

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

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

Other Key Points

Syria

- **Aleppo Governorate**
 - Pro-regime shelling reportedly damaged Abu Bakr al-Siddiq Mosque in Anadan, Aleppo Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0182**
 - A previously unexcavated Roman tomb in Manbij, Aleppo Governorate was reportedly looted and used as a trash dump during the occupation of the city by ISIS militants. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0176**
- **Daraa Governorate**
 - Jaish al-Islam reportedly targeted military installations with artillery fire on the archaeological site of Tell al-Jumou in Daraa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0194**
- **Deir ez-Zor Governorate**
 - A new photograph shows moderate damage due to natural impacts at the site of Qalaat Rahba near al-Mayadin, Deir ez-Zor Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0179**
 - Reported SARG shelling damage al-Bouawad Mosque in al-Quriyah, Deir ez Zor Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0181**
 - Satellite imagery shows shelling damage that occurred between September 7, 2017 and October 15, 2017 at four mosques in al-Mayadin, Deir ez-Zor Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Reports SHI 17-0184, SHI 17-0185, SHI 17-0187, and SHI 17-0195.**
 - A SARG airstrike reportedly damaged al-Fareeh Mosque in al-Jalaa, Deir ez-Zor Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0188**
 - Shelling reportedly damaged al-Fateh Mosque in Deir ez-Zor, Deir ez-Zor Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0193**
- **Hama Governorate**
 - SARG artillery fire reportedly damaged Omar bin al-Khattab Mosque in Harbnafseh, Hama Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0186**
- **Hasakah Governorate**
 - Restoration work is ongoing at the archaeological site of Tell Beydar in Hasakah Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0183**
- **Idlib Governorate**
 - A SARG airstrike reportedly destroyed a cultural center in Ma'arat al-Numan, Idlib Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0180**
 - A new video shows a gunman destroying the remains of a Byzantine-era villa in Deir Sunbul, Jebel Zawiya, Idlib Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0177**
- **Raqqa Governorate**
 - New photographs show the extent of damage to al-Firdous Mosque in Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate, which was reportedly severely damaged by a US-led Coalition airstrike. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0162 UPDATE**
 - New photographs confirm the complete destruction of Circassian Mosque in Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0153 UPDATE**
 - A new video shows previously unreported damage to al-Hinni Mosque in Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0121 UPDATE**
 - New photographs and DigitalGlobe satellite imagery confirm the destruction of the Armenian Catholic Church of the Martyrs in Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0165 UPDATE**

- Recently released DigitalGlobe satellite imagery shows damage to an unnamed mosque in Thawrah neighborhood, Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0192**
- Recently released DigitalGlobe satellite imagery shows a significant increase in damage to al-Shuhada Mosque in Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0189**
- New photographs show moderate damage to the Clock Tower in Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0190**
- New photographs and video show the destruction of the Arslan Tash Lions in al-Rasheed Park, Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0191**
- **Rif Dimashq Governorate**
 - News photographs show the extent of the damage to the Shrine of Sayyida Sakina in Darayya, Rif Dimashq Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0178**

Iraq

- **Baghdad Governorate**
 - A car bomb reportedly exploded near a Shia mosque in al-Husseiniyah, Baghdad Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 17-0077**
- **Ninawa Governorate**
 - New video shows previously unrecorded damage to al-Imam Muhsin Mosque in Mosul, Ninawa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 17-0044 UPDATE**
 - New video footage and DigitalGlobe satellite imagery shows intentional destruction and looting of the Tal Afar Citadel in Tal Afar, Ninawa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 17-0073 UPDATE**

Libya

- **Tripolitania**
 - Military clashes reportedly caused minor damage to several monuments at the archaeological site of Sabratha in the region of Tripolitania. **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0022 UPDATE**
 - A new building was reportedly constructed next to a historic structure in violation of the standing zoning principles of downtown Tripoli, Tripolitania. **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0028**
 - The Bani Walid office of the Historic City Authority (HCA) has begun to rebuild the historic Abu Rowee Mosque in Bani Walid, Tripolitania. **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0030**
 - Unknown parties reportedly destroyed a Sufi shrine dedicated to Sidi Abu Ghrara in al-Ghrararat, Tripolitania. **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0035**
- **Cyrenaica**
 - The Shahat office of the Department of Antiquities has installed new lighting to help protect the site of Cyrene in Cyrenaica. **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0029**
 - The Shahat office of the Department of Antiquities (DoA) is working to stop urban encroachment threatening the site of Wadi Belgadir in Cyrenaica. **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0031**
 - The Shahat office of the Department of Antiquities (DoA) has carried out a cleaning campaign on a portion of the UNESCO World Heritage site of Cyrene, Cyrenaica. **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0032**

- Social media reports of the two statues being stolen by ISIS militants were refuted by DoA representatives in Sultan, Cyrenaica. **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0033**
- A citizen returned an historic sword to state authorities in al-Marj, Cyrenaica. **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0034**

Military and Political Context

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

1. Raqqa Governorate:
 - On October 3, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported that US-led Coalition airstrikes killed at least 18 civilians when strikes targeted “water wells.”²
 - On October 8, the SDF began its final assault against remaining ISIS-held areas of Raqqa. According to a field commander with the SDF, the assault will focus on northern areas in the city including a sports stadium.³
 - On October 17, the SDF declared victory over ISIS in Raqqa after clearing the last two militant holdouts—the National Hospital and the municipal stadium. The Raqqa Civil Council began discussions with ISIS to free civilians trapped by the militants in the city. Remaining ISIS militants (numbering about 275) and their families reportedly were allowed to evacuate the city to an undisclosed location where they would reportedly be “detained and questioned.”⁴
 - On October 26, SDF fighters fired on civilian protesters from the al-Mashlab district of Raqqa who were demanding re-entry to their homes.⁵
 - On October 31, the Syrian regime declared that Raqqa would be considered “occupied” until it falls back under the control of Damascus.⁶
2. Idlib Governorate:
 - On October 3, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu stated that Turkey was working on weakening Islamist opposition forces, including Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), by separating Islamist from non-Islamist forces in Idlib Governorate.⁷

² <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2017/Oct-03/421362-us-led-strike-kills-18-civilians-in-syrias-raqqa-monitor.ashx>

³ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-raqqa/final-assault-on-islamic-state-in-raqqa-to-start-on-sunday-commander-idUSKBN1CD09F> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/10/syria-situation-report-september-27.html> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/10/syria-situation-report-october-10-24.html>

⁴ <http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/10/17/558271646/isis-makes-last-stand-at-a-stadium-in-raqqa-its-doomed-capital> ; <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-syria-raqqa/islamic-state-defeated-in-its-syrian-capital-raqqa-idUKKBN1CM0VY> ; https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/us-backed-force-claims-capture-of-islamic-states-de-facto-syrian-capital-raqqa/2017/10/17/d2e36eca-b24c-11e7-99c6-46bdf7f6f8ba_story.html ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-raqqa-observator/islamic-state-cleared-from-syrias-raqqa-monitor-idUSKBN1CM149> ; <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/17/world/middleeast/isis-syria-raqqa.html> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-usa/ninety-percent-of-raqqa-retaken-from-islamic-state-u-s-military-idUSKBN1CM2JA> ; <http://time.com/syria-raqqa-liberated/>

⁵ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/11/post-isis-insurgency-looms-in-northern.html>

⁶ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-kurds-analysis/assad-sets-sights-on-kurdish-areas-risking-new-syria-conflict-idUSKBN1D02CN>

⁷ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-idlib/turkey-seeks-to-isolate-syria-idlib-jihadists-opposing-truce-idUSKCN1C81UN>

- On October 4, the Russian Defense Ministry reported that one of its airstrikes had critically injured one of the leaders of HTS, Abu Mohammad al-Golani. The strike reportedly occurred on October 3, 2017 and killed around 50 of al-Golani's bodyguards and 12 HTS field commanders. HTS denied reports that al-Golani had been injured.⁸
 - On October 7, Turkish-backed Free Syrian Army (FSA) forces began a "new operation" inside Idlib Governorate backed by Russian aerial support, in order to curb the HTS-alliance. Residents near the Turkey-Syria border reported that Turkish authorities were removing parts of the protective border wall between the two countries.⁹
 - On October 8, Turkish military vehicles were reported to have entered Idlib Governorate. Clashes were reported between Turkish and HTS forces near the village of Kafr Lusin.¹⁰
 - On October 8, reported SARG airstrikes struck a market in Maarat al-Numan, killing at least 11 civilians. Much of Maarat al-Numan is under the control of HTS, which is not party to the so-called "de-escalation" zones determined by Russia, Iran, and Turkey. A few days prior civilian deaths were also recorded in Khan Sheikhoun as a result of suspected SARG airstrikes.¹¹
 - On October 9, ISIS captured at least sixteen villages and towns from HTS in Idlib Governorate. HTS later captured at least six towns in a counterattack against ISIS. HTS released a statement accusing the Syrian regime of "granting safe passage" to ISIS to cross the Salamiyah-Ithriya Highway from Hama to Idlib Governorate.¹²
 - On October 12, hundreds of Turkish forces launched a "cross-border intervention" crossing into Idlib Governorate in an effort to establish a de-escalation zone.¹³
3. Deir ez-Zor Governorate:
- On October 4, SOHR reported that a Russian airstrike struck civilians attempting to flee across the Euphrates River from the city of Deir ez-Zor, killing at least 38 people including nine children.¹⁴
 - On October 4–8, pro-regime forces, backed by heavy airstrikes, launched an offensive against ISIS in the town of al-Mayadin, one of the final strongholds of ISIS in Syria.¹⁵

⁸ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-russia/russia-says-critically-injures-tahrir-al-sham-militant-leader-in-syria-idUSKCN1C90H2> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-41496773>

⁹ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-41537469> ; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-turkey/turkish-army-surveys-syrias-idlib-before-deployment-sources-idUSKBN1CD07H> ; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-turkey/turkey-backs-syrian-rebels-for-serious-operation-in-idlib-idUSKBN1CC07Q> ; <http://www.cnn.com/2017/10/09/middleeast/turkey-syria-idlib-military-operation/index.html> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-hawija/hundreds-of-suspected-islamic-state-militants-surrender-in-iraq-source-idUSKBN1CF1A7> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/10/syria-situation-report-september-27.html>

¹⁰ <https://www.voanews.com/a/turkey-syria-tahrir-al-sham-idlib-province/4061279.html> ; <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/10/turkey-forces-clash-tahrir-al-sham-syria-border-171008071742937.html>

¹¹ <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/least-11-dead-syria-market-air-strike-monitor-1494249216> ; https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/shells-fall-into-syrias-idlib-province-from-turkey/2017/10/08/591549f8-ac0f-11e7-9b93-b97043e57a22_story.html

¹² <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/10/syria-situation-report-september-27.html>

¹³ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/10/syria-situation-report-october-10-24.html>

¹⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/04/dozens-of-syrian-civilians-killed-in-russian-airstrike>

- On October 14, pro-regime forces captured al-Mayadin from ISIS.¹⁶
 - On October 16, pro-regime forces launched an offensive against ISIS-held districts in Deir ez-Zor City. In the days that followed, pro-regime forces advanced into the city, backed by heavy aerial bombardment and reportedly captured all the villages along the Deir ez-Zor-Mayadin city highway. On October 18, a major pro-regime “propaganda figure” died after his convoy struck an IED in the regime-held district of Qasour.¹⁷
 - On October 22, the US-backed SDF captured the Omar Oilfield from ISIS, the largest such field in Syria.¹⁸
 - On October 23, pro-regime airstrikes targeted the regime-held district of Qasour, killing and wounding dozens of civilians.¹⁹
 - On October 26, the Syrian army and pro-regime forces captured the T2 oil pumping station. The station is “considered a launch pad for the army” to advance towards the ISIS-held town of Abu Kamal.²⁰
 - On October 28–29, clashes between the Syrian army, along with forces from pro-regime militias, and ISIS in the city of Deir ez-Zor killed at least 50 ISIS fighters and 23 pro-regime forces. Pro-regime forces captured two new neighborhoods and the “municipal stadium.”²¹
4. Homs Governorate:
- From September 28–October 10, ISIS launched a counteroffensive targeting SARG-held Palmyra and the Deir ez-Zor Highway in Homs Governorate.²²
 - On October 1, SOHR reported that ISIS militants had captured the town of al-Qaryatain from SARG forces following a surprise attack. SARG forces previously recaptured the town in April 2016.²³
 - On October 4, pro-regime forces advanced into the “de-confliction zone” surrounding al-Tanf military base, held by the US-led Coalition. Following communication between US and Russian officials, the pro-regime forces withdrew.²⁴

¹⁵ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-mayadin/syrian-army-encircles-is-in-al-mayadin-syrian-military-source-idUSKBN1CD05K> ; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-mayadin/syrian-army-battles-islamic-state-in-al-mayadin-town-report-idUSKBN1CH0KX> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/10/syria-situation-report-september-27.html>

¹⁶ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/10/syria-situation-report-october-10-24.html>

¹⁷ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/10/syria-situation-report-october-10-24.html>

¹⁸ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/10/syria-situation-report-october-10-24.html>

¹⁹ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/10/syria-situation-report-october-10-24.html> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-strike/deadly-air-strike-hits-syrian-government-held-deir-al-zor-state-tv-monitor-idUSKBN1CS2MN> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-strike/u-s-coalition-denies-deadly-strike-in-syrias-deir-al-zor-city-idUSKBN1CT0JK>

²⁰ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-islamicstate/syrian-army-captures-islamic-state-position-eyes-final-stronghold-idUSKBN1CV1ET>

²¹ <https://www.yahoo.com/news/syria-army-clashes-deir-ezzor-kill-73-monitor-150411539.html>

²² <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/10/syria-situation-report-september-27.html>

²³ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-town/syrian-observatory-islamic-state-captures-town-from-government-idUSKCN1C611D> ; <https://english.alarabiya.net/en/views/news/middle-east/2017/10/02/Drone-strike-kills-8-Hezbollah-fighters-in-Syria.html>

²⁴ <http://www.cnn.com/2017/10/04/politics/syria-russia-us-assad-at-tanf/index.html>

- On October 21, pro-regime forces captured the town of al-Qaryatain after ISIS withdrew from the area. Pro-regime forces reportedly “granted safe passage from the town” for around 200 fighters and civilians in exchange for hostages. The bodies of around 130 people, reportedly executed by ISIS, were found in al-Qaryatain. Around 70 more residents were kidnapped by ISIS.²⁵ 26 later escaped.²⁶
5. Hama Governorate:
- On October 4, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) reported that Sarin gas, a banned nerve agent, had been found in the town of Lataminah following a March 30, 2017 strike by the Syrian regime against the opposition-held town.²⁷
 - On October 4–6, pro-regime forces reported having completed clearing operations in an ISIS-held area near Salamiyah. ISIS fighters reportedly withdrew from the area to Homs Governorate. According to activists, “thousands of civilians and fighters remain in Wadi Atheeb...amidst efforts to broker safe passage to areas held by” HTS in Idlib Governorate.²⁸
 - On October 7, HTS captured the “smuggling hub of Abu Dali” in Hama Governorate following clashes. According to ISW, “Abu Dali served as a key commercial node...The town was defended by pro-regime tribal fighters supported by Syrian Parliamentarian Ahmed al-Darwish.”²⁹
 - On October 9, ISIS militants captured 12 Syrian villages in HTS-held areas of Hama Governorate. HTS asserted that SARG forces had allowed ISIS passage through SARG-held territory surrounding the villages.³⁰
6. Rif Dimashq Governorate:
- On October 10–11, two Syrian opposition groups, backed by the US and Jordan, withdrew from positions along the Syrian-Jordanian border and relocated to the outskirts of the Rukban IDP Camp in Homs Governorate.³¹
 - On October 30, Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) aid reached the besieged towns of Kafr Batna and Saqba in the Eastern Ghouta region of Rif Dimashq Governorate for the first time in more than a year.³²

²⁵ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/10/syria-situation-report-october-10-24.html> ; <http://www.france24.com/en/20171023-executed-116-syria-town-revenge-campaign-monitor> ; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-homs/syrian-army-ousts-is-from-last-central-syria-pocket-military-source-idUSKBN1CB2DI> ; <http://syriadirect.org/news/after-dozens-reported-killed-in-qaryatayn-%E2%80%98massacre%E2%80%99-one-resident-tells-her-story/> ; <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-syria-town/syrian-hostages-who-escaped-islamic-state-receive-rapturous-homecoming-idUKKBN1CY0TZ>

²⁶ <http://syriadirect.org/news/after-dozens-reported-killed-in-qaryatayn-%E2%80%98massacre%E2%80%99-one-resident-tells-her-story/> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/10/syria-situation-report-october-10-24.html> ; <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-syria-town/syrian-hostages-who-escaped-islamic-state-receive-rapturous-homecoming-idUKKBN1CY0TZ>

²⁷ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-chemicalweapons/chemical-weapons-watchdog-found-sarin-used-in-march-syria-attack-sources-idUSKBN1C91XJ>

²⁸ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/10/syria-situation-report-september-27.html>

²⁹ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/10/syria-situation-report-september-27.html>

³⁰ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-islamic-state/nusra-front-islamic-state-clash-in-syrias-hama-province-idUSKBN1CE1TC>

³¹ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/10/syria-situation-report-october-10-24.html>

³² <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-41807047>

- On October 31, shelling killed 10 people, including five children, and wounded 30 more in the besieged area of Eastern Ghouta following aid reaching the area for the first time after a year. Shelling reportedly struck the towns of Jisreen, Douma, Sabqa, Mesraba, Harasta, Ain Terma, Hazza, and Kafr Batna.³³
7. Damascus Governorate:
- On October 2, twin suicide bombings struck a Damascus police station in al-Midan District, killing at least 15 people and wounding 20 more. ISIS took responsibility for the attack.³⁴
 - October 11, suicide bombers targeted a police command center in Damascus, killing at least one person and wounding six others. ISIS took responsibility for the attack.³⁵
 - On October 12–13, three Syrian opposition groups announced a “preliminary local ceasefire” in several districts of southern Damascus following negotiations brokered by Egypt and Russia. On October 13, pro-regime forces launched “their first airstrikes in two years,” targeting ISIS-held areas in the Hajar al-Aswad District.³⁶
8. Aleppo Governorate:
- On October 10, the Syrian opposition group Jabha al-Shamiya (based in the northern Aleppo town of Azaz) handed over control of the Bab Salama border crossing to the Syrian opposition government, in an attempt to strengthen the opposition government.³⁷
 - On October 20–22, Russia reportedly deployed military forces to key SDF-held areas located near the majority-Kurdish Afrin Canton region. The placement of forces coincided with the arrival of a Turkish military delegation to the city of al-Bab.

Other Key Points:

- During the reporting period, the US-led coalition conducted airstrikes in the areas of Abu Kamal, Asad, Deir ez-Zor, Hawl, Raqqa, and Shaddadi.³⁸
- During the reporting period Russian airstrikes were reported in the areas of Deir ez-Zor, Idlib, and Hama Governorates. There has been a dramatic increase in Russian aerial bombardment over Idlib Governorate since mid-September 2017.³⁹

³³ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-ghouta/shelling-hits-besieged-syrian-ghouta-school-gate-after-aid-delivery-idUSKBN1D01UU>

³⁴ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-41470746> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-damascus/deadly-twin-suicide-attack-hits-damascus-police-station-idUSKCN1C71GK> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/10/syria-situation-report-september-27.html> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/10/syria-situation-report-october-10-24.html>

³⁵ <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/10/suicide-attack-targets-police-hq-damascus-171011132824326.html> ; <http://syriadirect.org/news/%E2%80%98suicide-attack-hits-central-damascus-police-headquarters-for-second-time-in-two-weeks/> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/10/syria-situation-report-october-10-24.html>

³⁶ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-ceasefire/ceasefire-deal-sealed-for-rebel-pocket-near-damascus-idUSKBN1CH1FC> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/10/syria-situation-report-october-10-24.html>

³⁷ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-crossing/syrian-rebels-hand-border-crossing-to-opposition-government-idUSKBN1CF23G>

³⁸ See: “US DOD News Release Military Strikes Hit ISIS in Syria, Iraq”. *Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve*. News Release No: [1330944](#), [1331974](#), [1333571](#), [1334756](#), [1336249](#), [1337455](#), [1337902](#), [1340197](#), [1338988](#), [1342052](#), [1342863](#), [1344752](#), [1346222](#), [1347415](#), [1348825](#), [1350010](#), [1350290](#), [1355495](#), [1351550](#), [1352935](#), [1354208](#), [1356750](#), [1356981](#), [1358248](#), [1359595](#)

³⁹ <http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/airstrikes-kill-79-civilians-in-syria-s-deir-ez-zour/928843> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/10/russia-renews-targeting-civilians.html> ; <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/syriasource/it-s-complicated-the-fate-of-idlib-with-russia-and-russia> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/11/russia-unfazed-in-syria.html>

- On October 5, the International Committee of the Red Cross reported a sharp increase in civilian deaths, reporting that Syria is now seeing the worst fighting since the December 2016 battle for Aleppo. Fighting is heavily concentrated in Raqqa, Deir ez-Zor, and rural areas to the west of Aleppo, with some fighting taking place in “de-escalation zones” in Idlib, rural Hama, and the area of Eastern Ghouta.⁴⁰
- On October 30–31, Syrian government representatives and “some armed opposition groups” met in Astana, Kazakhstan. The meetings were arranged by Russia, Turkey, and Iran in order to finish a plan for four so-called “de-escalation zones” in areas of Aleppo, Idlib, Latakia, Hama, Homs, Eastern Ghouta (Rif Dimashq Governorate), Daraa, and Quneitra. Humanitarian concerns, including the release of hostages and food and aid delivery, would also be discussed.⁴¹

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

1. Kirkuk Governorate:
 - During the reporting period, reports surfaced of hundreds of ISIS fighters surrendering to Peshmerga forces in Kirkuk Governorate following the group’s defeat in Hawija. Other ISIS fighters, or suspected ISIS fighters, have been detained by Peshmerga and Iraqi Security Forces (ISF).⁴²
 - On October 2, ISF and Shia militia forces captured the Rashad Airbase, located around 20 miles south of Hawija, from ISIS. The base was reportedly used by ISIS as a training camp and logistics base.⁴³
 - On October 4, the Iraqi military announced the launch of a “final assault” to recapture ISIS-held Hawija. Later the same day, Iraqi forces entered the northwestern outskirts of the town.⁴⁴
 - On October 5, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi announced that Hawija had been “liberated” following a two-week operation.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-41514862> ; <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/10/syria-violence-worst-level-aleppo-icrc-171005104329409.html> ; https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/russia-targets-al-qaida-positions-in-syria-2-days-in-a-row/2017/10/05/d53f6840-a9a0-11e7-9a98-07140d2eed02_story.html ; https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/civilian-casualties-spiral-in-syria-as-air-raids-target-areas-marked-for-cease-fire/2017/10/07/523a97b2-a919-11e7-9a98-07140d2eed02_story.htm

⁴¹ <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/10/syria-warring-sides-meet-fresh-talks-astana-171030060941637.html>

⁴² <http://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-middle-east-41531174/iraq-s-hawija-where-have-is-fighters-gone> ; <http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/f3c0db7e-7f2d-4189-b79f-3e4aa6d2f643> ; <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/08/world/middleeast/isis-iraq-surrender.html> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-hawija/hundreds-of-suspected-islamic-state-militants-surrender-in-iraq-source-idUSKBN1CF1A7>

⁴³ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-air-base/iraqi-forces-seize-air-base-from-islamic-state-near-hawija-idUSKCN1C71ZU>

⁴⁴ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-hawija/iraqi-forces-in-final-assault-to-take-hawija-from-islamic-state-idUSKCN1C90EJ> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-hawija/u-n-says-78000-civilians-could-be-trapped-in-iraqs-hawija-idUSKCN1C81G8>

⁴⁵ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-41509085> ; <https://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1334950/iraqi-security-forces-liberate-hawija-from-isis-control/source/GovDelivery/> ; <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/05/world/middleeast/iraq-hawija-isis.html> ; <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20171006-daesh-loses-main-urban-stronghold-in-iraq/>

- On October 15, Iraqi forces began a military operation to capture the city of Kirkuk and nearby oil fields from Kurdish Peshmerga forces following the Kurdish referendum vote. Iraqi forces captured the city in one day after facing little resistance from Peshmerga forces who retreated from the city.⁴⁶
 - On October 21, Iraqi forces solidified control over Kirkuk Governorate following clashes with Peshmerga forces.⁴⁷
 - On October 24, Amnesty International reported that clashes between ISF, backed by Shia militias, and the Peshmerga forced tens of thousands of civilians to flee the city of Tuz Khurmatu. According to the report, at least 11 civilians were killed in an “indiscriminate attack” and “hundreds of properties were looted, set on fire and destroyed” in what appeared to be a “targeted attack on predominantly Kurdish areas of the city.”⁴⁸
2. Erbil Governorate:
- On October 12, an Iraqi federal court issued an arrest warrant to members of the Kurdish region’s electoral commission.⁴⁹
 - On October 24, Iraqi military and Kurdish Peshmerga forces clashed in two towns, Makhmour and Rabia. The exact cause of the clashes and any casualties remain unclear.⁵⁰
3. Dohuk Governorate:
- On October 17, reports stated that Iraqi forces, including elements of the Popular Mobilization Front (PMF), entered Sinjar. Other reports stated that Sinjar was now under the control of the Yezidi Mobilization Forces who are loyal to the Baghdad-based Iraqi government.⁵¹
 - On October 26, Iraqi forces, backed by Shia militias, began an assault on the Kurdish-held Fishkhabour border crossing of northern Iraq. The Fishkhabour border crossing provides the “only access for U.S. military operations in northern Syria.”⁵²

⁴⁶ <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/16/world/middleeast/kirkuk-iraq-kurds.html> ; https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/iraqi-forces-launch-operation-for-kurdish-held-oil-fields-military-base/2017/10/15/dbae21cc-b03e-11e7-9b93-b97043e57a22_story.html?utm_term=.5ea99cb9a2ed ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-kurds-kirkuk/iraqi-forces-seize-oil-city-kirkuk-from-kurds-in-bold-advance-idUSKBN1CK0XL> ; https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/iraqis-seize-military-base-oil-field-from-kurdish-forces-near-contested-kirkuk/2017/10/16/35853dac-b201-11e7-9b93-b97043e57a22_story.html ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-41649729>

⁴⁷ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-kurds-clash/iraqi-forces-complete-kirkuk-province-takeover-after-clashes-with-kurds-idUSKBN1CP0PT>

⁴⁸ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/10/iraq-fresh-evidence-that-tens-of-thousands-forced-to-flee-tuz-khurmatu-amid-indiscriminate-attacks-lootings-and-arson/> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-kurds-tuz/nearly-30000-kurds-displaced-from-city-near-kirkuk-aid-groups-idUSKBN1CU1QG>

⁴⁹ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-41583900>

⁵⁰ <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/24/world/middleeast/iraqi-kurds-clashes-abadi.html>

⁵¹ <http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/e9d66677-c64c-4151-addb-682bd1006b77> ; https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/iraqi-forces-take-back-sinjar-in-latest-effort-to-roll-back-kurdish-gains-of-the-past-years/2017/10/17/61032770-b30d-11e7-9e58-e6288544af98_story.html

⁵² https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/iraqi-forces-clash-with-kurdish-troops-near-strategic-border-with-syria/2017/10/26/2f0987bc-ba30-11e7-be94-fabb0f1e9ffb_story.html

- On October 30, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and the Movement for Change (Gorran) reported that their offices in the town of Zakho had been attacked overnight.⁵³
 - On October 31, the Iraqi military announced that it was preparing to take control of the Kurdistan region's only border crossings with Turkey and Syria, known as Ibrahim al-Khalil and Fishkhabour. Iraqi forces later established border crossing checkpoints.⁵⁴
4. Al Anbar Governorate:
- On October 25, Iraqi forces began a new offensive to recapture the districts of Qaim and al-Rawa from ISIS.⁵⁵
5. Ninawa Governorate:
- On October 10, Middle East Eye reported that members of the Shia Popular Mobilization Front (PMF) were destroying Sunni-owned property and targeting the remaining Sunni community in the recently recaptured area of Tel Afar. Members of the PMF were previously accused of similar sectarian actions in area recaptured from ISIL, including in Fallujah and Tikrit. Human Rights Watch (HRW) previously accused the PMF of illegally detaining and torturing civilians near Hawija during operations to recapture the area from ISIS.⁵⁶
6. Diyala Governorate:
- On October 17, Kurdish forces pulled out of the town of Khanaqin, a long-disputed territory located near the Iranian border.⁵⁷

Other Key Points:

- During the reporting period, the US-led coalition conducted airstrikes in the areas of Bashir, Beiji, Haditha, Hawija (Huwayjah), Hit, Kirkuk, Qaim, Ramadi, Rawah, Sultan Abudullah, and Tuz.⁵⁸
- On October 2, the US-led Coalition confirmed the death of a US service member in Iraq, bringing the number of Americans killed in Coalition operations in Iraq to seven since the start of US involvement in the fight against ISIS in 2014.⁵⁹
- On October 2, Iran deployed a dozen tanks with artillery forces along the border between Iran and the Kurdish region in northern Iraq in another response to the Kurdish independence referendum.⁶⁰

⁵³ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-41804717>

⁵⁴ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-41816138> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-turkey/iraqi-authorities-gain-first-foothold-at-kurdish-frontier-with-turkey-idUSKBN1D00SQ>

⁵⁵ <https://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1354319/iraqi-forces-launch-offensive-to-liberate-final-isis-stronghold-in-iraq/source/GovDelivery/> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-iraq/islamic-state-shores-up-last-stronghold-on-syria-iraq-border-idUSKBN1CW24X> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-islamicstate/iraq-syria-converge-on-islamic-states-last-strongholds-idUSKBN1CV22D> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq/iraq-launches-final-offensive-on-islamic-state-near-syrian-border-idUSKBN1CV058>

⁵⁶ <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/ghost-town-crossroads-tal-afar-iraq-disputed-iran-897917941> ; <http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/9be76f6c-f619-4861-abfd-3835f69223eb>

⁵⁷ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-kurds-kirkuk/kurds-abandon-territory-in-the-face-of-iraq-government-advance-idUSKBN1CM1CT>

⁵⁸ See: "US DOD News Release Military Strikes Hit ISIS in Syria, Iraq". *Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve*. News Release No: [1330944](#), [1331974](#), [1333571](#), [1334756](#), [1336249](#), [1337455](#), [1337902](#), [1340197](#), [1338988](#), [1342052](#), [1342863](#), [1344752](#), [1346222](#), [1347415](#), [1348825](#), [1350010](#), [1350290](#), [1355495](#), [1351550](#), [1352935](#), [1354208](#), [1356750](#), [1356981](#), [1358248](#), [1359595](#)

⁵⁹ https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/the_americas/us-led-coalition-service-member-killed-in-explosion-in-iraq/2017/10/02/93c4c6a6-a73b-11e7-9a98-07140d2eed02_story.html ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-41469422>

- On October 3, Iraqi Kurdish politician and former Iraqi President Jalal Talabani died in Germany where he was receiving medical treatment. Kurdish President Masoud Barzani declared one week of mourning “across the Kurdistan region.”⁶¹
- On October 3, Iraq ceased selling dollars to four major banks in Kurdistan and banned the transfer of foreign currency to the region in ongoing retaliatory acts following the independence referendum. The Iraqi government based in Baghdad also threatened future sanctions.⁶²
- On October 10, the United Nations reported that more than five million Iraqis have been displaced by ISIS since 2014.⁶³
- On October 15, Iran shut border crossings connecting the country with the Kurdistan region of Iraq.⁶⁴
- On October 18, the Iraqi military announced that it had begun operations to retake territory under dispute with Kurdish forces since 2014.⁶⁵
- On October 27, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi ordered a 24-hour suspension to military operations against Kurdish Peshmerga forces in order to allow for the “peaceful deployment” of Iraqi forces at border crossings located in the Kurdistan region.⁶⁶
- On October 29, Iraqi Kurdish leader Masoud Barzani announced his resignation as president following the fallout from the late-September Kurdish independence referendum.⁶⁷

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

1. Tripolitania Governorate:
 - On October 4, gunmen attacked a court complex in the city of Misrata, killing at least three people and wounding 35 more. The gunmen later detonated explosives vests. ISIS later claimed responsibility for the attack.⁶⁸

⁶⁰ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-kurds-referendum-iran/iran-sends-tanks-to-border-with-iraqs-kurdish-region-kurdish-official-says-idUSKCN1C71EF>

⁶¹ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-kurds-talabani/kurdish-leader-and-ex-iraqi-president-jalal-talabani-dies-state-tv-idUSKCN1C81J6> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-41486847> ; <http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/d2bf5b1c-6cc8-4360-9e4f-5878571c4358> ; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-kurds-talabani/former-iraqi-president-talabani-buried-in-kurdish-home-region-idUSKBN1CB0VL>

⁶² <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-kurds-referendum-cenba/iraq-steps-up-retaliation-against-kurdish-independence-vote-with-dollar-ban-idUSKCN1C823V> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-kurds-referendum-elect/iraqi-kurds-face-more-sanctions-after-calling-elections-idUSKCN1C814N> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/10/cascading-crisis-in-iraqi-kurdistan.html>

⁶³ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-41567411>

⁶⁴ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iran-gate/iraq-says-iran-has-shut-border-with-kurdistan-idUSKBN1CK0D6>

⁶⁵ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-41663350>

⁶⁶ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-kurds-ceasefire-p/iraq-orders-truce-with-kurds-to-allow-peaceful-deployment-at-border-crossings-idUSKBN1CW26D>

⁶⁷ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-kurds-barzani/kurdish-leader-barzani-resigns-after-independence-vote-backfires-idUSKBN1CY0KR>

⁶⁸ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security/islamic-state-claims-deadly-attack-on-court-in-libyas-misrata-idUSKCN1C91CU>

- On October 7, a group of armed forces known as the “Operations Room” and allied forces announced that they had “taken over protection” of the Mellitah oil and gas terminal from the rival Anas al-Dabbashi Brigade following a three-week battle in the coastal city of Sabratha. The Operations Room forces are affiliated with the UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA).⁶⁹
 - On October 17, clashes between the Special Deterrence Force (aka Rada) and other armed groups in Tripoli temporary shut down the Mitiga military air base.⁷⁰
 - On October 29, US special operations forces captured Mustafa al-Imam, a militant accused of “playing an instrumental role” in the September 11, 2012 attack on the US Consulate in Benghazi that killed US Ambassador Chris Stevens. The operation took place in Misrata.⁷¹
 - On October 30, Libyan National Army (LNA) airstrikes killed at least 15 people in the besieged city of Derna. The strike gained condemnation by the UN for the high civilian death toll, a reported 12 children and women were among the dead. Derna remains under siege by “a coalition of Islamist militants and rebel veterans known as the Derna Mujahideen Shura Council (DMSC).”⁷²
2. Cyrenaica Governorate:
- On October 23, the Egyptian military announced that it had carried out airstrikes against a caravan carrying “arms and explosives” along the Egypt-Libya border.⁷³

Other Key Points:

- On October 21, month-long UN-backed talks hosting rival Libyan factions ended without any “discernable progress” and no proposed date for a second round of meetings.⁷⁴

Other significant political and military events during the reporting period:

- On October 10, Russia accused the United States of “pretending” to fight ISIS by reducing its number of airstrikes against ISIS in Iraq in order to allow the militants to cross into Syria and therefore slow the Russian-backed SARG forces from advancing east toward the Syria-Iraq border. The Pentagon strongly denied the accusation.⁷⁵
- On October 16, the United States launched its first airstrikes against the Yemeni Islamic State, targeting two villages in the al-Bayda Province. Local residents disputed that ISIS members in Yemen were targeted, stating instead that it was forces linked to al-Qaeda that had been struck in the attack.⁷⁶

⁶⁹ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security/armed-faction-takes-over-protection-of-libyan-oil-and-gas-complex-fresh-concern-over-migrants-idUSKBN1CC0NY>

⁷⁰ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security/fighting-in-libyan-capital-closes-airport-idUSKBN1CM1Q5>

⁷¹ <https://www.stripes.com/news/middle-east/2.1198/benghazi-attack-suspect-nabbed-by-us-special-forces-heading-to-us-1.495300>

⁷² <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security/u-n-condemns-civilian-deaths-from-air-attack-in-east-libya-idUSKBN1CZ2NM>

⁷³ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-egypt-security/egyptian-air-force-says-strikes-arms-convoy-at-libya-border-idUSKBN1CS20R>

⁷⁴ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security/u-n-ends-month-long-libya-talks-in-tunisia-without-proposing-new-date-idUSKBN1CQ0MM>

⁷⁵ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-russia-usa/russia-accuses-u-s-of-pretending-to-fight-islamic-state-in-syria-iraq-idUSKBN1CF0KN> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-russia-usa/russia-says-islamic-state-operates-near-u-s-base-in-syria-unhindered-idUSKBN1CG11U>

⁷⁶ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-security-usa/u-s-takes-aim-at-yemeni-islamic-state-for-first-time-idUSKBN1CM00Z>

Incident Reports: Syria

SHI 17-0121 UPDATE

Report Date: October 7, 2017

Site Name: al-Hinni Mosque (جامع الحني)

Date of Incident: October 4, 2017

Location: Old City, Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: A video showed damage to al-Hinni Mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On October 4, 2017 Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently (RBSS) posted a video showing previously unreported damage to al-Hinni Mosque.⁷⁷ Small-arms fire has damaged the southern and eastern facades of the mosque. This damage is concentrated near the southeastern corner of the building. Additionally, a large hole in the second story of the southern facade suggests the use of heavier weaponry.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Raqqa Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Reports SHI 17-0162 UPDATE, SHI 17-0153 UPDATE, SHI 17-0165 UPDATE, SHI 17-0189, SHI 17-0190, SHI 17-0191 and SHI 17-0191.**

For more information on previous damage to al-Hinni Mosque, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0014** in **Weekly Report 77-78** and **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0121** in the **June 2017 Monthly Report**.

Pattern: Military activity: gunfire/light weaponry.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently (RBSS):
<https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/videos/1696832883661289/>

⁷⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/videos/1696832883661289/>



Video still of damage from small-arms fire, seen from the south (RBSS; October 4, 2017)



Video still of damage from small-arms fire, seen from the south. Note the larger hole near the second story window (RBSS; October 4, 2017)



Video still of damage from small-arms fire, seen from the southeast (RBSS; October 4, 2017)

SHI 17-0153 UPDATE

Report Date: October 20, 2017

Site Name: Circassian Mosque (جامع الشراكسة)

Date of Incident: Between August 13, 2017 and August 25, 2017

Location: Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: New photographs show the destruction of the Circassian Mosque in Raqqa.

Incident Source and Description: On October 19 and 20, 2017 Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently (RBSS) published photographs showing the destruction of the Circassian Mosque for the first time.⁷⁸ These photographs confirm the complete destruction of the mosque building, as well as damage to the top of the minaret.

On September 10, 2017 Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently (RBSS) reported that US-led Coalition airstrikes destroyed the Circassian Mosque an unspecified number of days earlier.⁷⁹ The following day, Raqqa24 reported the destruction of the mosque.⁸⁰

ASOR CHI reported the destruction of this mosque in August 2017 using DigitalGlobe satellite imagery. The destruction occurred between August 13 and August 25, 2017.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Raqqa Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Reports SHI 17-0162 UPDATE, SHI 17-0121 UPDATE, SHI 17-0165 UPDATE, SHI 17-0189, SHI 17-0190, SHI 17-0191 and SHI 17-0191.**

For more information on previous damage to the Circassian Mosque, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0153 in August 2017 Monthly Report 153–156 and SHI 17-0153 UPDATE in September Monthly Report 157–160.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives - airstrike.

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

⁷⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/photos/a.780113668666553.1073741828.780110825333504/1711480335529877/>; <https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/photos/a.780113668666553.1073741828.780110825333504/1712402565437654/>

⁷⁹ <https://twitter.com/24Raqqa/status/907245038282952705>

⁸⁰ <https://twitter.com/24Raqqa/status/907245038282952705>

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Raqqa24: <https://twitter.com/24Raqqqa/status/907245038282952705>

Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently (RBSS):

September 10, 2017: <https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/posts/1675361435808434>

October 19, 2017: <https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/photos/a.780113668666553.1073741828.780110825333504/1711480335529877/>

October 20, 2017: <https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/photos/a.780113668666553.1073741828.780110825333504/1712402565437654/>



Destruction of the Circassian Mosque and damage to minaret (RBSS; October 19, 2017)



Damage to minaret of the Circassian Mosque (RBSS; October 20, 2017)

SHI 17-0162 UPDATE

Report Date: October 17, 2017

Site Name: al-Firdous Mosque (جامع الفردوس)

Date of Incident: September 11, 2017

Location: al-Huni Neighborhood, Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: New photographs show extent of damage to al-Firdous Mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On October 17, 2017 Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently (RBSS) and the Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC) published photographs of damage to al-Firdous Mosque.⁸¹ The mosque had previously been reported as destroyed by a US-led Coalition airstrike on September 11, 2017 by RBSS.⁸² DigitalGlobe satellite imagery confirmed severe damage to the mosque as a result of airstrikes between September 6, 2017 and September 19, 2017 but photographs were unavailable at the time. The minaret is still standing but the dome of the mosque has collapsed, rendering the structure unusable.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Raqqa Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Reports SHI 17-0165 UPDATE, SHI 17-0153 UPDATE, SHI 17-0121 UPDATE, SHI 17-0189, SHI 17-0190, SHI 17-0191** and **SHI 17-0191**.

For more information on previous damage to al-Firdous Mosque, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0056** in **Weekly Report 89-90**.

Pattern: Military activity: explosives - airstrike.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently (RBSS):

October 17, 2017: <https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/photos/a.831935496817703.1073741829.780110825333504/1709402969070947>

September 11, 2017: <https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/posts/1676000862411158>

⁸¹ <https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/photos/a.831935496817703.1073741829.780110825333504/1709402969070947> ; <https://twitter.com/CivCenter/status/920300928208658432>

⁸² <https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/posts/1676000862411158>

Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC):
<https://twitter.com/CivCenter/status/920300928208658432>



Damage to al-Firdous Mosque (CIVIC; October 17, 2017)



Damage to al-Firdous Mosque (RBSS; October 17, 2017)

SHI 17-0165 UPDATE

Report Date: October 24, 2017

Site Name: Armenian Catholic Church of the Martyrs (كنيسة الشهداء)

Date of Incident: Between September 6, 2017 and September 19, 2017

Location: Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Armenian Catholic Church characterized by a pointed dome typical of Armenian church architecture.

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: New photographs show destruction of church in Raqqa.

Incident Source and Description: On October 18, 2017 Raqqa Is Being Slaughtered Silently (RBSS) published a photograph showing the condition of the Armenian Catholic Church in Raqqa.⁸³ On October 21, 2017 RT Arabic published a video also showing the destruction of the church.⁸⁴

Recently released DigitalGlobe satellite imagery shows that the Armenian Catholic Church of the Martyrs was heavily damaged between September 6 and September 19, 2017. Two of the auxiliary buildings have been entirely destroyed, and the main building of the church complex has been damaged on its southeastern and southwestern facades. It appears that this damage is the result of aerial bombardment.

Following the capture of Raqqa by ISIS in 2013, the church was repurposed as an Islamic center and used as the headquarters of ISIS' Islamic police force.⁸⁵

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Raqqa Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Reports SHI 17-0162 UPDATE, SHI 17-0153 UPDATE, SHI 17-0121 UPDATE, SHI 17-0189, SHI 17-0190, SHI 17-0191** and **SHI 17-0191**.

For more information on previous damage to the Armenian Catholic Church of the Martyrs, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0036 in Weekly Report 83-84**.

Pattern: Military activity: explosives-airstrike.

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

⁸³ <https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/photos/a.78011366866553.1073741828.780110825333504/1710569325620978/>

⁸⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uSmRjbbiLTg>

⁸⁵ <http://www.expressen.se/nyheter/womens-secret-films-from-within-closed-city-of-islamic-state/>; <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/24/world/middleeast/islamic-state-controls-raqqa-syria.html>

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Expressen: <http://www.expressen.se/nyheter/womens-secret-films-from-within-closed-city-of-islamic-state/>

The New York Times: <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/24/world/middleeast/islamic-state-controls-raqqa-syria.html>

RBSS:

<https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/photos/a.780113668666553.1073741828.780110825333504/1710569325620978/>

RT Arabic: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uSmRjbhiLTg>



Photograph showing the destruction of the Armenian Catholic Church at top (RBSS; October 18, 2017)



Destruction of Armenian Catholic Church in Raqqa (RT Arabic; October 21, 2017)

SHI 17-0176

Report Date: October 4, 2017

Site Name: Roman Tomb

Date of Incident: Unknown

Location: Manbij, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Tomb

Site Date: Roman

Incident Summary: A tomb was illegally excavated and used as a trash dump.

Incident Source and Description: On October 4, 2017 the Authority of Tourism and Protection of Antiquities - al Jazira Canton (ATPA) posted photographs of a Roman tomb that had been looted during ISIS's control of the city.⁸⁶ The tomb was subsequently used as a trash dump. ATPA reported that the Directorate of Antiquities in Manbij is cleaning and documenting the site.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Aleppo Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0182**.

Pattern: Illegal excavation.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

The Authority of Tourism and Protection of Antiquities - al Jazira Canton (ATPA):
<http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/the-directorate-of-antiquities-in-manbej-discovers-roman-tomb/>

⁸⁶ <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/the-directorate-of-antiquities-in-manbej-discovers-roman-tomb/>



View of the looting hole in the top of the tomb's entrance (ATPA; October 4, 2017)



The entrance to the tomb (ATPA; October 4, 2017)



The interior of the tomb (ATPA; October 4, 2017)

SHI 17-0177

Report Date: October 5, 2017

Site Name: Deir Sunbul (Deir Sinbol; دير سنبل); Byzantine Villa

Date of Incident: October 4, 2017

Location: Deir Sunbul, Jebel Zawiya, Idlib Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Deir Sunbul is one of the Byzantine “Dead Cities” located on the Jebel Zawiya in Idlib Governorate. It is one of many such sites in the area, with other Dead City sites such as Serjilla, Dalloza, Kokaba, Baude, and Sinsharah all within 10 km. The ruins at Deir Sunbul are scattered among modern houses. Remains include several villas, tombs, and a badly ruined church.

Site Date: 4th–8th century CE

Incident Summary: A Byzantine monument was intentionally destroyed by gunfire at Deir Sunbul.

Incident Source and Description: On October 4, 2017 Aleppo Archaeology and Idlib Antiquities Center posted a video of the destruction of an ancient structure at Deir Sunbul.⁸⁷ The video footage shows a gunman firing at the standing remains of a monument, perhaps because a flag associated with the Syrian regime had been placed atop it. The gunfire caused most of the structure to collapse.

The Association for the Protection of Syrian Archaeology (APSA) published a series of photographs from 2010, 2016, and 2017 showing various stages of damage to the monument.⁸⁸ The 2010 photograph shows no damage. The 2016 photograph shows the northern room of the structure and the western wall of the southern room collapsed, possibly as the result of an earlier airstrike. There is also graffiti and a Syrian flag painting on the western wall. In the 2017 photograph and the video, only the southern wall of the structure is still standing.

DigitalGlobe satellite imagery confirms that the northern room of the structure collapsed sometime between September 10, 2014 and February 21, 2017.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Idlib Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0180**.

Pattern: Military activity: gunfire/light weaponry, intentional destruction; Vandalism.

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

⁸⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/aleppoarchaeology/videos/1557913044267211/>; <https://www.facebook.com/1070868956264699/videos/1696292567055665/>

⁸⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/apsa2011/posts/2067920639981703>

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Aleppo Archaeology:

<https://www.facebook.com/aleppoarchaeology/videos/1557913044267211/>

APSA: <https://www.facebook.com/apsa2011/posts/2067920639981703>

Idlib Antiquities Center:

<https://www.facebook.com/1070868956264699/videos/1696292567055665/>

Saleem Hajjar/Panoramio: <https://ssl.panoramio.com/photo/2272522>

Syria Photo Guide: <http://www.syriaphotoguide.com/home/deir-sinbol-دير-سنبل/>

Scholarly:

Tate, G. & A. Naccache (1991–2) “Le village antique de Deir Sunbul,” *Mélanges de l'Université de Saint-Joseph*, 370–490.



Pre-damage photograph of destroyed monument seen from south (Saleem Hajjar/Panoramio; May 18, 2007)



Photographs of the destroyed monument from 2010, 2016, and 2017 (APSA; October 4, 2017)



Video still of a gunman shooting at the monument (Aleppo Archaeology; October 4, 2017)



Video still of a gunman shooting at the monument (Aleppo Archaeology; October 4, 2017)



Video still of the collapse of the monument (Aleppo Archaeology; October 4, 2017)



Video still of the collapse of the monument (Aleppo Archaeology; October 4, 2017)



Villa in Deir Sunbul prior to any significant damage shown within the red box (DigitalGlobe NextView License; September 10, 2014)



Severe damage to the northern part of villa indicated by red arrows (DigitalGlobe NextView License; February 21, 2017)

SHI 17-0178

Report Date: October 8, 2017

Site Name: Shrine of Sayyida Sakina, daughter of Imam Hussein (مقام السيدة سكينة بنت الإمام حسين)

Date of Incident: Before August 26, 2016

Location: Darayya, Rif Dimashq Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Shia shrine and mosque.

Site Date: 2003 CE

Incident Summary: New imagery shows the destruction of a Shia shrine in Darayya.

Incident Source and Description: On October 8, 2017 a Private Facebook account published photographs of the Shrine of Sayyida Sakina and the surrounding area in Darayya. The photographs originally came from the new source Dimashq al-Aan. The shrine has been largely destroyed. The shrine's two minarets still stand, but have been heavily damaged. Much of the building has collapsed. Based on an Enab Baladi article published on August 26, 2016 this damage occurred prior to this date during the battle between SARG forces and the Free Syrian Army.⁸⁹

As seen in DigitalGlobe satellite imagery, the shrine was first damaged between November 6, 2012 and March 23, 2013. There is visible damage to the dome of the shrine at that time and significant rubble and damage from conflict in the surrounding area. Damage as a result of warfare increases between November 20, 2013 and December 23, 2014. During this time period, the area suffered from heavy aerial bombardment. The northern facade and all domes collapsed between January 10, 2015 and April 17, 2015.

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Enabbaladi: <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/99907>

Orient News:

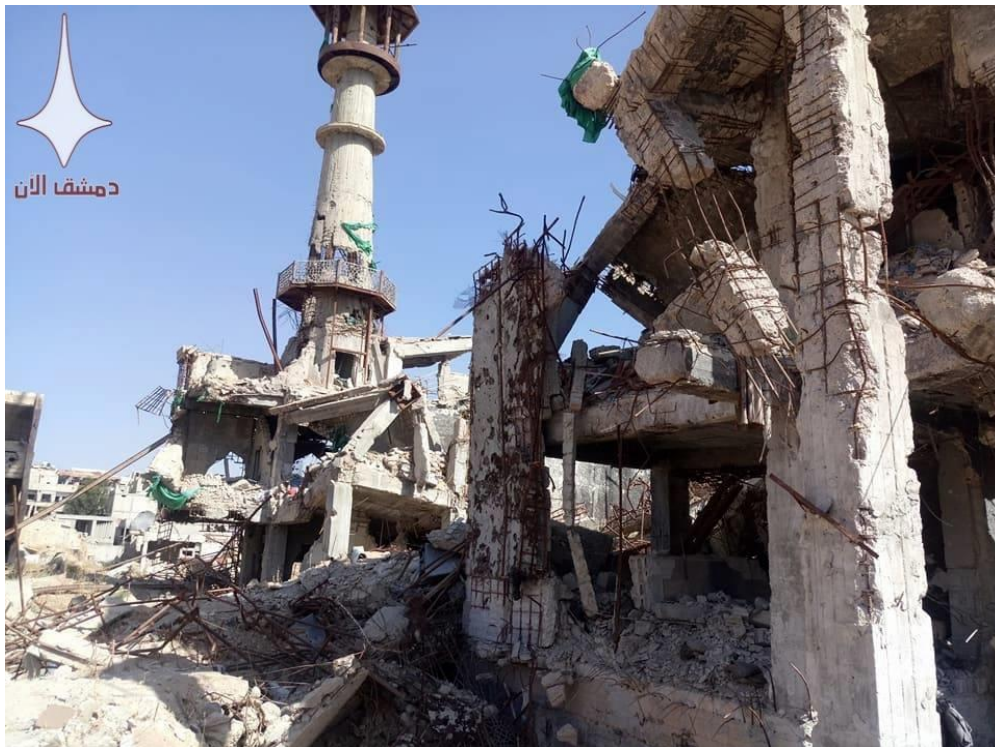
<http://orient-news.net/ar/news/show/121381/0/ما-حقيقة-مقام-سكينة-في-دار-يا-و-يماذا-تو-عدت-ايران>

Private Facebook Account

⁸⁹ <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/100931?so=related>



Photograph of damage to the area surrounding the shrine (Private Facebook Account; October 8, 2017)



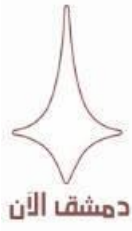
Photograph of damage to the front of the shrine (Private Facebook Account; October 8, 2017)



Photograph of damage to the shrine (Private Facebook Account; October 8, 2017)



Photograph of damage to the shrine, with remnants of the destroyed dome in foreground (Private Facebook Account; October 8, 2017)



Photograph of damage to the shrine (Private Facebook Account; October 8, 2017)



Photograph of damage to area surrounding the shrine (Private Facebook account; October 8, 2017)



Photograph of damage to the shrine, seen from rear of the structure (Private Facebook Account; October 8, 2017)



Photograph of damage to the shrine's minaret (Private Facebook Account; October 8, 2017)



Photograph of damage to the shrine's minaret (Private Facebook Account; October 8, 2017)



Photograph of damage to the shrine (Private Facebook Account; October 8, 2017)



Photograph of damage to the shrine below the minaret (Private Facebook Account; October 8, 2017)



The Shrine of Sayyida Sakina prior to damage (DigitalGlobe NextView License; November 12, 2012)



Initial damage to the dome of the shrine as indicated by the red arrow, possibly from an airstrike (DigitalGlobe NextView License; November 20, 2013)



Increased damage to the roof of the shrine in the form of holes, possibly from airstrikes, indicated by red arrows (DigitalGlobe NextView License; December 23, 2014)



Extreme damage to the shrine, indicated by red arrows. The central dome of the shrine has collapsed, along with much of the central portion of the building (DigitalGlobe NextView License; April 17, 2015)

SHI 17-0179

Report Date: October 8, 2017

Site Name: Qalaat Rahba

Date of Incident: October 8, 2017

Location: al-Mayadin, Deir az-Zor Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Qalaat Rahba is located roughly 3 km west of al-Mayadin on a hill overlooking the city. The first castle on this spot was built in the 9th century CE during the reign of Caliph al-Mamun.⁹⁰ Following the destruction of the original fortress by an earthquake in 1157, al-Mujahid Assad al-Din Shirkuh II built the current castle in 1164. The castle consists of a central five-sided keep surrounded by an outer fortification wall, and served as an important defensive point during the Mongol invasions in the 13th and 14th centuries. The site fell into decline following the final defeat of the Mongols in the mid-13th century.

Site Date: 9th–13th century CE

Incident Summary: Photographs and satellite imagery showed the condition of Qalaat Rahba.

Incident Source and Description: On October 8, 2017 ANNA News posted a photograph showing the current condition of the exterior southeastern corner of Qalaat Rahba.⁹¹ The fortress suffers from lack of maintenance, but no damage from military activities is identifiable. An area of soil discoloration visible along the left side of the photograph is likely the result of foot traffic into the site's interior from the south.

In recently released DigitalGlobe satellite imagery, increases in militarization and illegal excavation are detectable at Qalaat Rahba between August 12, 2017 and October 15, 2017. A new illegal excavation pit is visible at the southern end of the inner fortress between two earlier illegal excavation pits. Additionally, new earthworks and bulldozing are present on a ridge overlooking the western slope of the site.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Deir ez-Zor Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Reports SHI 17-0181, SHI 17-0184, SHI 17-0185, SHI 17-0187, SHI 17-0188, SHI 17-0193, and SHI 17-0195.**

For more information on previous damage to Qalaat Rahba, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 14-0078** in **Weekly Report 15**; **SHI 14-0098** in **Weekly Report 19**; **SHI 14-0104** in **Weekly Report 21-22**; **SHI 15-0153** in **Weekly Report 69-70**; **SHI 16-0149** in **Weekly Report 111-112**.

Pattern: Site management: tourism/visitor activity; Military activity: earthworks/roadwork; Illegal excavation.

⁹⁰ Burns 2009: 238

⁹¹ <http://anna-news.info/sirijskaya-armiya-voshla-v-mejyadin>

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

ANNA News: <http://anna-news.info/sirijskaya-armiya-voshla-v-mejyadin>

Personal Twitter Account

Scholarly:

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



Qalaat Rahba, seen from the southeast. The soil discoloration along the left side of the image is likely the result of foot traffic into the site's interior (ANNA News; October 8, 2017)



Qalaat Rahba, seen from the east (Personal Twitter Account; October 14, 2017)



Qalaat Rahba prior to increased militarization (DigitalGlobe NextView License; August 12, 2017)



Increased militarization at the castle is evidenced by new linear earthworks built on the western part of the site, indicated by red arrows. Additionally, there is a new illegal excavation pit in the center of the site, also indicated by an arrow (DigitalGlobe NextView License; October 15, 2017)

SHI 17-0180

Report Date: October 8, 2017

Site Name: Cultural Center (لمركز الثقافي)

Date of Incident: October 8, 2017

Location: Ma'arat al-Numan, Idlib Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Cultural Center

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: A reported SARG airstrike damaged a cultural center.

Incident Source and Description: On October 8, 2017 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that a SARG airstrike had landed near a cultural center in the center of Ma'arat al-Numan, causing unspecified damage.⁹² According to Al-Jazeera, the airstrike struck a popular market in central Maarat al-Numan near the cultural center.⁹³ Video footage published by SMART News Agency shows damage from the airstrike on the eastern wall of the cultural center.⁹⁴

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Idlib Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0177**.

Pattern: Military activity: explosives - airstrike.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Al Jazeera:

<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/arabic/2017/10/8/عشرات-القتلى-بصفوف-النظام-بالميادين-وغارات-بإدلب>

al-Maara Education Center:

<https://www.facebook.com/MarraEducationCenter/photos/a.1470803769856648.1073741825.1470787663191592/1755595004710855/?type=1&theater>

SMART News Agency: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s0oow7xwvok>

⁹² <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/10/08/syrian-regime-forces-bomb-cultural-center-maaret-al-numan-city-idlib-governorate-october-8/>

⁹³ <http://www.aljazeera.net/news/arabic/2017/10/8/عشرات-القتلى-بصفوف-النظام-بالميادين-وغارات-بإدلب>

⁹⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s0oow7xwvok>

SNHR:

<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/10/08/syrian-regime-forces-bomb-cultural-center-maaret-al-numan-city-idlib-governorate-october-8/>



Pre-damage photograph of north facade of cultural center (al-Maara Education Center/Facebook; undated)



Video still showing damage to eastern side of cultural center in top left (SMART; October 8, 2017)



Video still showing damage to eastern side of cultural center (SMART; October 8, 2017)

SHI 17-0181**Report Date:** October 11, 2017**Site Name:** al-Bouawad Mosque (مسجد البوعواد)**Date of Incident:** October 10, 2017**Location:** al-Quriyah, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, Syria**Site Description:** Mosque**Site Date:** Unknown**Incident Summary:** SARG shelling damaged a mosque in Deir ez-Zor Governorate.**Incident Source and Description:** On October 11, 2017 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that on October 10, 2017 SARG warplanes shelled al-Bouawad Mosque in the neighborhood of al-Sharqi, in the city of al-Quriya.⁹⁵ The mosque suffered unspecified damage.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Deir ez-Zor Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Reports SHI 17-0179, SHI 17-0184, SHI 17-0185, SHI 17-0187, SHI 17-0188, SHI 17-0193, and SHI 17-0195.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives - airstrike.**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of al-Bouawad 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/blog/2017/10/11/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-al-bouawad-mosque-al-qouriya-city-deir-ez-zour-governorate-october-10/>

⁹⁵ <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/10/11/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-al-bouawad-mosque-al-qouriya-city-deir-ez-zour-governorate-october-10/>

SHI 17-0182

Report Date: October 12, 2017

Site Name: Abu Bakr al-Siddiq Mosque (مسجد أبو بكر الصديق)

Date of Incident: October 12, 2017

Location: Anadan, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: Shelling reportedly damaged a mosque in Anadan.

Incident Source and Description: On October 12, 2017 Anadan Media Center reported that pro-regime forces shelled the city of Anadan resulting in civilians wounded and damage to civilian sites, including a mosque.⁹⁶ The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) later identified the mosque as Abu Bakr al-Siddiq Mosque, located in an eastern neighborhood.⁹⁷

During the reporting period, Al Qaeda-linked Syrian opposition group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) reportedly reached an agreement with Turkey to establish a “protected buffer zone from the Idlib border village of Atme through Darat Izza to Anadan into western Aleppo,” leaving Turkish operations in those areas to continue unhindered.⁹⁸

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Aleppo Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0176.**

Pattern: Military activity - explosives.

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

⁹⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/Anadan.Media.Center3/photos/pcb.1800689926612628/1800689493279338/>; <https://www.facebook.com/Anadan.Media.Center3/photos/pcb.1800689926612628/1800689493279338/>

⁹⁷ <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/10/12/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-abu-bakr-al-siddiq-mosque-anadan-city-aleppo-governorate-october-12/>

⁹⁸ <https://www.newsdeeply.com/syria/community/2017/10/10/turkeys-operation-in-idlib-may-not-bring-all-out-war-with-al-qaida>

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Anadan Media Center:

October 12, 2017: <https://www.facebook.com/Anadan.Media.Center3/photos/pcb.1800689926612628/1800689493279338/> ; <https://www.facebook.com/Anadan.Media.Center3/videos/1800853343262953/>

SNHR:

October 12, 2017: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/10/12/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-abu-bakr-al-siddiq-mosque-anadan-city-aleppo-governorate-october-12/>

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



Damage to the interior of Abu Bakr al-Siddiq Mosque (Anadan Media Center; October 11, 2017)



Rubble in mosque interior (Anadan Media Center; October 12, 2017)



Damage to mosque ceiling (Anadan Media Center; October 12, 2017)

SHI 17-0183

Report Date: October 12, 2017

Site Name: Tell Beydar (Nabada; تل بيدر)

Date of Incident: October 12, 2017

Location: Tell Beydar, al-Hasakah Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Tell Beydar is a multi-period archaeological mound divisible into a high mound (25 HA) and low mound (50 HA).⁹⁹ The low mounded area dates to the Late Bronze Age and early Iron Age. The European Centre for Upper Mesopotamian Studies and the DGAM started work in 1992, and to date 16 seasons have been completed. The site is best known for its Early Bronze Age architectural complex in the area of the high mound and an archive of pre-Sargonic cuneiform tablets.

Site Date: Early Bronze Age to early Iron Age; Hellenistic

Incident Summary: Restorations at the archaeological site of Tell Beydar are complete.

Incident Source and Description: On September 26 and October 2, 2017 the Tourism and Antiquities Protection Authority (ATPA) for Jazirah Canton published videos showing ongoing restoration work at the site of Tell Beydar.¹⁰⁰ On October 10, 2017 the ATPA reported that restoration at the archaeological site of Tell Beydar had been completed.¹⁰¹ Restored sites include Temple A, Temple B, Temple C, Temple D, “workshops,” and the Hellenistic Palace.

In 2014 the Association for the Protection of Syrian Archaeology (APSA) reported that vandals had removed brick paving and destroyed signage at the site.¹⁰² In May 2015 APSA provided an update on the site, reporting that it was now under the control of YPG and illegal excavations at the site had stopped.¹⁰³ However, due to a lack of maintenance, the site and excavation had been damaged by rainfall and required “urgent consolidation.”

For more information on previous damage to the site of Tell Beydar, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 14-0026** in **Weekly Report 5**.

Pattern: Site management: reconstruction/clean-up.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor ATPA restoration efforts at Tell Beydar and other archaeological sites in al-Hasakah Governorate.

⁹⁹ <http://www.beydar.org/>

¹⁰⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aaep7zs9n7Q> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9nXQP2qcqFw>

¹⁰¹ <http://desteva-shunwaran.com/الانتهاء-من-ترميمات-تل-بيدر/>

¹⁰² <http://apsa2011.com/apsanew/syrias-cultural-heritage-apsa-report-august-2014/>

¹⁰³ <http://apsa2011.com/apsanew/hassakah-report-on-the-actual-state-in-tell-beydar/>

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Tourism and Antiquities Protection Authority - Jazirah Canton (ATPA):

September 26, 2017: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9nXQP2qcqFw>

October 2, 2017: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aaep7zs9n7Q>

October 12, 2017: <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/الانتهاء-من-ترميمات-تل-بيدر/>

Association for the Protection of Syrian Archaeology:

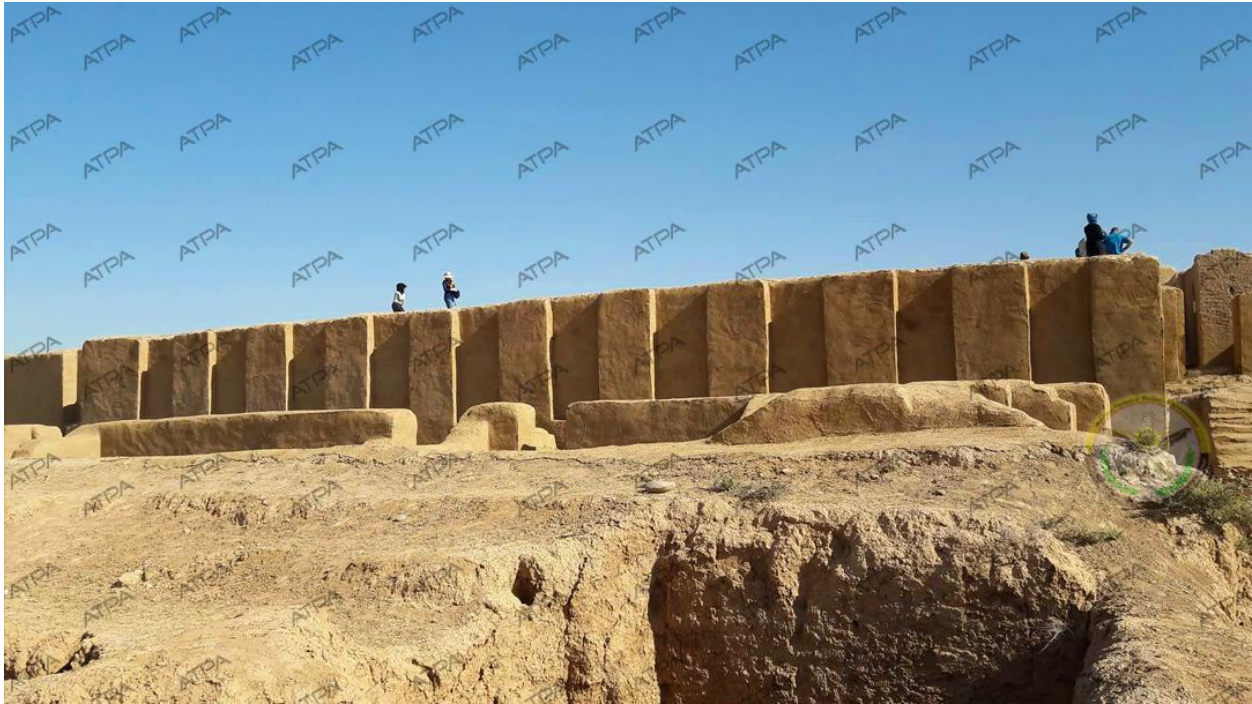
May 15, 2015: <http://apsa2011.com/apsanew/syrias-cultural-heritage-apsa-report-august-2014/>

May 8, 2015: <http://apsa2011.com/apsanew/hassakah-report-on-the-actual-state-in-tell-beydar/>

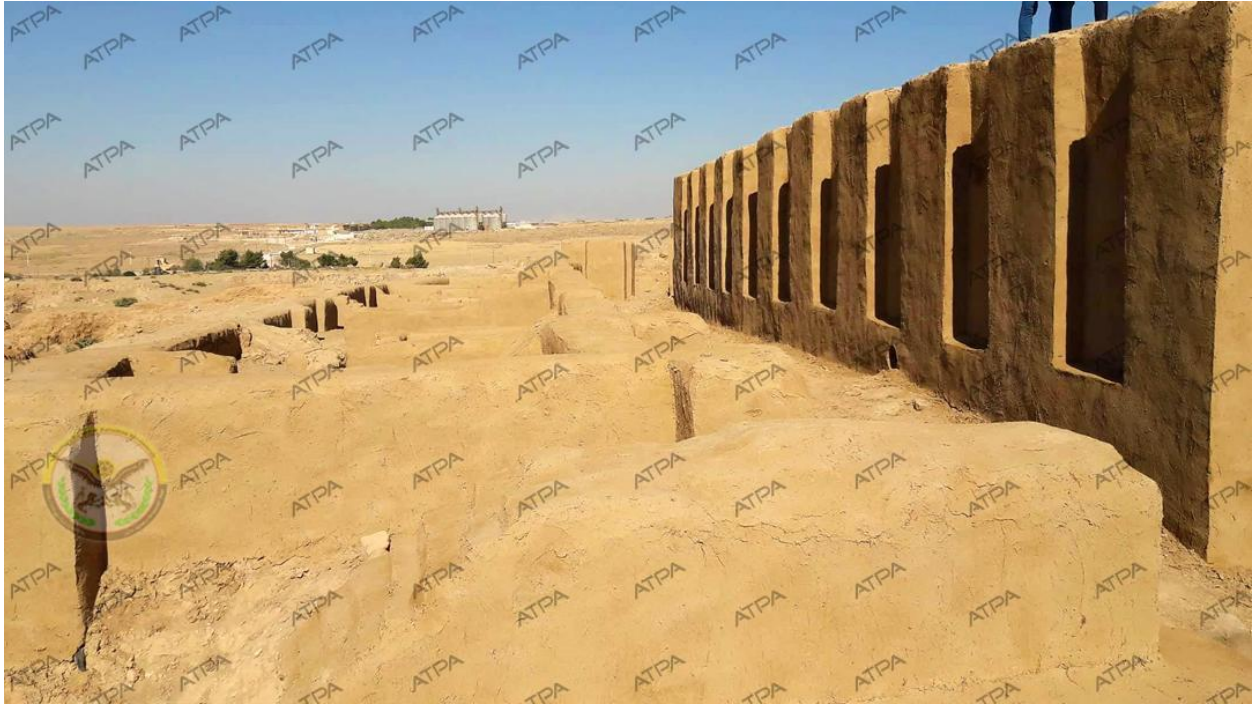
Scholarly:

Tell Beydar Excavation Site: <http://www.beydar.org/>

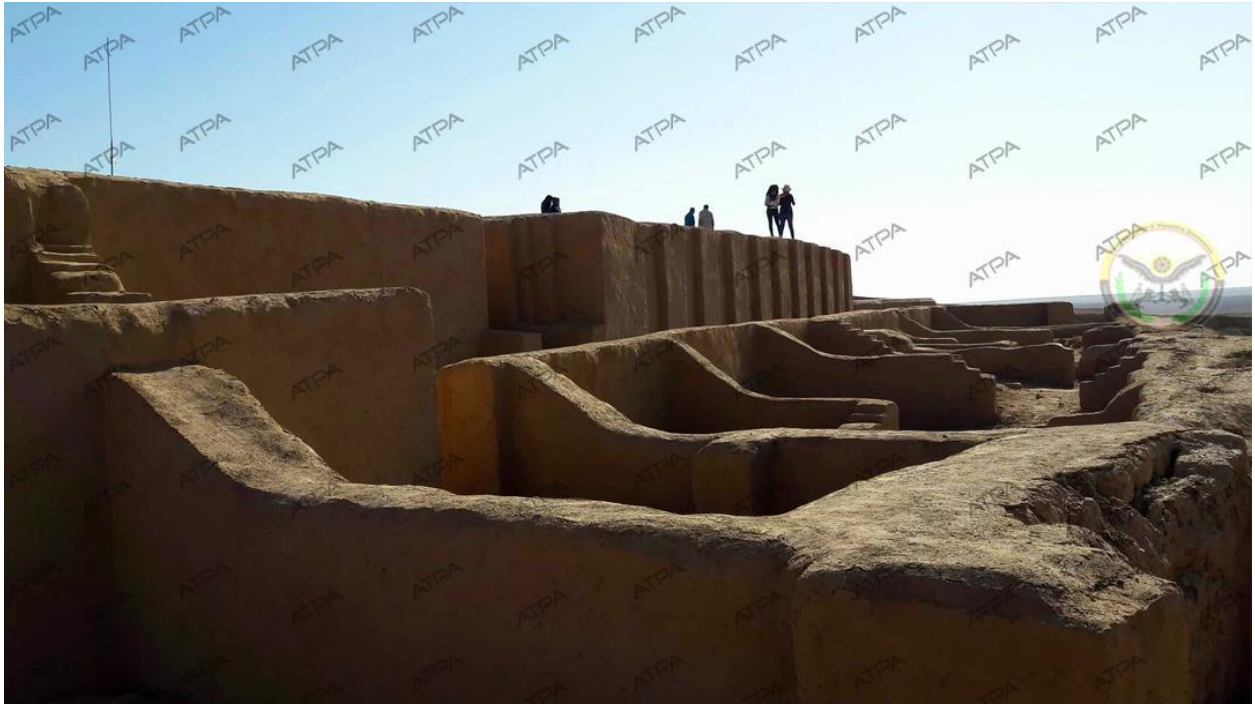
Harvard University: <https://scholar.harvard.edu/jasonur/pages/tell-beydar>



Completed restoration work on southern wall of Temple C at Tell Beydar (ATPA; October 10, 2017)



Completed restoration work on southern wall of Temple C and Temple Street at Tell Beydar (ATPA; October 10, 2017)



Completed restoration work on southern wall of Temple C and Temple Street at Tell Beydar (ATPA; October 10, 2017)



Completed restoration work at Tell Beydar (ATPA; October 10, 2017)



Video still of restoration work on mudbrick walls at Tell Beydar (ATPA/Youtube; October 2, 2017)



Video still of restoration work on mudbrick walls at Tell Beydar (ATPA/Youtube; October 2, 2017)

SHI 17-0184

Report Date: October 16, 2017

Site Name: Unnamed Mosque

Date of Incident: Between September 7, 2017 and October 15, 2017

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

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: Satellite imagery shows damage to a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: Recently released DigitalGlobe satellite imagery shows that an unnamed mosque was damaged by shelling between September 7, 2017 and October 15, 2017. This is evidenced by a hole in the roof of the southern part of the building. There is also visible damage to the surrounding area.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Deir ez-Zor Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Reports SHI 17-0179, SHI 17-0181, SHI 17-0185, SHI 17-0187, SHI 17-0188, SHI 17-0193, and SHI 17-0195.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

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



Al-Mayadin mosque prior to any damage (DigitalGlobe NextView License; September 7, 2017)



A hole visible in the southern roof of the mosque just east of the minaret is indicated by a red arrow. Nearby damage is indicated by red arrows (DigitalGlobe NextView License; October 15, 2017)

SHI 17-0185

Report Date: October 16, 2017

Site Name: Unnamed Mosque

Date of Incident: Between September 7, 2017 and October 15, 2017

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

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: Satellite imagery shows damage to a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: Recently released DigitalGlobe satellite imagery, shows that a hole appeared in the roof of an unnamed mosque in al-Mayadin between September 7, 2017 and October 15, 2017. This damage is probably a result of heavy shelling.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Deir ez-Zor Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Reports SHI 17-0179, SHI 17-0181, SHI 17-0184, SHI 17-0187, SHI 17-0188, SHI 17-0193, and SHI 17-0195.**

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 any damage (DigitalGlobe NextView License; September 7, 2017)



A hole in the roof of the mosque indicated by a red arrow (DigitalGlobe NextView License; October 15, 2017)

SHI 17-0186

Report Date: October 16, 2017

Site Name: Omar bin al-Khattab Mosque (مسجد عمر بن الخطاب) (al-Kabir Mosque)

Date of Incident: October 15, 2017

Location: Harbnafseh, Hama Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: Reported SARG artillery fire damaged a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On October 16, 2017 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that SARG artillery fire had damaged Omar bin al-Khattab Mosque in Harbnafseh.¹⁰⁴ The artillery partially damaged the building and damaged the mosque's contents. No video or photographs were available at the time of publication.

DigitalGlobe satellite imagery shows that Omar bin al-Khattab Mosque was previously damaged between October 2015 and March 2016. A hole is present in the roof of the mosque.

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR):

<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/10/16/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-al-kabir-mosque-harbnafseh-town-hama-governorate-october-15/>

¹⁰⁴ <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/10/16/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-al-kabir-mosque-harbnafseh-town-hama-governorate-october-15/>

SHI 17-0187

Report Date: October 16, 2017

Site Name: Unnamed Mosque

Date of Incident: Between September 7, 2017 and October 15, 2017

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

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: Satellite imagery shows damage to a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: Recently released DigitalGlobe satellite imagery shows that there has been an increase in damage to an unnamed mosque in al-Mayadin between September 7, 2017 and October 15, 2017. There is a new hole, probably the result of heavy shelling, in the southwest part of the mosque's roof.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Deir ez-Zor Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Reports SHI 17-0179, SHI 17-0181, SHI 17-0184, SHI 17-0185, SHI 17-0188, SHI 17-0193, and SHI 17-0195.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives

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



The unnamed mosque with a red arrow indicating previous damage to the roof (DigitalGlobe NextView License; September 7, 2017)



A new hole in the roof of the mosque indicated by a red arrow (DigitalGlobe NextView License; October 15, 2017)

SHI 17-0188**Report Date:** October 18, 2017**Site Name:** al-Fareeh Mosque (مسجد الفريح)**Date of Incident:** October 17, 2017**Location:** al-Jalaa, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, Syria**Site Description:** Mosque**Site Date:** Unknown**Incident Summary:** A reported SARG airstrike damaged a mosque.**Incident Source and Description:** On October 18, 2017 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that SARG airstrikes had damaged al-Fareeh Mosque.¹⁰⁵ No video or photographs of damage to the site were available at the time of publication.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Deir ez-Zor Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Reports SHI 17-0179, SHI 17-0181, SHI 17-0184, SHI 17-0185, SHI 17-0187, SHI 17-0193, and SHI 17-0195.**

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

Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR):

<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/10/18/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-al-fareeh-mosque-al-jalaa-city-deir-ez-zour-governorte-october-17/>

¹⁰⁵ <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/10/18/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-al-fareeh-mosque-al-jalaa-city-deir-ez-zour-governorte-october-17/>

SHI 17-0189

Report Date: October 19, 2017

Site Name: al-Shuhada Mosque (Martyrs Mosque) (جامع الشهداء)

Date of Incident: Between October 5, 2017 and October 19, 2017

Location: Hurriyah Neighborhood, Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: Satellite imagery revealed damage to a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: Recently released DigitalGlobe satellite imagery showed that there has been a significant increase in damage to al-Shuhada Mosque between October 5, 2017 and October 19, 2017. During that time, the dome collapsed and damage and debris are visible on the eastern side of the mosque. The damage was likely caused by an airstrike.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Raqqa Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Reports SHI 17-0162 UPDATE, SHI 17-0153 UPDATE, SHI 17-0121 UPDATE, SHI 17-0165 UPDATE, SHI 17-0192, SHI 17-0190, and SHI 17-0191.**

For more information on previous damage to al-Shuhada Mosque, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0080** in **May 2017 Monthly Report**.

Pattern: Military activity: explosives - airstrike.

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



al-Shuhada mosque prior to any damage (DigitalGlobe NextView License; October 5, 2017)



Damage to the dome of the mosque as well as to the surrounding area of the mosque as indicated by red arrows (DigitalGlobe NextView License; October 19, 2017)

SHI 17-0190

Report Date: October 22, 2017

Site Name: Clock Tower

Date of Incident: October 6, 2017

Location: Clock Tower Square, Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate, Syria

Site Description: The four-sided clock tower is located in the eponymous Clock Tower Square, located near the city center. Each face of the tower has a clock embedded near its top. Additionally, a statue of two figures originally rested on top of the tower. Prior to the 1950s, a 12th-century CE citadel occupied the area of Clock Tower Square.¹⁰⁶

Site Date: Post-1950s CE

Incident Summary: Photographs showed the condition of a clock tower.

Incident Source and Description: On October 6, 2017 Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently (RBSS) posted a photograph of the clock tower in the center of Clock Tower Square.¹⁰⁷ Additional photographs and video have appeared subsequently.¹⁰⁸ The body of the tower shows signs of combat damage, but appears to be structurally sound. However, at least two of the clocks at the top of the tower have been destroyed. Additionally, the statue on top of the tower is missing.

The SDF recaptured Clock Tower Square in August 2017.¹⁰⁹ The clock tower was a common location for executions during ISIS' control of the city.¹¹⁰ A drone strike killed the notorious executioner "Jihadi John" near the roundabout.¹¹¹ A photograph published on August 24, 2017 shows the base of the clock tower has been painted with the ISIS flag.¹¹²

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Raqqa Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Reports SHI 17-0162 UPDATE, SHI 17-0153 UPDATE, SHI 17-0121 UPDATE, SHI 17-0165 UPDATE, SHI 17-0189, SHI 17-0192, and SHI 17-0191.**

Pattern: Site management: tourism/visitor activity.

¹⁰⁶ <http://www.homsonline.com/ES/Ciudades/ArRaqqa.htm>

¹⁰⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/posts/1698981683446409>

¹⁰⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/posts/1713435942000983>;

https://twitter.com/QSD_Jabha/status/922506300231217155; <http://abcnews.go.com/International/drone-footage-captures-aftermath-isis-raqqa/story>; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-raqqa/raqqa-to-be-part-of-federal-syria-u-s-backed-militia-says-idUSKBN1CP16T>

¹⁰⁹ <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/raqqa-s-historic-clock-tower-falls-to-advancing-kurdish-forces-lcdbrgxf>

¹¹⁰ <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/raqqa-s-historic-clock-tower-falls-to-advancing-kurdish-forces-lcdbrgxf>; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/10/raqqa-a-journey-into-the-destroyed-heart-of-the-islamic-state-capital>

¹¹¹ <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/jihadi-john-first-picture-spot-6824834>

¹¹² <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/raqqa-s-historic-clock-tower-falls-to-advancing-kurdish-forces-lcdbrgxf>

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

ABC News:

<http://abcnews.go.com/International/drone-footage-captures-aftermath-isis-raqqa/story>

The Daily Mirror: <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/jihadi-john-first-picture-spot-6824834>

Homs Online: <http://www.homsonline.com/ES/Ciudades/ArRaqqa.htm>

The Guardian:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/10/raqqa-a-journey-into-the-destroyed-heart-of-the-islamic-state-capital>

Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently (RBSS):

October 6, 2017: <https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/posts/1698981683446409>

October 21, 2017: <https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/posts/1713435942000983>

Reuters:

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-raqqa/raqqa-to-be-part-of-federal-syria-u-s-backed-militia-says-idUSKBN1CP16T>

Syrian Democratic Forces from the Front:

https://twitter.com/QSD_Jabha/status/922506300231217155

The Times: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/raqqa-s-historic-clock-tower-falls-to-advancing-kurdish-forces-lcdbrgxft>



The clock tower prior to the operation to recapture Raqqa, seen from the southeast (The Times; August 24, 2017)



The clock tower prior to the operation to recapture Raqqa, seen from the southwest (The Mirror; November 13, 2015)



View of the clock tower, seen from the southeast (RBSS; October 6, 2017)



View of the clock tower, seen from the northwest (RBSS; October 21, 2017)



View of the clock tower, seen from the south (RBSS; October 21, 2017)



View of the clock tower, seen from the west (Reuters/Erik De Castro; October 18, 2017)



Video of the clock tower, seen from the southwest (ABC News; October 18, 2017)



Video still of the clock tower, seen from the west (Syrian Democratic Forces from the Front; October 23, 2017)

SHI 17-0191

Report Date: October 23, 2017

Site Name: al-Rasheed Park - Arslan Tash Lions

Date of Incident: April 2014

Location: Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Al-Rasheed Park contains the Arslan Tash lions, two Assyrian-era stone sculptures of lions discovered at the archaeological site of Arslan Tash and later erected in Raqqa in the 1980s.¹¹³

Site Date: mid-9th–8th century BCE

Incident Summary: New photographs and video show destruction of artifacts in Raqqa park.

Incident Source and Description: Destruction of the Arslan Tash lions by ISIS militants was first reported on April 28, 2014 by the DGAM based on photographs that had been circulated on social media.¹¹⁴ The photographs show the destruction of the lions being carried out using a bulldozer. New images and video published on October 22, 2017 by ANF News and ANHA show the extent of the damage to the sculptures.¹¹⁵

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Raqqa Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Reports SHI 17-0162 UPDATE, SHI 17-0153 UPDATE, SHI 17-0121 UPDATE, SHI 17-0165 UPDATE, SHI 17-0189, SHI 17-0190, and SHI 17-0192.**

Pattern: Military activity: intentional destruction.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of the Arslan Tash Lions, as well as the condition of other sites located in recently liberated regions.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

ANF News:

<https://anfenglish.com/news/historical-lion-sculptures-found-blown-up-by-daesh-in-raqqa-22844>

ANHA: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r74u2BXxm3A>

DGAM: <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=1259>

¹¹³ <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/safeguarding-syrian-cultural-heritage/arslan-tash/>

¹¹⁴ <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=1259>

¹¹⁵ <https://anfenglish.com/news/historical-lion-sculptures-found-blown-up-by-daesh-in-raqqa-22844>

Scholarly:

Albenda, P. (Aug. 1988) "The Gateway and Portal Stone Reliefs from Arslan Tash," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, No. 271. pp. 5-30

UNESCO: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/safeguarding-syrian-cultural-heritage/arslan-tash/>



Destruction of lion using bulldozer (DGAM; April 28, 2014)



Aftermath of destruction of lion (DGAM; April 28, 2014)



Video still showing stone base with broken pieces of lion (ANHA; October 22, 2017)



Video still showing stone base with broken pieces of lion (ANHA; October 22, 2017)



The Arslan Tash lions, outlined in red, prior to destruction (DigitalGlobe NextView License; October 12, 2011)



The Arslan Tash lions, outlined in red, post destruction, with debris from the statues still on the ground (DigitalGlobe NextView License; October 6, 2014)

SHI 17-0192

Report Date: October 19, 2017

Site Name: Unnamed Mosque

Date of Incident: Between September 24, 2017 and September 30, 2017

Location: Thawrah neighborhood, Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: Satellite imagery revealed damage to a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: Recently released DigitalGlobe satellite imagery shows that an unnamed mosque in Thawrah neighborhood was damaged between September 24, 2017 and September 30, 2017. The southern half of the mosque was badly damaged, and the corners collapsed. The damage was likely caused by an airstrike.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Raqqa Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Reports SHI 17-0162 UPDATE, SHI 17-0153 UPDATE, SHI 17-0121 UPDATE, SHI 17-0165 UPDATE, SHI 17-0189, SHI 17-0190, and SHI 17-0191.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives - airstrike.

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



The unknown mosque prior to any damage (DigitalGlobe NextView License; September 24, 2017)



The southern half of the mosque is severely damaged likely by an airstrike, as indicated by the red arrows (DigitalGlobe NextView License; September 30, 2017)

SHI 17-0193

Report Date: October 27, 2017

Site Name: al-Fateh Mosque (مسجد الفتح)

Date of Incident: October 23, 2017

Location: al-Qusour neighborhood, Deir ez-Zor, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: Shelling reportedly damaged a mosque in Deir ez-Zor.

Incident Source and Description: On October 23, 2017 local reporting group Justice for Life reported that shells dropped on al-Qusour, a SARG-held neighborhood of Deir ez-Zor, damaged al-Fateh Mosque.¹¹⁶ No photographs of the damage were available at the time of publication.

DigitalGlobe satellite imagery from October 27, 2017 does not show any visible damage to the mosque. However, a building across the street has been badly damaged.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Deir ez-Zor Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Reports SHI 17-0179, SHI 17-0181, SHI 17-0184, SHI 17-0185, SHI 17-0187, SHI 17-0188, and SHI 17-0195.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives - airstrike.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Justice for Life: <https://twitter.com/JFLngo/status/922545863129554948>

Syrian Revolution News: https://twitter.com/SYR_REV_NEWS/status/922749329244327937

¹¹⁶ <https://twitter.com/JFLngo/status/922545863129554948>



al-Fateh Mosque prior to shelling (DigitalGlobe NextView License; October 5, 2017)



Damage to building close to al-Fateh Mosque after reports of shelling (DigitalGlobe NextView License; October 27, 2017)

SHI 17-0194

Report Date: October 28, 2017

Site Name: Tell al-Jumou

Date of Incident: October 28, 2017

Location: Daraa Governorate, Syria

Site Description: According to the DGAM: "Tell al-Jumu is located west of Nawa village, much closer to Tasil town. It has not been subjected to any historical research or archaeological excavations; consequently, there is not much information about it. However, based on its location, it is historically associated with the hills nearby, such as Tell al-Jabiyah and Tell Um Hauran, which were prominent during the Classical period."¹¹⁷

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: Artillery fire reportedly hit an archaeological site.

Incident Source and Description: On October 28, 2017 multiple sources reported that Jaish al-Islam had targeted military installations on Tell al-Jumou with artillery fire.¹¹⁸ The shells hit the northeastern slope of the mound.

Based on DigitalGlobe satellite imagery, there has been a military base on top of the site since at least 2012. The site has also been subject to periodic looting since the start of the conflict.¹¹⁹

For more information on previous damage to Tell al-Jumou, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0008** in **Weekly Report 24**.

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

DGAM: <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1568>

Jaish al-Islam: <https://twitter.com/jaishalislam/status/924283323287064576>

Private Twitter Account

¹¹⁷ <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/damages/eplace.php?placeid=499>

¹¹⁸ <https://twitter.com/jaishalislam/status/924283323287064576>; Private Twitter Account

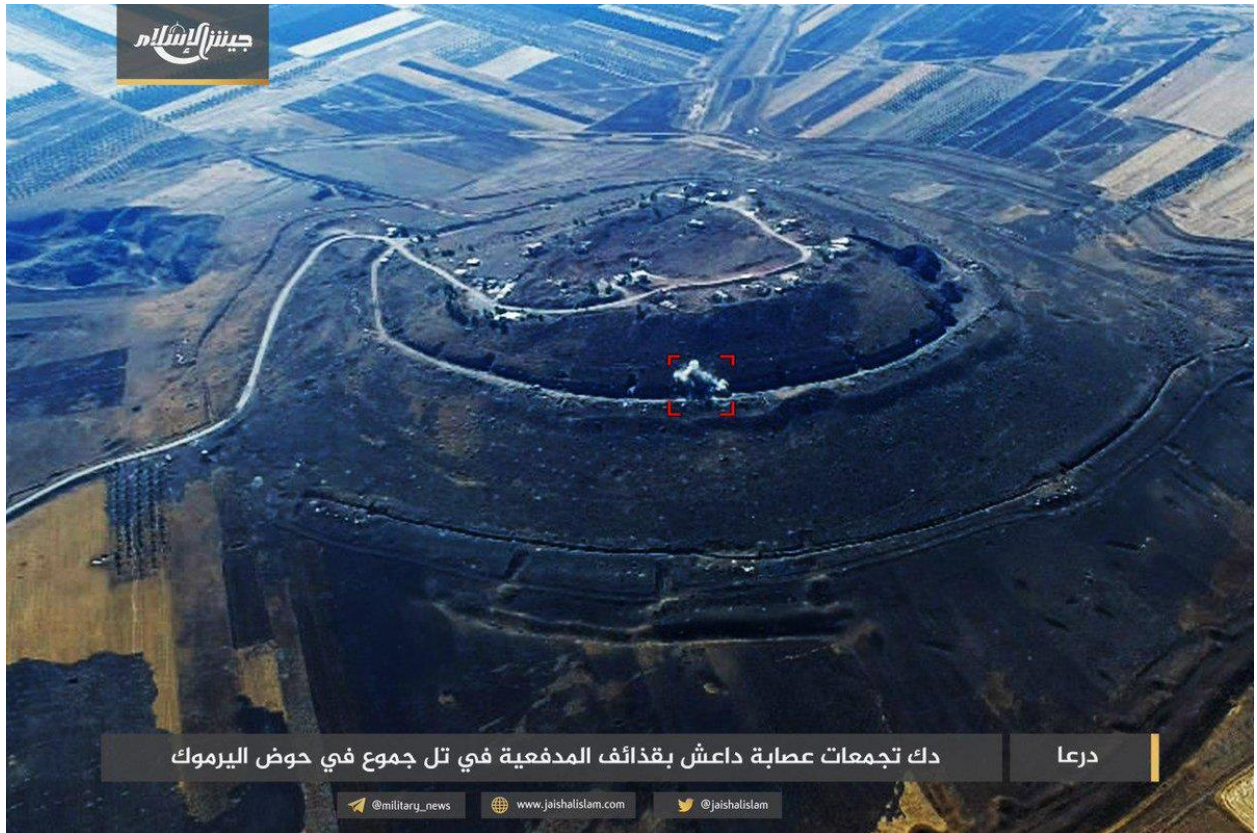
¹¹⁹ <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1568>

Scholarly:

DGAM: <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/damages/eplace.php?placeid=499>



A shell hitting the northeastern slope of the mound (Private Twitter Account; October 28, 2017)



A shell hitting the northeastern slope of the mound (Private Twitter Account; October 28, 2017)

SHI 17-0195

Report Date: October 16, 2017

Site Name: Unnamed Mosque

Date of Incident: Between September 7, 2017 and October 15, 2017

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

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: Satellite imagery shows damage to a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: Recently released DigitalGlobe satellite imagery shows that an unnamed mosque in al-Mayadin and its surrounding area has been damaged by shelling. There is a hole in the roof of the southwestern part of the mosque.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Deir ez-Zor Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Reports SHI 17-0179, SHI 17-0181, SHI 17-0184, SHI 17-0185, SHI 17-0187, SHI 17-0188, and SHI 17-0195.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

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



The unnamed mosque prior to any damage (DigitalGlobe NextView License; September 7, 2017)



An arrow indicates the hole in the roof of the mosque. Other arrows indicate damage in surrounding area (DigitalGlobe NextView License; October 15, 2017)

Incident Reports: Iraq

IHI 17-0044 UPDATE

Report Date: October 18, 2017

Site Name: al-Imam Muhsin Mosque (مسجد الامام محسن)

Date of Incident: October 13, 2017

Location: az-Zanjili Neighborhood, Mosul, Ninawa Governorate, Iraq

Site Description: The mosque was originally named Madrasa al-Nuriyya after Nur al-Din Arslan Shah ibn 'Izz al-Din Mas'ud (d. 1210), Turkic atabeg of Aleppo and Mosul.¹²⁰ It became known as Madrasa al-Imam Muhsin during the reign of Badr al-Din Lu'lu'. In 1959 CE the mosque was enlarged with a new building, and a minaret was added.¹²¹ The mosque is next to the shrine dedicated to Nur al-Din.

Site Date: 13th-century CE, enlarged 1959 CE

Incident Summary: A video shows damage to a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On October 13, 2017 VICE News posted a video that shows previously unrecorded damage to al-Imam Muhsin Mosque.¹²² The video, which was recorded in June 2017, displays damage to the ablution facility in the mosque's courtyard as well as the condition of the mosque's interior. The ablution facility has been hit by small-arms fire or shrapnel and its roof is in poor condition. The interior of the mosque is filled with broken glass and some of the wall fixtures, including parts of the plaster, have fallen down. The interior has also suffered from exposure to the elements.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Ninawa Governorate: [ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 17-0073 UPDATE](#).

For previous damage to al-Imam Muhsin Mosque, see [ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 17-0044](#) in the [June 2017 Monthly Report](#) and [ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 15-0054](#) in [Weekly Report 39](#).

Pattern: Site management: tourism/visitor activity.

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

¹²⁰ Hamm et. al 2015

¹²¹ The Sunni Endowment in Iraq. p. 120.

¹²² VICE News

Sources:

Online Reporting:

VICE News: Season 5 Episode 9 “After ISIS & Cubs of the Caliphate”

Scholarly:

Hamm, G., K. Dabrowska, T. Townsend-Greaves. 2015. Iraq: The ancient sites and Iraqi Kurdistan. Bucks: Bradt. p. 215

The Sunni Endowment of Iraq. دليل الجوامع والمساجد التراثية والأثرية [*Directory of Mosques and Mosques Heritage and Archaeology*]. Baghdad.



Video still of the mosque's exterior (VICE News; October 13, 2017)



Video still of the mosque's minaret (VICE News; October 13, 2017)



Video still of the ablution facility in the mosque's courtyard (VICE News; October 13, 2017)



Video still of the mosque's interior. Note the water damage near the open windows (VICE News; October 13, 2017)



Video still of the mosque's interior (VICE News; October 13, 2017)



These are their instructions for growing a beard.

Video still of the mosque's interior (VICE News; October 13, 2017)

IHI 17-0073 UPDATE

Report Date: October 7, 2017

Site Name: Tal Afar Citadel (Qalaat Tal Afar; قلعة تلأفر)

Date of Incident: October 4, 2017

Location: Tal Afar, Ninawa Governorate, Iraq

Site Description: Ottoman-era castle, possibly built on an earlier Assyrian site.

Site Date: Ottoman-era

Incident Summary: New video footage shows the condition of the Tal Afar Citadel.

Incident Source and Description: On October 4, 2017 al-An Arabic Television posted a video that shows the condition of the Tal Afar Citadel.¹²³ The video provides new footage of the area along the bottom of the western side of the mound, where ISIS demolished buildings and looted the site using earthmoving equipment. DigitalGlobe satellite imagery indicates that the damage from this looting extends all along the northwestern slope of the mound. The intentional destruction and looting of the Tal Afar Citadel began in late 2014.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Ninawa Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 17-0044 UPDATE**.

For more information on previous damage to the Tal Afar Citadel, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 17-0073** in the **August 2017 Monthly Report**.

Pattern: Site management: tourism/visitor activity; Military Activity: intentional destruction; Illegal excavation.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Al-Aan Arabic Television: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pkiWsG-soHQ>

¹²³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pkiWsG-soHQ>



Video still of an area where ISIS looted the site with earthmoving equipment, seen from the southwest (Al-Aan Arabic Television; October 4, 2017)



Video still of an area where ISIS looted the site with earthmoving equipment, seen from the southwest (Al-Aan Arabic Television; October 4, 2017)



Video still of damage to buildings around the base of the mound, as well as the piles of building material from the structures formerly on top of the mound, seen from the west (Al-Aan Arabic Television; October 4, 2017)



Video still of damage to buildings around the base of the mound, seen from the west (Al-Aan Arabic Television; October 4, 2017)



Video still of damage to buildings around the base of the mound as well as an area where ISIS looted the site with earthmoving equipment, seen from the west (Al-Aan Arabic Television; October 4, 2017)

IHI 17-0077

Report Date: October 6, 2017

Site Name: Mosque of al-Imam al-Sadiq (جامع الامام الصادق)

Date of Incident: October 4, 2017

Location: al-Husseiniyah, Baghdad Governorate, Iraq

Site Description: Shia mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: A car bomb reportedly exploded near a mosque in Baghdad.

Incident Source and Description: On October 4, 2017 Sot al-Iraq reported a car bomb exploded near a Shia mosque in the town of al-Husseiniyah, north of Baghdad.¹²⁴ Damage to the mosque was not specified. Al-Qurtas News identified the mosque as al-Iman al-Sadiq Mosque.¹²⁵ No photographs of damage to the mosque were available at the time of publication. Based on recent DigitalGlobe satellite imagery from October 12, 2017, there was no visible damage to the mosque.

Pattern: None

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor reports of damage to the Mosque of al-Imam al-Sadiq.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

al-Qurtas News:

<http://www.alqurtasnews.com/mobile/news/257931/الداخلية-انفجار-سيارة-مفخخة-مساء-اليوم-قرب-حسينية/ar>

Sot al Iraq: <https://www.sotaliraq.com/2017/10/04/انفجار-سيارة-مفخخة-بيغداد/>

¹²⁴ <https://www.sotaliraq.com/2017/10/04/انفجار-سيارة-مفخخة-بيغداد/>

¹²⁵ <http://www.alqurtasnews.com/mobile/news/257931/الداخلية-انفجار-سيارة-مفخخة-مساء-اليوم-قرب-حسينية/ar>



Mosque of al-Imam al-Sadiq prior to nearby car bomb (DigitalGlobe NextView License; August 25, 2017)



No visible damage to Mosque of al-Imam al-Sadiq (DigitalGlobe NextView License; October 12, 2017)

Incident Reports: Libya

LHI 17-0022 UPDATE

Report Date: October 9, 2017

Site Name: Sabratha; Sabratha Theater; Mausoleum of Bes

Date of Incident: September 16, 2017

Location: Sabratha, Tripolitania, Libya

Site Description: Sabratha is a Punic and Roman-era city on the coast approximately 80km west of Tripoli. It is one of the five Libyan sites inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list, and features standing architectural elements primarily in sandstone, including both a theater and an amphitheater, as well as houses, temples and a series of later basilicas. The site includes significant visitor infrastructure including a Punic Museum and a Roman Museum.

Site Date: 4th century BCE–7th century CE

Incident Summary: Militia clashes in Sabratha reportedly spilled into the archaeological site, resulting in widespread damage.

Incident Source and Description: In September 2017, fighting between the Amu Brigade and the Anti-ISIS Operations Room (AIOR) of Sabratha, supported by the Libyan National Army (LNA), resulted in extensive (though largely superficial) damage throughout the site of Sabratha.

According to Abd al Hakim al Harizi of the Sabratha Tourist Police (the organization charged with the protection of the site) the officers were forced to abandon their posts during the most intense fighting. Residents of Sabratha had been expecting this confrontation for some time, as they assumed that the hard line Islamists and those controlling lucrative human and cargo smuggling networks would resist the imposition of outside order. After fighting in and around the archaeological site subsided, al Harizi returned to the site, conducted an initial damage assessment, and facilitated access for a delegation from Department of Antiquities (DoA) headquarters in Tripoli.¹²⁶

This delegation included Mohammed Shakshouki, the Director of DoA Tripoli and Hafeed Walda, the Libyan representative to UNESCO in Paris. According to Walda, the site suffered pervasive superficial damage. In one case, an errant rocket-propelled grenade appears to have detonated the fuel tanks in one of the workshops behind the Punic museum, damaging the building and its roof. The theater also sustained enough superficial damage that, in Walda's estimation, it now deserves to have a thorough structural assessment. He saw many bullet holes in the standing architecture, evidence of the use of high caliber weapons, and tank tracks throughout the site. In addition to the damage inflicted by the fighting, Walda also encountered a significant quantity of deflated rubber

¹²⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/hafed.walda/posts/10212452110690580> ; <https://www.facebook.com/diwanmasl7at/posts/1452007404868203>

rafts and debris from informal camp sites on the coast near with the archaeological site, suggesting that Sabratha has recently been used as a base for human smuggling operations.

DoA Tripoli plans to dispatch a more thorough, multi-day damage assessment mission to the site in weeks to come in order to thoroughly document the status of the site.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Tripolitania: **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0035**.

For more information on previous reports of damage to Sabratha, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0022** in **September 2017 Monthly Report**.

Pattern: Military activity: gunfire/light weaponry.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor damage assessment reports concerning Sabratha.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Adel Manoubi, Facebook, October 7, 2017:

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1755488008087543&id=100008790816233

DoA Tripoli, Facebook, October 11, 2017:

<https://www.facebook.com/diwanmasl7at/posts/1452007404868203>

Hafed Walda, Facebook, October 9, 2017:

<https://www.facebook.com/hafed.walda/posts/10212452110690580>



Damage to the Sabratha theatre (Hafed Walda; October 9, 2017)



Detail of damage to the Sabratha theater (Hafed Walda; October 9, 2017)



Detail of damage to the Sabratha theater (Hafed Walda; October 9, 2017)



Damage to a column of one of the basilicas on site (Hafed Walda; October 9, 2017)



Superficial damage to the Punic funerary Mausoleum of Bes (Hafed Walda; October 9, 2017)

LHI 17-0028

Report Date: October 3, 2017

Site Name: Historic building on 24 December Street

Date of Incident: late-September, 2017

Location: Tripoli, Tripolitania, Libya

Site Description: This street is one of the locations with the highest traffic in downtown Tripoli, and includes a number of historic buildings dating to the Italian period.

Site Date: Italian period (1911-1943)

Incident Summary: Violating the zoning laws of downtown Tripoli, a citizen has reportedly built a new, taller construction adjacent to a historic building.

Incident Source and Description: According to a member of the Tripoli office of the Libyan Department of Antiquities, a new building was constructed in violation of the standing zoning principles of downtown Tripoli.

Pattern: Development disturbance.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor threats to historic cities throughout Libya.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Private Facebook Account



Historic building from the Italian period with new construction behind (Private Facebook Account; October. 3, 2017)



Historic building and new building in context (Private Facebook Account; October. 3, 2017)



The taller scale of the new building violates standing zoning principles in downtown Tripoli (Private Facebook Account; October. 3, 2017)

LHI 17-0029

Report Date: October 5, 2017

Site Name: Sanctuary of Apollo

Date of Incident: October 5, 2017

Location: Cyrene, Cyrenaica, Libya

Site Description: The Sanctuary of Apollo, used during the Greek and Roman eras of Cyrene, is one of the most prominent concentrations of standing architecture at the UNESCO World Heritage site of Cyrene.

Site Date: 7th Century BCE–3rd Century CE

Incident Summary: The Shahat office of the Department of Antiquities has installed new lighting to help protect the site at night.

Incident Source and Description: On October 5, 2017 the Department of Antiquities (DoA) Shahat reported the installation of a new cable and light array, providing for illumination of the Sanctuary of Apollo at night.¹²⁷ This lighting will assist the guard staff on site to better protect the site, especially at night. Fadl Abd al Aziz, the Controller of DoA Shahat, reports that in the absence of any budget accorded to his office from the eastern branch of DoA, he has had to resort to alternate means of raising funds to support priority site protection projects. He has imposed an entrance fee of one Libyan dinar for all visitors on site (excluding school groups, university students, and children). The revenue from these ticket sales enabled him to pay for the new lighting array.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for information on reconstruction and clean-up activities conducted by DoA staff at other heritage sites in Cyrenaica: **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0031** and **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0032**.

Pattern: Site management.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to report on ongoing efforts made by DoA to protect and maintain cultural heritage sites throughout Libya.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

DoA Shahat:

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1506279809461731&id=1252747658148282

¹²⁷ https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1506279809461731&id=1252747658148282



Crew installs new lights adjacent to the Sanctuary of Apollo (DoA Shahat; October. 5, 2017)



The new lights are next to the main visitor path leading to the Sanctuary of Apollo (DoA Shahat; October 5, 2017)



The lights help guards monitor the site at night (DoA Shahat; October 5, 2017)

LHI 17-0030

Report Date: October 9, 2017

Site Name: Abu Rowee Mosque

Date of Incident: October 9, 2017

Location: Bani Walid, Tripolitania, Libya

Site Description: This mosque is part of the historic core of Bani Walid and lies on the elevated embankment of Wadi Merdum.

Site Date: 1700 CE

Incident Summary: The Bani Walid office of the Historic City Authority (HCA) has begun to rebuild a historic mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On October 9, 2017 Sufian ad Debib, Director of the Bani Walid office of the Historic City Authority (HCA), reported that efforts to rebuild the historic Abu Rowee Mosque have begun.¹²⁸ According to ad Debib, the historic core of the mosque was destroyed in 2011 at the height of the Libyan Revolution, when terrorist groups destroyed the building. In cooperation with the municipal council and local civil society organizations, the HCA is rebuilding the mosque so that it will serve as a community library. So far, they have rebuilt the walls and have begun to build a collection of books and magazines which will be the core of the collection of the future library.

As seen in DigitalGlobe satellite imagery, the historic core of the mosque was damaged between two mosaicked satellite images with dates ranging from April 19, 2011 to February 2, 2012 and February 2, 2015 and June 6, 2017. This area was damaged again between August 14, 2016 and September 29, 2016. The most recently available satellite image shows reconstruction efforts.

Pattern: Site management: reconstruction.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor reports of HCA successfully engaging with local authorities and citizens to protect Libyan cultural heritage.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Bani Walid Historic Cities Office:

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=720139438175219&id=245975528924948

¹²⁸ https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=720139438175219&id=245975528924948



Abu Rowee Mosque following its destruction in 2011 (Sufian ad Debib; undated)



Work to rebuild walls (Sufian ad Debib; October 29, 2017)



1200 books have been donated to the new library to form the core of its future collection (Sufian ad Debib; October 29, 2017)



Abu Rowee Mosque prior to any visible damage; location indicated by red arrow (DigitalGlobe NextView License; February 2, 2012)



Initial damage to the mosque; former location indicated by red arrows (DigitalGlobe NextView License; February 2, 2015)



Increased damage to the mosque as indicated by the red arrow (DigitalGlobe NextView License; September 29, 2016)



Most recent image of reconstruction of the mosque (DigitalGlobe NextView License; October 1, 2017)

LHI 17-0031

Report Date: October 11, 2017

Site Name: Wadi Belgadir

Date of Incident: October 11, 2017

Location: Cyrene, Cyrenaica, Libya

Site Description: The Wadi Belgadir is part of the UNESCO World Heritage site of Cyrene, and contains a number of temples, including the Sanctuary of Demeter which played an important role in the religious life of the ancient city.

Site Date: Greco-Roman, 7th Century BCE–3rd Century CE

Incident Summary: The Shahat office of the Department of Antiquities (Doa) is working to stop urban encroachment threatening the site.

Incident Source and Description: On October 11, 2017 DoA Shahat reported that a Wadi Belgadir resident, who constructed a new home within the illegal subdivision in the area, is now selling building materials to others seeking to build in this same area.¹²⁹ Fadl Abd al Aziz, the Controller of DoA Shahat, explained that DoA has convinced the municipal government to impose an injunction on all new construction in this area and that the Department of Criminal Investigations has opened an inquiry into this matter. For the time being, illegal construction in this area appears to have stopped.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for information on reconstruction and clean-up activities conducted by DoA staff at other heritage sites in Cyrenaica: **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0029** and **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0032**.

Pattern: Development disturbances.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to report on ongoing efforts made by DoA to protect and maintain cultural heritage sites throughout Libya.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

DoA Shahat, Facebook:

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1511223562300689&id=1252747658148282

¹²⁹ https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1511223562300689&id=1252747658148282



Building materials being sold in Wadi Belgadir (DoA Shahat: October11, 2017)



State of urban encroachment in Wadi Belgadir (DoA Shahat:, October 11, 2017)

LHI 17-0032

Report Date: October 11, 2017

Site Name: Cyrene

Date of Incident: October 11, 2017

Location: Cyrene, Cyrenaica, Libya

Site Description: This outlying area of Cyrene is separated from the core archaeological site by a road leading towards the Sanctuary of Apollo adjacent to the rest house maintained by the Department of Antiquities (DoA).

Site Date: Greek, Roman, 7th Century BCE–3rd Century CE

Incident Summary: The Shahat office of the Department of Antiquities (DoA) has carried out a cleaning campaign on a portion of the UNESCO World Heritage site of Cyrene.

Incident Source and Description: On October 11, 2017 DoA Shahat reported dispatching their conservation crew to conduct cleaning and maintenance on this overgrown portion of the site.¹³⁰ They removed bushes, tree roots, grass, soil, and trash that had accumulated in this portion of the site, revealing the original stone paving underneath.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for information on reconstruction and clean-up activities conducted by DoA staff at other heritage sites in Cyrenaica: **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0029** and **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0031**

Pattern: Site management.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to report on ongoing efforts made by DoA to protect and maintain cultural heritage sites throughout Libya.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

DoA Shahat, Facebook:

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1511234035632975&id=1252747658148282

¹³⁰ https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1511234035632975&id=1252747658148282



Overview of the area targeted for maintenance (DoA Shahat; October 11, 2017)



Removal of brush and grass from this portion of Cyrene (DoA Shahat;, October 11, 2017)



Revealing original stone paving, featuring one inscribed block (DoA Shahat; October 11, 2017)

LHI 17-0033

Report Date: October 15, 2017

Site Name: Philaeni Statues of Sultan

Date of Incident: October 15, 2017

Location: Sultan, Cyrenaica, Libya

Site Description: Two Italian colonial-period bronze statues are located in Sultan, close to the coastal road between Sirte and Ras Lanuf, in a small compound controlled by the Libyan Department of Antiquities (DoA). The bronze statues depict the Philaeni brothers, who had helped to establish the territorial boundary between Tripolitania and Cyrenaica.

Site Date: 1937 CE

Incident Summary: Social media reports of the two statues being stolen by ISIS militants were refuted by DoA representatives.

Incident Source and Description: On October 15, 2017 Khaled Aljohre, the director of the DoA office in al Marj, reported via Facebook that the Philaeni Statues of Sultan were missing.¹³¹ In the absence of credible news sources, this report circulated on social media for approximately 24 hours, with additional embellishment attributing the theft to ISIS militants. This report was then refuted by Abdel Azim Hafed, the director of the DoA office in Sirte, who explained that the statues had been removed from their normal outdoor display in Sultan to a safer storage location.

Pattern: Site management.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to verify incident reports using multiple sources.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Khalid Aljohre: <https://www.facebook.com/kaljohre/posts/1588692561190370>

Libya Herald:

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2017/10/16/philaeni-statues-disappearance-refuted-by-antiquities-authorities/>

¹³¹ <https://www.facebook.com/kaljohre/posts/1588692561190370>



Bronze statues prior to their removal to safe storage (Khalid Aljohre; October 15, 2017)



Platform after the removal of the bronze statues (Khalid Aljohre; October 15, 2017)

LHI 17-0034

Report Date: October 19, 2017

Site Name: Historic Sword of al-Marj

Date of Incident: October 19, 2017

Location: al-Marj, Cyrenaica, Libya

Site Description: This historic sword is currently in the Department of Antiquities (DoA) storeroom of al Marj.

Site Date: c.a. 1950

Incident Summary: A citizen returned an historic sword to state authorities.

Incident Source and Description: According to an account published on the website Akhbar Libya 24, an officer of the al-Marj Security Directorate purchased an historic sword from a citizen in al-Marj and then gave the sword to DoA for safe keeping.¹³² The sword dates back to the period of the Libyan monarchy (1951-1969), and bears the mark of its English manufacturer. According to the report, it has a wooden hilt and a guard of copper, and the shaft also bears decorations including plants, a star and a crescent moon. The director of the DoA office in al Marj, Khalid al Johree, reports that the sword is now kept in the DoA storeroom.

Pattern: None.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor reports of DoA successfully engaging with local authorities and citizens to protect Libyan cultural heritage.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Akhbar Libya: <http://www.akhbarlibya24.net/2017/07/19/مكتب-آثار-المرج-يستلم-سيفاً-تاريخياً-ي/>

¹³² <http://www.akhbarlibya24.net/2017/07/19/مكتب-آثار-المرج-يستلم-سيفاً-تاريخياً-ي/>



The historic sword returned to DoA (Akhbar Libya 24; October 19, 2017)

LHI 17-0035

Report Date: October 20, 2017

Site Name: Memorial of Sidi Abu Ghrara

Date of Incident: October 20, 2017

Location: al-Ghrararat, Tripoli, Tripolitania, Libya

Site Description: Al-Ghararat is a neighborhood of Tripoli located between Souq al Jum'aa and the Mitiga International Airport. The memorial of Sidi Abu Ghrara is associated with the Atiq Mosque, just south of the Arada Road.

Site Date: 1400–1900 CE (dates disputed by different sources)

Incident Summary: A Sufi shrine dedicated to Sidi Abu Ghrara was destroyed.

Incident Source and Description: On October 20, 2017, Mohammed al Misrati, a Libyan journalist, reported the destruction of the memorial of Sidi Abu Ghrara.¹³³ According to Al Naba', there have been recent clashes between the Rada Deterrent Forces and armed militias in the area, though Rada denies involvement in this destruction.¹³⁴ The destruction of this shrine appears to have been motivated by sectarian impulses, as hard-line Sunni militias seek to remove Sufi monuments and shrines, as they have elsewhere in Tripoli. According to Libya Herald, no party has claimed responsibility for this destruction.¹³⁵

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Tripolitania: **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0022 UPDATE.**

Pattern: Military activity: intentional destruction.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the destruction of religious properties throughout the country.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Al Naba': <https://alnabaa.tv/news/view/15192>

Libya Herald:

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2017/10/22/still-not-known-who-wrecked-tripoli-shrine/>

Mohammed al Misrati:

<https://www.facebook.com/mahmoud.messrati/posts/2063622373866245>

¹³³ <https://www.facebook.com/mahmoud.messrati/posts/2063622373866245>

¹³⁴ <https://alnabaa.tv/news/view/15192>

¹³⁵ <https://www.libyaherald.com/2017/10/22/still-not-known-who-wrecked-tripoli-shrine/>



The remains of the Sidi Abu Ghrara memorial (Mohammed al Misrati; October. 20, 2017)



The remains of the Sidi Abu Gharara memorial (Mohammed al Misrati; October 20, 2017)



The remains of the Sidi Abu Gharara memorial (Mohammed al Misrati; October 20, 2017)



The remains of the Sidi Abu Gharara memorial (Mohammed al Misrati; October 20, 2017)

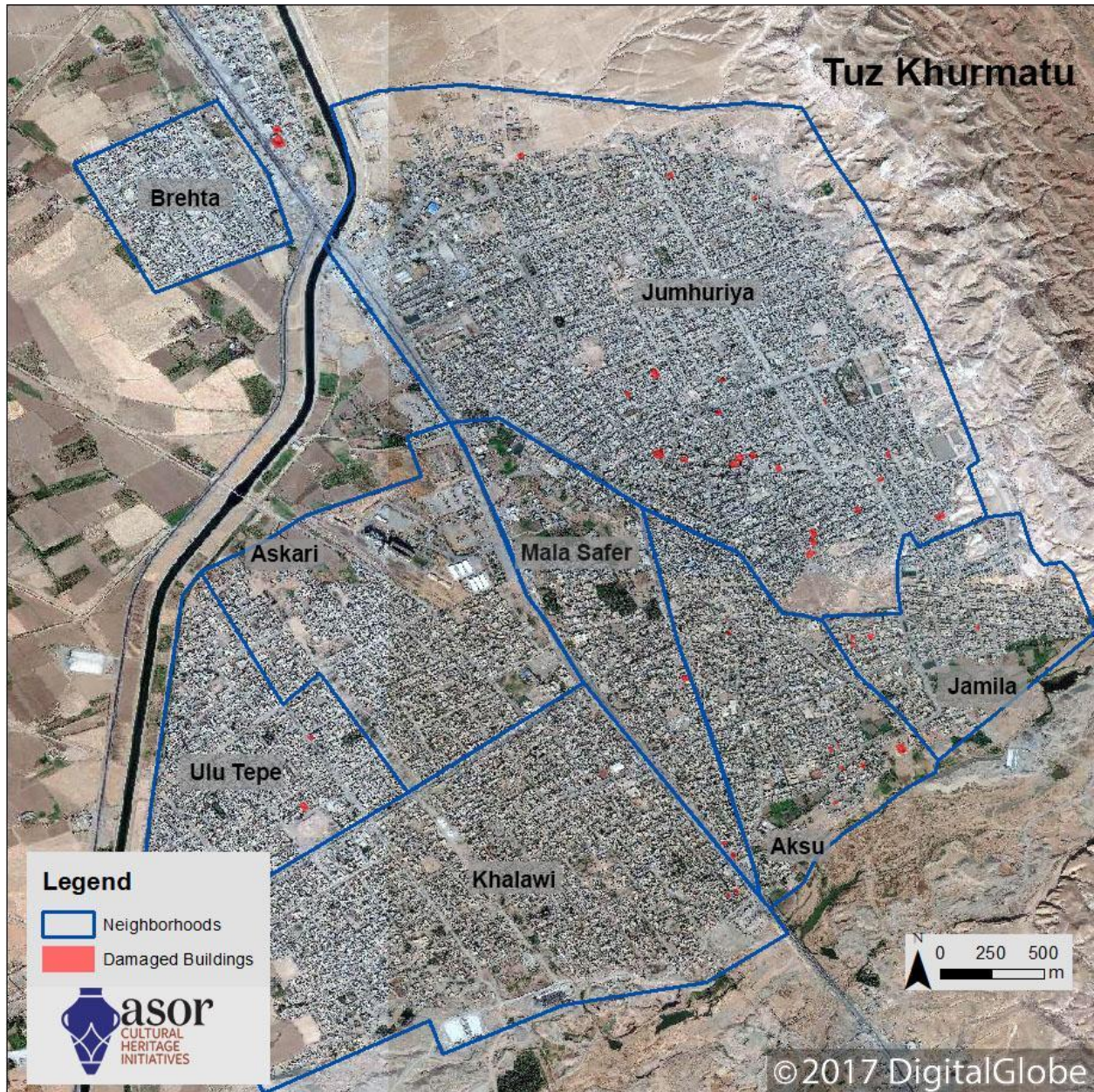
Satellite Imagery and Geospatial Analysis

Tuz Khurmatu, Iraq:

After reports surfaced of sectarian violence in the city of Tuz Khurmatu,¹³⁶ ASOR CHI analyzed available satellite imagery for damaged structures. 41 instances of damage caused by fire and heavy artillery were identified via satellite imagery within the city between January 19, 2017 and October 25, 2017. 38 of the 41 instances of damage occurred between October 12, 2017 and October 25, with the only three exceptions being near the northern neighborhood of Brehta and one building in Ulu Tepe neighborhood. This damage appears to be related to industrial activity.

Half of the identified features which have been damaged are located in the neighborhood called al-Jumhuriya — the largest neighborhood in the city which comprises about one third of its area. There are seven instances of damage in the neighborhood of Aksu, four in Jamila neighborhood and three in Mala Safer neighborhood. These four neighborhoods comprise the eastern half of the city and contain the majority of damage from reported violence in October 2017. Damage to these buildings consists of blackened structure likely due to fire, as well as collapsed roofs and surrounding debris. Some of the buildings have been completely destroyed. Though the satellite analysis does not prove who or what is causing this damage, the clustering of damage within these neighborhoods is concerning. ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the situation in Tuz Khurmatu.

¹³⁶ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/10/iraq-fresh-evidence-that-tens-of-thousands-forced-to-flee-tuz-khurmatu-amid-indiscriminate-attacks-lootings-and-arson/>



Overview map of the recent damage in the city Tuz Khurmatu, separated by neighborhood (ASOR CHI/DigitalGlobe NextView License; October 25, 2017)

Raqqa, Syria:

The city of Raqqa was severely damaged during the recent offensive to retake the city from ISIS. Over the course of five months, the city was bombarded with airstrikes, shelled, and affected by close combat damage. As in Mosul, much of the city's architecture has been severely damaged. Since May, ASOR CHI has reported on 50 different incidents within Raqqa. The majority of these involve damage to mosques due to airstrikes and other explosives. In addition to the damage inflicted on religious heritage, archaeological sites, such as the Old City Wall, were also damaged with explosives. As the conflict has moved to other regions, postings of photographs of the city on social media show the true extent of the damage and the massive amounts of rebuilding required to rehabilitate the city. While ASOR CHI has been able to compile reports of this damage from media sources, DigitalGlobe satellite imagery has also been integral to reporting on the ongoing damage during the offensive. For every site reported as damaged in the media, another site was found only through examination of recent satellite images (For previous reporting on damage to Raqqa, see the [Satellite Imagery and Geospatial Analysis in the June 2017 Monthly Report](#)).

Comparisons of DigitalGlobe satellite imagery from before and after the aerial campaign on Raqqa help to illustrate the extent of the damage to the city. In the Old City, satellite images indicate that though buildings remain standing, the streets and surrounding areas are covered in debris, and a layer of ash and dust covers the entire area. Darker brown soil can be seen tracked into the city through the holes blown into the Old City Wall (For more information on damage to the wall, see [ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0122 in July 2017 Monthly Report](#) and [ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0122 UPDATE in August 2017 Monthly Report](#)). On the western side of the Old City, the damage is demonstrably worse, as the front line of the conflict was located in the western half of Raqqa. For example, al-Hinni Mosque, located in the western part of the Old City, was damaged in June due to a US-led Coalition airstrike. Recent photographs indicate the mosque was also damaged by gunfire (see [ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0121 in July 2017 Monthly Report](#) and [ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0121 UPDATE in October 2017 Monthly Report](#)).

Conflict damage is extensive in western Raqqa neighborhoods. The areas around the hospital and stadium were constantly bombarded with airstrikes during the offensive, leading to severe destruction of residential and administrative buildings and mosques. Many of the mosques damaged in this area were completely destroyed, such as Abdul Rahman bin Auf Mosque. Located close to the children's hospital, which was reportedly used by ISIS as a headquarters, this mosque was destroyed in a US-led Coalition airstrike in late July (see [ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0141 in August 2017 Monthly Report](#)). The satellite images below illustrate the breadth of the damage, with the majority of neighborhoods in Raqqa affected by collapsed buildings and scattered debris.



Old City of Raqqa prior to start of offensive (DigitalGlobe NextView License; May 30, 2017)



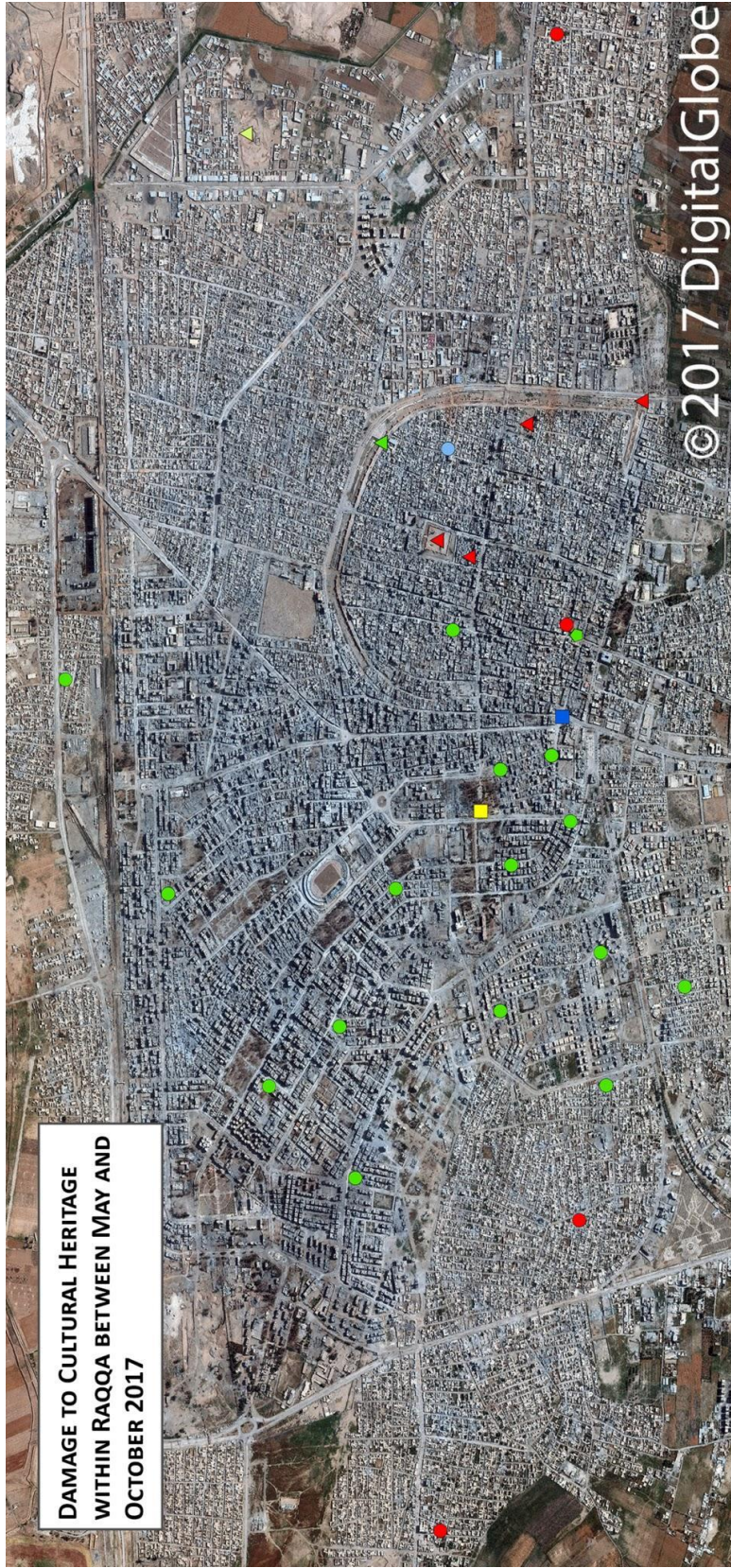
Old City of Raqqa with severe damage (DigitalGlobe NextView License; October 21, 2017)



Western Raqqa prior to start of offensive with a few visible areas of bombardment (DigitalGlobe NextView License; May 30, 2017)



Western Raqqa with severe damage (DigitalGlobe NextView License; October 21, 2017)



DAMAGE TO CULTURAL HERITAGE WITHIN RAQQA BETWEEN MAY AND OCTOBER 2017

© 2017 DigitalGlobe

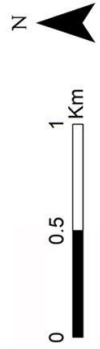
Image: October 21, 2017

SITE TYPE

- ▲ Archaeological Site/Monument
- Religious Site/Monument
- Secular Site/Monument
- ◆ Museum, Collection, Library, or Archive

DAMAGE PATTERN

- Military activity: explosives
- Military activity: explosives - airstrike
- Military activity: tunneling
- Military activity: intentional destruction
- Developmental disturbance
- Site management: visitor activity



(ASOR CHI/DigitalGlobe NextView License; October 21, 2017)

SNHR Vital Facilities Report:

On October 12, 2017 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) released a vital facilities report for September 2017. According to SNHR, there were 92 attacks against vital civilian facilities. The sites attacked include seven mosques.¹³⁷

- On September 2, 2017, SNHR reported a US-led Coalition airstrike destroyed al-Nur Mosque in Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate. However, DigitalGlobe satellite imagery indicates this mosque was destroyed as a result of two incidents, the first between July 26–August 1, 2017 and the second between August 13–25, 2017. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0145**
- On September 10, 2017, a US-led Coalition airstrike destroyed Umm al-Mouminein Aisha Mosque in Ruwaished, Raqqa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0161**
- On September 10, 2017, SNHR reported that SDF fighters shelled al-Basrawi Mosque in Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate, partially destroying the mosque. However, DigitalGlobe satellite imagery indicates that while there is damage to the roof that occurred between August 25–September 6, 2017, the mosque has not been destroyed.
- On September 17, 2017, a US-led Coalition airstrike damaged al-Shamati Mosque in Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate, rendering the mosque out of commission. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0164**
- On September 20, 2017, a Russian airstrike partially destroyed Abu Bakr al-Siddiq Mosque in Jarjanaz, Idlib Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0166**
- On September 27, 2017, a Russian airstrike damaged al-Iman Mosque in Jisr al-Shugur, Idlib Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0171**
- On September 28, 2017, a SARG airstrike partially destroyed al-Janoubi Mosque in Mazra'at al-Tis'a, Sahl al-Rouj, Idlib Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0174**

Heritage Timeline

October 31, 2017

The **Penn Cultural Heritage Center** will hold a lecture on October 31, 2017 at the Penn Museum titled “**Measuring Cultural Property Destruction in Iraq and Syria.**” Benjamin Isakhan of Deakin University will discuss the first results of “an ongoing research project which seeks to develop the methods and models urgently needed to analyse and interpret heritage destruction.”
<http://www.pennchc.org/page/Isakhan2017>

¹³⁷ <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/10/11/47422/>

- Reuters* published an article titled “**World Bank approves \$400 million to rebuild liberated Iraqi areas.**” The World Bank approved \$400 million in funding to help rebuild services in Iraqi areas recaptured from Islamic State militants. This is in addition to the \$350 million approved in 2015 for the Iraq Emergency Operation for Development Project.
<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-iraq-worldbank/world-bank-approves-400-million-to-rebuild-liberated-iraqi-areas-idUSKBN1D02V5>
 - The New York Times* published an article titled “**Why Unesco Needs the United States**” (by Hugh Eakin). The author argues that in withdrawing from UNESCO, the US is “forfeiting its leadership in a cause on which Unesco and its partners in the United States, Europe and beyond are finally making progress: protecting art, sacred buildings and other historic treasures from deliberate attacks during armed conflict.”
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/31/opinion/unesco-united-states.html?smid=tw-share>
- October 30, 2017
- The Express Tribune* published an article titled “**Aleppo's ancient roots explored in talk by former Australian ambassador to Syria**” (by Bashaar Husain). Ross Burns, currently serving as an adjunct professor in the Ancient History Department at Macquarie University in Sydney, spoke at a session on “Aleppo: A City and its Architecture” held at Aga Khan University.
<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1541327/1-aleppos-ancient-roots-explored-talk-former-australian-ambassador-syria/>
- October 29, 2017
- Heritage for Peace** published its bi-weekly newsletter titled “**Damage to Syria's Heritage – 29 October 2017.**”
<http://www.heritageforpeace.org/syria-culture-and-heritage/damage-to-cultural-heritage/previous-damage-newsletters/damage-to-syrias-heritage-29-october-2017/>
- October 26, 2017
- The Seattle Times* published an article titled “**Iraq’s vast marshes, reborn after Saddam, are in peril again**” (by Sam McNeil & Susannah George). Iraq’s wetlands, declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2016, are imperiled by government mismanagement and new upstream projects.
<https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/iraqs-vast-marshes-reborn-after-saddam-are-in-peril-again/>
- October 25, 2017
- The Libyan Department of Antiquities** launched its own website.
<https://doa.com.ly/mag/>

- *3DPrint.com* published an article titled “**3D Printed Palmyra Arch Honored for Engaging the Public with Research.**” A replica of the Triumphal Arch from Palmyra that was destroyed by ISIS militants in 2015 has been awarded the Public Engagement with Research Award from the University of Oxford.
<https://3dprint.com/192138/3d-printed-palmyra-arch-award/>
 - *The Libya Observer* published an article titled “**Libyan antiquities are subject to an awareness campaign**” (by Housam Najjair). The Libyan Antiquities Authority began a project to document and protect archaeological sites in the remote desert village of Jaghub.
<https://www.libyaobserver.ly/inbrief/libyan-antiquities-are-subject-awareness-campaign>
 - The **DGAM** published a post titled “مشروع التدمير والإسعاف الطارئ (Emergency relief and rehabilitation project for entrance stairs of Aleppo Citadel).” The DGAM will carry out repairwork on the entrance stairway of the Citadel of Aleppo.
<http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=177&id=2353>
- October 24, 2017
- The Libya Observer* published an article titled “**Libyan Archaeology Authority ends training course at The Louvre**” (by Abdulkader Assad). The Archaeology Authority of Libya has ended the training course it began at the end of September 2016 at the Louvre in cooperation with the French Embassy.
<https://www.libyaobserver.ly/inbrief/libyan-archaeology-authority-ends-training-course-louvre>
- October 23, 2017
- Sci News* published an article titled “**Archaeologists Find Cache of Assyrian Cuneiform Tablets in Iraq.**” Excavations led by a University of Tübingen archaeologist at Bassetki, the site of a recently-discovered Bronze Age settlement in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, have uncovered almost 100 clay tablets dating back to the Middle Assyrian period.
<http://www.sci-news.com/archaeology/cache-assyrian-cuneiform-iraq-05350.html>
- *The Art Newspaper* published an article titled “**UK’s Cultural Protection Fund makes headway in conflict zones**” (by Emily Sharpe). The British Council, in co-operation with the Department for Digital, Media, Culture and Sport, developed a fund for the protection of heritage in 12 conflict-affected countries in the Middle East and Africa. The fund has helped to promote and protect cultural heritage in Syria and Iraq by funding training in traditional stonemasonry, creating films exploring Yezidi culture, and training archaeologists to use satellite and aerial imagery sources.
<http://theartnewspaper.com/news/uk%27s-cultural-protection-fund-makes-headway-in-conflict-zones>

- October 22, 2017 *Libya Herald* published an article titled “**Still not known who wrecked Tripoli shrine.**” Al-Bugharara Sufi Shrine in Tripoli was reportedly destroyed by unknown perpetrators in October 2017. **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0035**
<https://www.libyaherald.com/2017/10/22/still-not-known-who-wrecked-tripoli-shrine/>
- October 21, 2017 *ABC Radio* published a report titled “**Syria's cities: from rubble to renewal on Sunday Extra**” (by Hamish MacDonald). Plans are being made by Syrian architects and designers to rebuild the cities devastated during the civil war.
<http://radio.abc.net.au/programitem/pg961mKx06?play=true>
- October 19, 2017 *The Art Newspaper* published an article titled “**Islamic State's looting of antiquities is rising but hard facts remain scarce**” (by Vincent Noce). The difficulty in establishing the revenue raised by ISIS by the sale of looted antiquities is compounded by the high number of fake artifacts flooding the market. ASOR CHI Academic Director Michael Danti is quoted.
<http://theartnewspaper.com/news/islamic-state's-looting-of-antiquities-is-rising-but-hard-facts-remain-scarce>
- October 18, 2017 *Libya Herald* published an article titled “**Benghazi palace may become archaeological museum.**” Libyan Antiquities Authority officials hope secure funding to turn al-Manar Palace in Benghazi into a museum.
<https://www.libyaherald.com/2017/10/18/benghazi-palace-may-become-archaeological-museum/>
- **DGAM** published an article titled “اكتشاف مدخل في باب النصر يؤدي إلى سطح الباب (The discovery of a door in Bab al-Nasr that leads to the roof).” The Aleppo Directorate Antiquities discovered a previously unknown passageway leading to the roof of Bab al-Nasr while conducting restoration work on the monument.
<http://dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=177&id=2351>
 - **SNHR** published a post titled “**Syrian regime forces shelled al Fareeh Mosque in al Jalaa city in Deir Ez-Zour governorte on October 17.**” SARG shelling reportedly damaged a mosque. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0186**
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/10/18/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-al-fareeh-mosque-al-jalaa-city-deir-ez-zour-governorte-october-17/>

- MDR published an article titled “**Wie syrische Raubkunst in Deutschland verkauft wird (How Syrian looted art is sold in Germany).**” An upcoming investigative report airing October 25, 2017 will examine the movement of looted antiquities from Idlib Governorate to buyers in Germany.
<http://www.mdr.de/investigativ/syrische-raubkunst-in-deutschland-100.html>
- October 17, 2017 **Heritage for Peace** published its bi-weekly newsletter titled “**Damage to Syria’s Heritage - 17 October 2017.**”
<http://www.heritageforpeace.org/syria-culture-and-heritage/damage-to-cultural-heritage/previous-damage-newsletters/damage-to-syrias-heritage-17-october-2017/>
- October 16, 2017 *Libya Herald* published an article titled “**Philaeni statues’ disappearance refuted by antiquities authorities.**” The head of Sirte Antiquities Office Abdel-Azim Hafez has denied recent reports that two bronze statues were stolen from a museum in Sultan. According to Hafez, the statues were removed for safe-keeping with the knowledge of UNESCO and are being kept off site. **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0033**
<https://www.libyaherald.com/2017/10/16/philaeni-statues-disappearance-refuted-by-antiquities-authorities/>
- SNHR published a post titled “**Syrian regime forces shelled al Kabir Mosque in Harbnafseh town in Hama governorate on October 15.**” SARG shelling reportedly severely damaged a mosque. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0188**
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/10/16/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-al-kabir-mosque-harbnafseh-town-hama-governorate-october-15/>
- Art News* published an article titled “**World Monuments Fund Names 25 At-Risk Cultural Sites**” (by Grace Halio). The World Monuments Fund named 25 cultural heritage sites spanning 30 countries that it is placing on its 2018 World Monuments Watch list, meaning that they are currently threatened by conflict, climate change, or other dangers. These include Mosul’s al-Hadba Minaret and the Old Suq of Aleppo.
<http://www.artnews.com/2017/10/16/world-monuments-fund-names-25-at-risk-cultural-sites/>
- October 15, 2017 *Al Jazeera* published an article titled “**Reclaiming Mosul's vibrant culture after ISIL**” (by Linah Alsaafin). The author discusses the cultural resurgence in Mosul following its recapture from ISIS militants in July 2017 after three years of ISIS rule.
<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/10/reclaiming-mosul-vibrant-culture-isil-171015092411699.html>

- Alaraby TV* published a video report titled “الأسبوع السوري | الآثار في إدلب وجهد الحفاظ عليها (Syrian week | Artifacts in Idlib and efforts to preserve them).” The efforts of the Idlib Directorate of Antiquities to preserve cultural heritage sites and artifacts despite the ongoing conflict are discussed.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f7iLaujoms0&feature=youtu.be>
- October 14, 2017

Le Monde published an article titled “Audrey Azoulay devient la nouvelle patronne de l’Unesco (Audrey Azoulay becomes the new head of Unesco)” (by Benjamin Barthe). Audrey Azoulay, former minister of culture and communication under François Hollande, was elected Director-General of UNESCO, beating out candidates from eight other countries, including Egypt and Qatar.
http://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2017/10/14/audrey-azoulay-devient-la-nouvelle-patronne-de-l-unesco_5200818_3210.html#meter_toaster
- October 12, 2017

SNHR published a post titled “Syrian regime forces shelled Abu Bakr al Siddiq Mosque in Anadan city in Aleppo governorate on October 12.” SARG shelling reportedly severely damaged a mosque.
ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0182
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/10/12/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-abu-bakr-al-siddiq-mosque-anadan-city-aleppo-governorate-october-12/>
- October 11, 2017

DGAM published an article titled “الإعلان عن مشروع لتأهيل صرح الثورة السورية الكبرى (Announcement of a project to rehabilitate the Great Syrian Revolution [shrine]).” The DGAM plans to rehabilitate the al-Mujahid Sultan Pasha al-Atrash Shrine in al-Qrayya, Suwayda Governorate.
<http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=177&id=2346>
- Several news outlets published articles on the recent decision by the US to withdraw from UNESCO, citing anti-Israel bias.
<http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/10/11/u-s-to-pull-out-of-unesco-again/>
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2017/10/12/u-s-withdraws-from-unesco-the-u-n-s-cultural-organization-citing-anti-israel-bias/>
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/12/us-withdraw-unesco-december-united-nations>
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-41598991>

- SNHR published a post titled “**Syrian regime forces shelled al Bouawad Mosque in al Qouriya city in Deir Ez-Zour governorate on October 10.**” A SARG airstrike reportedly damaged a mosque. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0181**
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/10/11/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-al-bouawad-mosque-al-qouriya-city-deir-ez-zour-governorate-october-10/>
 - *Heritage Daily* published an article titled “**The Pop-Cultural Heritage of Terrorism, Treasure Hunters, and Trafficking: Entertainment versus Reality**” (by Katie Paul). The author argues that the popularization of story lines related to ISIS and terrorism more broadly has opened a new public audience to threats facing our cultural heritage. Looting and the trade in black market antiquities as portrayed in television shows and video games is compared with the current situation in reality.
<http://www.heritagedaily.com/2017/10/pop-cultural-heritage-terrorism-treasure-hunters-trafficking-entertainment-versus-reality/117047>
 - *Egypt Today* published an article titled “**The war-torn heritage of Libya, Iraq, and Syria.**” A short survey of the damage to cultural heritage sites in Libya, Iraq, and Syria.
<https://www.egypttoday.com/Article/4/27143/The-war-torn-heritage-of-Libya-Iraq-and-Syria>
 - *The New York Times* published an article titled “**Looted Antiquity, Once at Met Museum, to Return to Lebanon**” (by Colin Moynihan). A Phoenician statue on loan to the Metropolitan Museum of Art was found to have been stolen in the 1980s from the archaeological site of the Temple of Eshmun near Sidon, Lebanon and will be returned to Lebanon.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/11/arts/design/looted-antiquity-once-at-met-museum-to-return-to-lebanon.html? r=0>
- October 10, 2017
- The New York Times* published an article titled “**After 6,000 Years of Human Habitation, One Family and Lots of Mice**” (by Rod Nordland). A discussion of the long history of Erbil, including the Citadel.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/10/world/middleeast/iraq-erbil-citadel.html>

- ICOMOS published an article titled “**ICOMOS salutes the exemplary work led by Prof. Maamoun Abdulkarim in favor of Syrian heritage.**” ICOMOS praises the contributions made by former Director-General of Antiquities and Museums Maamoun Abdulkarim to the protection of Syrian archaeology. Abdulkarim was head of the DGAM from 2011 to 2017.
<http://www.icomos.org/en/178-english-categories/news/9834-l-icomos-salue-le-travail-remarquable-du-professeur-maamoun-abdulkarim-pour-le-patrimoine-syrien-2>
 - Colgate University News* published an article titled “**Preserving Cultural Heritage in Times of Conflict: an interdisciplinary conference**” (by Emily Daniel). A three-day conference will take place on October 18–20 at Colgate University and will include talks by Amr al-Azm of The Day After Heritage Initiative Project (TDA-HPI) and Allison Cuneo of ASOR CHI.
<http://news.colgate.edu/2017/10/preserving-cultural-heritage-in-times-of-conflict-an-interdisciplinary-conference.html/>
 - UNESCO published a press release titled “**UNESCO and the State Hermitage Museum join forces to protect heritage in conflict areas.**” Director-General of UNESCO Irina Bokova and General Director of the State Hermitage Museum of Saint Petersburg Prof. Mikhail Borisovich Piotrovskiy signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the protection and restoration of cultural property in conflict areas. The State Hermitage Museum will provide support for the assessment of damage to cultural property, the devising of operational plans for urgent safeguarding measures, restoration of cultural property and technical supervision, and training.
<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/unesco-and-the-state-hermitage-museum-join-forces-to-protect/>
- October 8, 2017
- XinhuaNet* published an article titled “**Libya's Sabratha recovering after weeks of violent battles.**” The facade and walls of the ancient Roman theater at Sabratha were reportedly damaged by recent fighting. **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0022 UPDATE**
http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-10/08/c_136665365.htm
- SNHR published a post titled “**Syrian regime forces bomb Cultural Center in Ma’aret al Numan city in Idlib governorate on October 8.**” A SARG airstrike reportedly damaged a cultural center. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0180**
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/10/08/syrian-regime-forces-bomb-cultural-center-maaret-al-numan-city-idlib-governorate-october-8/>

October 6, 2017

Reuters published an article titled “**Debris and dust: Raqqa 'sacrificed' to defeat Islamic State**” (by John Davison). The devastating damage to the city of Raqqa is discussed.
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-raqqa/debris-and-dust-raqqa-sacrificed-to-defeat-islamic-state-idUSKBN1CB114>

- *Le Temps* published an article titled “**Les confessions d’Ali Aboutaam, marchand d’art aussi puissant que controversé**” (by Laure Lugon). The legal case against Ali Aboutaam, owner of the antiquities dealership Phoenix Ancient, for dealing in looted ancient Middle Eastern artifacts, is discussed.
<https://www.letemps.ch/suisse/2017/10/06/confessions-dali-aboutaam-marchand-dart-puissant-controverse>

October 5, 2017

Phys.org published an article titled “**Iraq flight ban halts dig for lost ancient city**” (by Wilson Fache). Excavations at the newly discovered Hellenistic/Parthian site of Qalatga Darband have stalled as a result of the Iraqi government’s ban on international travel into and out of Iraqi Kurdistan.
<https://phys.org/news/2017-10-iraq-flight-halts-lost-ancient.html>

- The **Iraqi Embassy in the US** published an article titled “**H.E. Prime Minister Dr. Haider Al-Abadi visits the "Christians of the East" exhibition at the Institute of the Arab World in Paris.**” The Iraqi Prime Minister visited an exhibit of photographs documenting the lives of Eastern Christians at the Arab World Institute.
<http://www.iraqiembassy.us/in-the-news/he-prime-minister-dr-haider-al-abadi-visits-the-christians-of-the-east-exhibition-at-the>

October 4, 2017

World Bulletin published an article titled “**Damascus’ Cultural Heritage: Al-Zahiriyya Library**” (by Rahmi Gökmen). The manuscript collection belonging to the al-Zahiriyya Library in the Mamluk-era al-Madrasa al-Zahiriyya is explored.
<http://www.worldbulletin.net/news/194640/damascus-cultural-heritage-al-zahiriyya-library>

- UNESCO published an article titled “**Experts meet in Aleppo to discuss traditional building materials and techniques.**” On August 10–11, 2017 UNESCO organized a meeting on traditional building materials and techniques in Aleppo, with the aim to determine the needs of historical sites in Aleppo in terms of traditional building materials and techniques. The initiative gathered 30 relevant stakeholders from governmental institutions, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, local and international experts, as well as 14 traditional craftsmen from the local community.
<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/beirut/single-view/news/experts-meet-in-aleppo-to-discuss-traditional-building-materials>

- *Geopolitical Monitor* published an article titled “**Amid the Usual Cultural Controversies, UNESCO Selects a New Leader**” (by James Borton). Voting for a new Director-General of UNESCO begins on October 9, 2017 during the 202nd session of the UNESCO Executive Board in Paris.
<https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/amid-the-usual-cultural-controversies-unesco-selects-a-new-leader/>
- October 3, 2017 *ScienceNordic* published an article titled “**Ancient grain reveals the development of the earliest cities**” (by Rasmus Kragh Jakobsen). A new study published in *Nature Plants* 3 (June 2017) used isotopic evidence to study the agricultural economy underpinning the emergence of the first urban centres in northern Mesopotamia. Rather than farming existing land more intensively, Mesopotamian farmers made more land arable.
<http://sciencenordic.com/ancient-grain-reveals-development-earliest-cities>
- October 1, 2017 Several news outlets published articles discussing the recent unveiling of the newly restored Lion of Allat from the Palmyra Museum, which was looted and damaged by ISIS militants in 2015. The statue is currently on display in the National Museum in Damascus.
<http://mobile.reuters.com/article/amp/idUSKCN1C61FA>
<http://www.newsweek.com/syria-ancient-palmyra-lion-saved-isis-brought-back-life-damascus-677000>
<https://www.facebook.com/dsyria/posts/10155737696009289>
<http://en.unesco.org/news/restoration-completed-lion-al-lat-statue-ancient-city-palmyra-damaged-isis>
- September 17, 2017 **ICONEM** published an article titled “**Memories of a travel to Kurdistan. The village and the Zoroastrian settlements of Akre.**” Yves Ubelmann, ICONEM CEO, discusses his recent trip to the ancient city of Akre in Iraqi Kurdistan.
<http://iconem.tumblr.com/post/165476590059/memories-of-a-travel-to-kurdistan-the-village-and>