at Brown University, to digitize 1,800 cuneiform tablets from Ugarit. The texts will be available in a searchable database.  
<https://news.brown.edu/articles/2018/05/rutz>
- May 15, 2018 **Cultural Heritage Crime** published an article titled “**La distruzione del Patrimonio Culturale dell’Umanità. Da crimine di guerra a genocidio culturale fino alla ‘Responsibility to Protect’?**” A conference at l’Università degli Studi di Udine on May 21, 2018 will focus on the destruction of cultural heritage during wartime.  
<https://culturalheritagecrime.com/2018/05/15/la-distruzione-del-patrimonio-culturale-dellumanita-da-crimine-di-guerra-a-genocidio-culturale-fino-alla-responsibility-to-protect/>
- May 13, 2018 *ABC* published an article titled “**Las rutas de las «antigüedades de sangre» de Daesh, al descubierto**” (by Pablo Muñoz & Cruz Morcillo). A discussion of how artifacts looted in Libya, allegedly to finance ISIS operations, have been smuggled to Europe for sale.  
<http://www.abc.es/espana/abci-rutas-antiguedades-sangre-daesh-descubierto-201805130146 noticia amp.html>
- May 11, 2018 **DGAM** published an article titled “**معرض صور عن الأضرار التي تعرضت لها مواقع التراث السوري في ريف دمشق (Photo gallery about the damage suffered by Syrian heritage sites in Rif Dimashq).**” As part of the Rif Dimashq Cultural Festival, the DGAM created an exhibit showcasing photographs of damage to cultural heritage sites in Rif Dimashq Governorate.  
<http://dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=177&id=2392>

- *Reuters* published an article titled “**In Iraq’s crumbling Basra, a yearning for a better past**” (by Ulf Laessing). Little of Basra’s Ottoman-era Old City has been restored since the 1980s and 90s.  
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iraq-elections-basra/in-iraqs-crumbling-basra-a-yearning-for-a-better-past-idUSKBN1IC1BI>

May 10, 2018

*WNPR* published an article titled “**Cultural Heritage Expert Explains Why Hobby Lobby Returned Iraqi Artifacts**” (by Carlos Mejia). The author provides an overview of the case against the Green family (the owners of Hobby Lobby), who participated in smuggling looted Iraqi artifacts into the US that were recently repatriated to Iraq.  
<http://wnpr.org/post/cultural-heritage-expert-explains-why-hobby-lobby-returned-iraqi-artifacts>

- *Al Monitor* published an article titled “**Iraqi calligraphers try to revive their art**” (by Adnan Abu Zeed). The Iraqi Cultural Center for Calligraphy and Decorative Arts in Anbar organized a festival on April 8, 2018. Dozens of Iraqi artists hoping to call attention to the traditional art of calligraphy were in attendance.  
<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/05/iraqs-calligraphers-try-to-save-their-art.html>

May 9, 2018

*Art Forum* published an article titled “**Mayor of Paris proposes turning city into a ‘refuge’ for cultural heritage.**” The mayor of Paris, Anne Hidalgo, is planning on making the French capital a safe haven for cultural heritage objects from areas across the globe threatened by armed conflicts. Hidalgo will collaborate with the International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage in Conflict Zones (ALIPH), a Geneva-based foundation launched by France, UNESCO, and the UAE.  
<https://www.artforum.com/news/mayor-of-paris-proposes-turning-city-into-a-refuge-for-cultural-heritage-75349>



- *The National* published an article titled “**Is reconstruction of Aleppo's Grand Mosque whitewashing history?**” (by Diana Darke) The author argues that “international cultural historians have a duty to keep the records that show how rebels – now damned as terrorists – went to great lengths to preserve and protect their heritage, while continual regime bombardment damaged virtually every mosque in Aleppo.” In particular, she discusses the lengths rebel groups went to in order to protect parts of the Great Mosque of Aleppo from SARG bombardment and gunfire.  
<https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/is-reconstruction-of-aleppo-s-grand-mosque-whitewashing-history-1.728715>
  
- *Radio Praha* published an article titled “**Czechs showcase destruction and conservation of Syrian heritage during civil war.**” The Czech National Museum is hosting an exhibition in Prague outlining what has been destroyed and what has been saved during Syria’s civil war.  
<http://www.radio.cz/en/section/curaffrs/czechs-showcase-destruction-and-conservation-of-syrian-heritage-during-civil-war>
  
- *Heritage Daily* published an article titled “**Cuneiform tablets from Bassetki reveal location of ancient royal city of Mardaman.**” Translations of cuneiform tablets from an excavation at Bassetki in Iraqi Kurdistan have revealed that the site may be the 2nd-millennium BCE Assyrian city of Mardama.  
<https://www.heritagedaily.com/2018/05/cuneiform-tablets-from-bassetki-reveal-location-of-ancient-royal-city-of-mardaman/119529>
  
- May 8, 2018 *The Arab Weekly* published an article titled “**Iraq recovers 3,800 artefacts from US.**” In the first US repatriation of cultural property to Iraq since 2015, US officials returned thousands of clay tablets smuggled out of Iraq by the US company Hobby Lobby.  
<https://thearabweekly.com/iraq-recovers-3800-artefacts-us>
  
- May 7, 2018 *BBC News* published an article titled “**Did Syria create the world’s first song?**” (by Leila Molana-Allen & Lizzie Porter). A discussion of the history of music in Syria, beginning with the discovery of a 3,400- year-old tablet from the site of Ugarit inscribed with song lyrics and musical notation.  
<http://www.bbc.com/travel/story/20180424-did-syria-create-the-worlds-first-song>

- *BBC News* presented a documentary titled “**The Road to Palmyra**” (by Dan Cruickshank & Don McCullin). Historian Dan Cruickshank and photographer Don McCullin documented the cultural destruction wrought by ISIS in Syria.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0b2gjpl>

- *The Times* published an article titled “**Preventing Profit from Plunder.**” The author argues that governments and art salerooms should work together to halt the trade in stolen art, beginning with granting auction houses access to archives of stolen goods.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/preventing-profit-from-plunder-z6pp2rlz8>

May 6, 2018

**UNESCO** published an article titled “**International conference on reconstruction: The challenges of World Heritage recovery.**” This international conference will “summarize previous discussions and experiences regarding the recovery and reconstruction of UNESCO World Heritage sites and attempt to develop the most appropriate, universal guidelines for moving forward with properties of exceptional value at the time of destruction.” The conference will be held in Warsaw, Poland from May 6–8, 2018.

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/events/1442>

- *The Huffington Post* published an article titled “**The Sites Of Toppled Temples In Syria Should Be Treated As Crime Scenes**” (by Dan Cruickshank). The author argues that rather than rebuilding monuments like the Temple of Bel in Palmyra, it “might be more meaningful to leave this ruin as a statement about man’s inhumanity to history.”

[https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/the-sites-of-toppled-temples-in-syria-should-be-treated-as-crime-scenes\\_uk\\_5aec6673e4b0ab5c3d64d477](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/the-sites-of-toppled-temples-in-syria-should-be-treated-as-crime-scenes_uk_5aec6673e4b0ab5c3d64d477)

May 4, 2018

**Heritage for Peace** published its bi-weekly newsletter titled “**Damage to Syria’s Heritage – 04 May 2018.**”

<http://www.heritageforpeace.org/syria-culture-and-heritage/damage-to-cultural-heritage/previous-damage-newsletters/damage-to-syrias-heritage-04-may-2018/>

- *The Art Newspaper* published an article titled “**Retain or return? It’s complicated**” (by Robert Jackson). A discussion of the complex issues behind returning cultural goods to their place of origin.

<https://www.theartnewspaper.com/comment/retain-or-return-it-s-complicated>

May 3, 2018

*Motherboard* published an article titled “**eBay, Organized Crime, and Evangelical Christians: The Ethical Minefield of Studying Ancient Civilizations**” (by Sarah Emerson). Scholars are divided over whether artifacts smuggled into the US by Hobby Lobby can be studied ethically.

[https://motherboard.vice.com/en\\_us/article/9kgxjp/ebay-organized-crime-and-evangelical-christians-the-ethical-minefield-of-studying-ancient-civilizations-hobby-lobby-irisagrigrig-iraq](https://motherboard.vice.com/en_us/article/9kgxjp/ebay-organized-crime-and-evangelical-christians-the-ethical-minefield-of-studying-ancient-civilizations-hobby-lobby-irisagrigrig-iraq)

- *Granta* published an article titled “**Palmyra**” (by Charles Glass & Don McCullin). A discussion of the long history of Palmyra, including its occupation by ISIS militants in 2015–2016.

<https://granta.com/palmyra/>

May 1, 2018

Several media outlets reported on the return of artifacts illegally brought to the US by Hobby Lobby to the Iraqi Government. Hundreds of the artifacts may have been illegally excavated from the Sumerian site of Irisagrigrig, the location of which is currently unknown to archaeologists.

<https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2018/05/01/607582135/hobby-lobbys-smuggled-artifacts-will-be-returned-to-iraq>

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/museums/hobby-lobbys-illicit-artifacts-are-returned-to-their-iraqi-homeland/2018/05/02/3f59842a-4e44-11e8-84a0-458a1aa9ac0a\\_story.html?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.d4c3705462fc](https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/museums/hobby-lobbys-illicit-artifacts-are-returned-to-their-iraqi-homeland/2018/05/02/3f59842a-4e44-11e8-84a0-458a1aa9ac0a_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.d4c3705462fc)

<http://thehill.com/policy/international/385897-thousands-of-stolen-artifacts-forfeited-by-hobby-lobby-return-to-iraq>

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/artifacts-seized-hobby-lobby-may-come-lost-sumerian-city-180968931/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/02/us/politics/iraq-artifacts-hobby-lobby-ice.html>

- *ARAMCO World* published an article titled “**Iraq’s First Archeologist**” (by Jane Waldron Grutz). A discussion of the life and work of Hormuzd Rassam who, working both under archaeologist Austen Henry Layard and independently, made great contributions to Near Eastern archaeology.  
<http://www.aramcoworld.com/en-US/Articles/May-2018/Iraq-s-First-Archeologist>

- *Al Monitor* published an article titled “**Iraq's Yazidis resume pilgrimages to sacred temple**” (by Adnan Abu Zeed). On April 8, 2018 thousands of Yezidis traveled to Lalish to take part in New Year celebrations.  
<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/05/yazidis-lalish-sinjar-iraq-minorities.html>

April 30, 2018

*Al Monitor* published an article titled “**Iraq’s 'Tree of Knowledge' draws visitors across faiths**” (by Wassim Bassem). Thousands of Muslim and Christian pilgrims and tourists travel to the “Tree of Knowledge” in Qurna each year, believing it to be a tree from the Garden of Eden where the prophet Abraham later prayed.  
<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/04/mythical-tree-of-knowledge-gathers-tourists.html>