

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

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Weekly Report 101-102 — July 6-19, 2016

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## Executive Summary

During the reporting period, the escalation of hostilities in northern Syria resulted in significant damage to cultural sites. Despite the Syrian regime announcement of a 72-hour ceasefire to coincide with the three-day celebration of Eid al-Fitr, airstrikes continued over much of the country with emphasis on Aleppo Governorate and the Damascus suburbs. Armed opposition later detonated a tunnel bomb in the western Old City of Aleppo, sparking intense fighting in the city between SARG forces and opposition fighters, which resulted in, inter alia, the damaging of the National Museum of Aleppo. Furthermore, multiple religious sites in the city of Aleppo and surrounding towns of Kafr Hamra and Hreitan have been damaged in recent weeks, while cultural sites in Manbij continue to be damaged in the ongoing armed conflict.

In Iraq, we continue to investigate the extent of the damage in Fallujah following the expulsion of ISIL militants. A number of mosques were vandalized or destroyed during ISIL occupation, and more were damaged during the battle to recapture Fallujah. After the city was retaken, local citizens accused the Shia Popular Mobilization Units of vandalizing, looting, and burning private property as well as Sunni mosques. During the ISIL occupation, Fallujah was largely cut off from communication with the outside world, and so little information was available on the cultural heritage situation save for satellite imagery and sporadic in-country reports. Since the city's liberation, a steady flow of information has been released with the first detailed photodocumentation of conditions in the city and detailed accounts of the ISIL occupation. ASOR CHI will continue to employ open source media and satellite imagery to assess the damage to Fallujah's religious sites with special emphasis on documenting whether damage occurred during the ISIL occupation, during the battle for Fallujah, or in the aftermath of the GOI victory.

**In both Iraq and Syria intentional targeting of religious sites continues.** ISIL militants carried out suicide bombings near the Mausoleum of Sayyid Muhammad bin Ali al-Hadi, the 9th century tomb of a revered Shia saint in the town of Balad, north of Baghdad. According to open-source reports, worshippers at or near the shrine were celebrating the end of Ramadan holiday Eid al-Fitr. Mar Sharbel Syrian Orthodox Church in al-Hasakah Governorate was firebombed and vandalized by unknown assailants.

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

## Key Points

- New photographs from Fallujah, al-Anbar Governorate reveal damage to three mosques (**ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0019 UPDATE**).
- Members of the Popular Mobilization Forces are accused of damaging at least six mosques in Fallujah following the recapture of the city from ISIL militants (**ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0022**).
- ISIL militants allegedly attacked the Mausoleum of Sayyid Muhammad bin Ali al-Hadi in Balad, Salah ad Din Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0023**).
- Unknown attackers firebombed and vandalized Mar Sharbel Syrian Orthodox Church in al-Hasakah Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0010**).
- New video footage shows damage to al-Bara bin Malek Mosque in Hreitan, Aleppo Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0071 UPDATE**).
- New video footage shows damage to Abu Bakr al-Sideiq Mosque in Hreitan, Aleppo Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0082 UPDATE**).
- New video footage has emerged of damage to Khaled bin al-Walid Mosque in Hreitan, Aleppo Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0092 UPDATE**).
- New videos and photographs of damage to four mosques in Hreitan have been published on Youtube and Instagram (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0102**).
- Alleged SARG airstrikes damaged al-Musafir Mosque in Ghernata, Homs Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0103**).
- At least eight mosques in Manbij were damaged between January 2014 and July 2016, allegedly by ISIL militants, Syrian Democratic Forces, and US-led coalition airstrikes (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0104**).
- The National Museum of Aleppo was severely damaged by shelling (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0105**).
- Alleged SARG airstrikes damaged Omar bin al-Khattab Mosque in Deir ez Zor Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0106**).
- The DGAM discovered several large looting tunnels at Tell Taban in al-Hasakah Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0107**).
- Alleged Russian airstrikes damaged a cemetery and Abu Bakr al-Sidiq Mosque in Kafr Hamra, Aleppo Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0108**).
- Alleged SARG and Russian shelling damaged four mosques in the city of Aleppo (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0109**).

## Heritage Timeline

July 19, 2016

**Homs Media Center** published an article titled “روسيا لم ترمم شينا” من آثار تدمر والسكان يحذرون من سرقتها (Russia has not restored any of the ruins of Palmyra and residents warn of theft).” Homs Media Center reports no Russian restoration or excavation is taking place at Palmyra and looting of the site is ongoing.  
<http://www.homs-media-center.com/archives/3232>

- *Al Monitor* published an article titled “**Sumerian city of Lagash slowly emerging from desert sands**” (by Adnan Abu Zeed). Excavations are ongoing at Lagash but looting, neglect, and lack of protection threaten the site.  
<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/en/originals/2016/07/lagash-sumerian-iraq-babylon.html>
  - The **Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE)** and **La Sapienza University in Rome** launched a website titled “**Historical Houses of Sulaymaniyah**” in partnership with the Directorate of Antiquities of Sulaymaniyah and the Sulaymaniyah Museum. The website maps and describes historically significant private houses in the city acquired by the museum.  
<http://hhs.routes-assn.org/en/>
- July 18, 2016
- Several media outlets published articles discussing the **recent inscription al-Ahwar Marshlands to the UNESCO World Heritage List**. The area consists of the archaeological sites of Ur, Uruk, and Tell Eridu, and four wetland marsh areas in southern Iraq.  
<http://rudaw.net/english/middleeast/iraq/17072016>  
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-36823417>  
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/jul/18/iraqi-marshlands-named-as-unesco-world-heritage-site>  
<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-un-heritage-iraq-idUSKCN0ZX0SN>  
<http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1529/>
- July 16, 2016
- SNHR** published a post titled “**Government forces targeted mosque in Al Saleheen neighborhood in Aleppo city in July 16.**” An airstrike severely damaged the 12th-century CE Mausoleum of Ibrahim Saleheen in Aleppo. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0109.**  
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/07/16/government-forces-targeted-mosque-al-saleheen-neighborhood-aleppo-city-july-16/>
- **SNHR** published a post titled “**Government forces targeted Al Maqamat Mosque in Al Ma’adi neighborhood in Aleppo city in July 16.**” An airstrike severely damaged a 14th-century CE mosque in Aleppo. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0109.**  
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/07/16/government-forces-targeted-al-maqamat-mosque-al-maadi-neighborhood-aleppo-city-july-16/>

July 15, 2016

**U.S. Department of State** published a press release titled “**Preserving Cultural Heritage.**” From July 9–30, 2016 the U.S. Department of State is hosting 15 officials from the Middle East and North Africa as part of the International Visitor Leadership Program to explore strategies that prevent the destruction, looting, and trafficking of cultural heritage.

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2016/07/260070.htm?goMobile=0>

July 14, 2016

**DGAM** published an article titled “**Damages at the site of Tel Taban.**” DGAM representatives visited the site of Tell Taban in al-Hasakah Governorate. The site has been seriously damaged by looting tunnels. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0107.**

<http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2010>

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**SNHR** published an article titled “**Russian forces targeted Al Aqsa Martyrs Mosque in Tareiq Al Bab neighborhood in Aleppo city in July 14.**” A Russian airstrike reportedly damaged a mosque in Aleppo. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0109.**

<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/07/15/russian-forces-targeted-al-aqsa-martyrs-mosque-tareiq-al-bab-neighborhood-aleppo-city-july-14/>

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**KUNA** published an article titled “**Preserving Arab heritage sites vital for intercultural dialogue--Kuwaiti official.**” Kuwait will donate \$100,000 USD to restoring Arab heritage sites in Syria, Iraq, and Libya.

<http://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=2512146&Language=en>

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**TASS** published an article titled “**Palmyra’s Baalshamin temple may be restored — expert.**” Aleksander Lesovoi, the head of the Grabar Russian Art and Research Restoration Center, asserts that the Temple of Baal-Shamin and Qalaat Shirkuh at Palmyra can be restored fairly easily. However, the damage to the *cella* of the Temple of Bel and the Triumphal Arch is such that these monuments must be reconstructed largely using modern materials.

<http://tass.ru/en/society/888087>

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**UNESCO** published a press release titled “**UNESCO Director-General depllores heavy damages at the National Museum of Aleppo.**” The recent damage to the National Museum of Aleppo is discussed.

[http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/unesco\\_director\\_general\\_depllores\\_heavy\\_damages\\_at\\_the\\_nation#.V4eoODkrI1j](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/unesco_director_general_depllores_heavy_damages_at_the_nation#.V4eoODkrI1j)



- **SNHR** published a post titled “**Government forces targeted mosque in Al Bou Omar town in Deir Ez-Zour governorate in July 13.**” SARG forces reportedly damaged a mosque in rural Deir ez Zor Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0106.**  
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/07/14/government-forces-targeted-mosque-al-bou-omar-town-deir-ez-zour-governorate-july-13/>
  - **SNHR** published a post titled “**Russian forces targeted Al Tawabein mosque in Al Lairamoon neighborhood in Aleppo city, July 13.**” A Russian airstrike allegedly damaged a mosque in Aleppo. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0109.**  
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/07/14/russian-forces-targeted-al-tawabein-mosque-al-lairamoon-neighborhood-aleppo-city-july-13/>
- July 13, 2016
- DGAM** published an article titled “**Huge damages in the national Museum of Aleppo.**” The National Museum of Aleppo was severely damaged by recent shelling. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0105.**  
<http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2008>
- **SNHR** published its “**Vital Facilities Report**” covering damage to civilian facilities in June and during the first half of 2016.  
[http://sn4hr.org/wp-content/pdf/english/assault\\_on\\_the\\_vital\\_centers\\_in\\_the\\_first\\_half\\_of\\_2016\\_en.pdf](http://sn4hr.org/wp-content/pdf/english/assault_on_the_vital_centers_in_the_first_half_of_2016_en.pdf)
  - *New China* published an article titled “**World heritage meeting highlights damages to sites in conflict zones.**” The 40th session of the World Heritage Committee highlighted the damages done to heritage sites in conflict zones, with member states pledging to take more protective measures.  
[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-07/13/c\\_135508287.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-07/13/c_135508287.htm)
  - **DGAM** published an article titled “**Report about the visit of the Director General, to Tel Mozan and the archaeological sites in the regions of Al-Qamishli, Al-Malkieh.**” DGAM representatives visited sites in the Qamishli area, including Tell Mozan.  
<http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2006>
- July 12, 2016
- Al Jazeera* published an article titled “**The group saving Syria’s ancient sites from destruction**” (by Stefanie Dekker). The work of The Day After - Heritage Protection Initiative is discussed.  
<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/07/group-saving-syria-ancient-sites-destruction-160712080118117.html>

- *The Guardian* published an article titled “**British hostage John Cantlie is shown in new Isis propaganda video**” (by Ben Quinn). A recent ISIL propaganda video that shows the aftermath of the alleged US-led coalition bombing of Mosul University was narrated by kidnapped British journalist John Cantlie.  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jul/13/british-hostage-john-cantlie-appears-in-new-isis-propaganda-video>
  - **Heritage for Peace** published its bi-weekly newsletter titled “**Damage to Syria’s Heritage.**”  
<http://www.heritageforpeace.org/syria-culture-and-heritage/damage-to-cultural-heritage/previous-damage-newsletters/damage-to-syrias-heritage-12-july-2016/>
  - *Baladi News* published an article titled “كيف نهب آل الأسد آثار السويداء؟ (How is Assad looting the artifacts of al-Suweida?)” The historical and archaeological sites of as-Suwayda Governorate are at risk from neglect, illegal modern construction, and looting.  
<http://baladi-news.com/ar/news/details/8177/>
  - *Environment News Service* published an article titled “**Dams, Logging, Poaching Threaten World Heritage.**” The nonprofit Save the Tigris Campaign called for the protection of the Mesopotamian Marshlands in Iraq and a halt to construction of all large dams on the Tigris River and its principal tributaries at the 40th session of the World Heritage Committee.  
<http://ens-newswire.com/2016/07/13/dams-logging-poaching-threaten-world-heritage-sites/>
  - UNESCO published a press release titled “**Istanbul Declaration on the Protection of World Heritage was Unanimously Adopted!**” According to the Istanbul Declaration, States Parties are invited to take measures and act together against the destruction of world heritage in cooperation with UNESCO and in correspondence with relevant UNESCO cultural conventions.  
<http://40whc2016.istanbul/all-news/istanbul-declaration-on-the-protection-of-world-heritage-was-unanimously-adopted/>
- July 10, 2016
- The Independent* published an article titled “**Russian forces are the latest to travel on Syria’s Roman road to barbarity**” (by Robert Fisk). The author discusses the damage done by ISIL militants in the ancient and modern areas of Palmyra.  
<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/isis-syria-palmyra-russia-forces-journey-down-roman-road-to-barbarity-a7129406.html>

- UNESCO published an article titled “**UNESCO World Heritage Committee opens in Istanbul.**” This is the 40th session of the World Heritage Committee.  
<http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1519/>
  - DGAM published an article titled “**Documentation of Citadel of Masyaf by using 3D techniques.**” The DGAM and ICONEM continue to document Qalaat Masyaf using 3D imaging techniques.  
<http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2004>
  - SNHR published an article titled “**Government forces and its allies targeted Al Mufafer Mosque in Ghernata village in Homs governorate, July 9.**” SARG shelling reportedly damaged a mosque.  
**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0103.**  
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/07/10/government-forces-allies-targeted-al-mufafer-mosque-ghernata-village-homs-governorate-july-9/>
- July 9, 2016
- The Yale Politic* published an article titled “**Syria, Colonialism, and the Yale Art Gallery**” (by Olivia Paschal). This article examines the debate over where historical artifacts from modern regions of conflicts should be housed. Yale University’s collection of artifacts from Dura Europos is used as an example.  
<http://thepolitic.org/syria-colonialism-and-the-yale-art-gallery/>
- July 8, 2016
- Artnet News* published an article titled “**Germany Ratifies Controversial Cultural Heritage Legislation**” (by Henri Neuendorf). Germany ratified a bill seeking to keep German cultural heritage, such as works of art, within the country. The new legislation was widely criticized by the art market and museum community.  
<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/germany-ratifies-cultural-heritage-legislation-547412>
- *Al Monitor* published an article titled “**Iraqi pre-Islamic landmark threatening to collapse**” (by Adnan Abu Zeed). The Sasanian palace of Taq Kasr at Ctesiphon is suffering from neglect and is in dire need of maintenance.  
<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/07/taq-kasra-iraq-iran-ctesiphon.html>
- July 7, 2016
- Deutsche Welle* published an article titled “**UNESCO meets to expand World Heritage.**” UNESCO will gather in Istanbul on July 10, 2016 to review candidates to join the World Heritage List.  
<http://www.dw.com/en/unesco-meets-to-expand-world-heritage/a-19385558>

- *NewsDeeply* published an article titled “**Conversations: Selling Military Antiques in Wartime**” (by Al-Basel Tadrous). The owner of a shop selling military antiques in the Eastern Ghouta region of Rif Dimashq is interviewed.  
<https://www.newsdeeply.com/syria/articles/2016/07/07/conversations-selling-military-antiques-in-wartime>
  - *TRT World* published an article titled “**From Palmyra to Yellowstone global heritage remains at risk.**” There are currently 48 sites included by UNESCO on its List of World Heritage in Danger. Threats to these sites include war, climate change, and modern development.  
<http://www.trtworld.com/americas/from-palmyra-to-yellowstone-global-heritage-remains-at-risk-134872>
- July 5, 2016
- TED* posted a short film titled “**How Syria’s architecture laid the foundation for brutal war**” (by Marwa al-Sabouni). Homs-native Marwa al-Sabouni argues “Syria’s architecture divided its once tolerant and multicultural society into single-identity enclaves defined by class and religion.”  
[http://www.ted.com/talks/marwa\\_al\\_sabouni\\_how\\_syria\\_s\\_architecture\\_laid\\_the\\_foundation\\_for\\_brutal\\_war](http://www.ted.com/talks/marwa_al_sabouni_how_syria_s_architecture_laid_the_foundation_for_brutal_war)
- *Al Monitor* published an article titled “**How religious holidays are uniting Iraqi Muslims and Christians**” (by Saad Salloum). Iraqi Muslims celebrated Christmas to show solidarity with Christians last year, while the Chaldean Catholic Church announced a day of fasting during Ramadan this year to show that all Iraqis are united.  
<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/07/christians-iraq-ramadan-solidarity-christmas.html>

## Military and Political Context

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

1. Aleppo Governorate:
  - On July 7, SARG forces advanced to ‘within shooting range’ of Castello Road, cutting off the only access point to opposition-held areas in Aleppo city and placing an estimated 250,000-300,000 people under siege.<sup>2</sup>
  - On July 11, Syrian opposition forces launched a new attack against SARG positions in the center of Aleppo City, firing more than 300 shells on western SARG-held neighborhoods. Opposition forces reportedly blew up a tunnel in the Old City, killing 19 regime soldiers. SARG airstrikes were reported over opposition held areas of the city, the majority of which struck the neighborhood of Bab al-Maqam.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-aleppo-idUSKCN0ZN0U2> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-36735196>

<sup>3</sup> <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-syria-aleppo-idUKKCN0ZR0QU> ; <https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2016/7/11/syrian-rebels-target-tunnel-following-regime-massacre-in-aleppo> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east->

- On July 12, a group of Syrian opposition forces known as Rebels of the Aleppo Conquest captured the SARG-held district of Bani Zaid in the city of Aleppo.<sup>4</sup>
  - On July 16, airstrikes in the neighborhoods of Bab al-Nasr and al-Fardous in the city of Aleppo, killed at least 25 civilians.<sup>5</sup>
  - On July 18, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported that US-led coalition airstrikes in Manbij and the village of al-Tukhar killed 21 civilians.<sup>6</sup>
  - On July 19, SOHR reported that US-led coalition airstrikes near the village of al-Tukhar killed at least 56 civilians.<sup>7</sup>
  - On July 19, the US-backed SDF captured the National Hospital building in Manbij, which was being used by ISIL as the group's headquarters.<sup>8</sup>
2. Homs Governorate:
- On July 9, 2016 ISIL militants shot down a Russian military helicopter near Palmyra, killing the two Russian pilots who were on board.<sup>9</sup>
  - On July 9, ISIL launched an attack against SARG positions on the outskirts of Palmyra. Militants were able to capture three SARG checkpoints.<sup>10</sup>
  - On July 12, reported SARG and "allied warplanes" struck an IDP camp in the area of Al-Hamad near the border with Jordan, killing at least 12 people and injuring dozens. A senior Western diplomat stated that initial information showed that several Russian warplanes carried out the attack.<sup>11</sup>
  - On July 13, SARG shelling and airstrikes struck the city of Rastan, killing at least 20 people.<sup>12</sup>
  - On July 14, ISIL militants staged a surprise attack on SARG headquarters "in the vicinity of the ancient Palmyra city." The attack occurred to the east of the city near the grain silos and killed over 18 SARG forces.<sup>13</sup>

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[36763836 ; http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/air-raids-hit-diesel-market-syria-killing-40488681](http://www.abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/air-raids-hit-diesel-market-syria-killing-40488681) ; <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/07/syria-rebels-push-retake-aleppo-supply-line-160711162633835.html> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-aleppo-idUSKCN0ZR0QS> ; <https://www.yahoo.com/news/syria-rebels-attack-regime-held-aleppo-districts-095559363.html> ; <http://time.com/4402242/syrian-rebels-aleppo-civilians-castello-road-assault/> ;

<sup>4</sup> <http://aranews.net/2016/07/syrian-rebels-fight-back-aleppo-recapture-key-district-regime-troops/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/air-raids-kill-25-civilians-syrias-aleppo-monitor-1196646069>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2016/Jul-19/362845-airstrikes-on-isis-held-villages-in-syria-kill-56-activists.ashx>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2016/Jul-19/362845-airstrikes-on-isis-held-villages-in-syria-kill-56-activists.ashx> ; <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/07/led-air-strikes-kill-21-civilians-syria-160719045329897.html> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-36835671>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-headquarters-idUSKCN0Z71D9> ;

<http://aranews.net/2016/07/sdf-captures-isis-command-centre-north-syria/>

<sup>9</sup> <http://uk.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-russia-idUKKCN0ZP0UI> ; <https://citeam.org/ruaf-mil-mi-35-hind-e-down/> ; <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/07/12/russia-just-lied-about-losing-a-gunship-to-isis-heres-why-thats-not-surprising/>

<sup>10</sup> <http://aranews.net/2016/07/islamic-state-returns-to-battlefield-in-palmyra-captures-checkpoints-from-syrian-army/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/07/12/victims-died-government-forces-shelling-displaced-camp-al-hamad-homs-governorate-july-12/> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-south-idUSKCN0ZS2M0>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/07/deadly-air-strikes-syria-ceasefire-dissolves-160713193700103.html>

<sup>13</sup> <http://aranews.net/2016/07/scores-syrian-army-forces-killed-renewed-isis-attack-palmyra/>

3. Idlib Governorate:
  - On July 8, airstrikes of unknown origin struck a riverside “holiday spot” in the town of Darkush near the Syrian border with Turkey, killing 22 civilians.<sup>14</sup>
  - On July 13, an airstrike struck a market in the town of Ariha, killing at least 12 people.<sup>15</sup>
4. Rif Dimashq Governorate:
  - On July 9, SARG forces captured the town of Maydaa in the Eastern Ghouta suburb of Damascus from Islamist opposition group Jaish al-Islam.<sup>16</sup>
  - On July 10, ISIL militants carried out a suicide bombing at the headquarters of Jaish al-Islam in the town of Dumayr, killing at least 6 members of the group.<sup>17</sup>
  - On July 11, SARG and allied forces advanced into the Damascus suburb of Darayya. Opposition forces reportedly withdrew under the advancement. Darayya has been under siege by SARG since 2012.<sup>18</sup>
5. Raqqa Governorate:
  - On July 12, airstrikes of unidentified origin struck the ISIL-held stronghold city of Raqqa, killing at least 12 people including ISIL members and civilians.<sup>19</sup>
6. Deir ez Zor Governorate:
  - On July 14, ISIL militants claimed that their fighters brought down a Syrian jet near the city of Deir ez Zor.<sup>20</sup>
7. Daraa Governorate:
  - On July 13, several opposition groups in the FSA Southern Front announced “the battle of ‘Hiya Lilah” that would target pro-regime positions in Daraa Governorate.<sup>21</sup>
8. Hasakah Governorate:
  - On July 9, a car bomb attack reportedly targeted and killed Fehman Huseyin, a senior commander of the PKK, who was en route to the city of Qamishli. His death has not been confirmed by PKK officials.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2016/Jul-08/360987-15-civilians-dead-in-strikes-on-syria-rebel-town-activists.ashx> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-idlib-idUSKCN0Z01BZ>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/07/deadly-air-strikes-syria-ceasefire-dissolves-160713193700103.html>

<sup>16</sup> <http://post.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/syria-situation-report-july-9-15-2016>

<sup>17</sup> <http://post.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/syria-situation-report-july-9-15-2016>

<sup>18</sup> <http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/syrian-regime-forces-roll-into-w-damascus-suburb-/605692> ; <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/16/world/middleeast/syria-us-russia-cooperation-forces-advance.html>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/07/syria-isil-held-raqqa-hit-deadly-air-strikes-160712131209936.html>

<sup>20</sup> <http://af.reuters.com/article/idAFKCN0ZU1C0> ; <http://post.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/syria-situation-report-july-9-15-2016>

<sup>21</sup> <http://post.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/syria-situation-report-july-9-15-2016>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-security-kurds-pkk-idUSKCN0ZP0NX> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-security-kurds-commander-idUSKCN0ZR0WB> ; <http://post.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/syria-situation-report-july-9-15-2016>



#### Other Key Points:

- During the reporting period, the US-led coalition conducted airstrikes in the areas of Abu Kamal, Ayn Isa, Deir ez Zor, Mara, Manbij, Palmyra, Shaddadi, and Raqqa.<sup>23</sup>
- During the reporting period, Russia conducted airstrikes over Aleppo, Homs, Damascus, Idlib, Deir ez Zor, and Hasakah Governorates.<sup>24</sup>
- On July 6, the Syrian regime announced a 72-hour “regime of calm” that would end at midnight on July 8. An alliance of opposition forces reportedly agreed to the ceasefire. The announcement coincides with the Eid holiday.<sup>25</sup>
- On July 9, the Syrian regime extended the 72-hour ceasefire to continue for another three days. However, the ceasefire has done little to reduce violence with both SARG and opposition forces continuing their campaigns.<sup>26</sup>

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

1. Ninawa Governorate:
  - On July 9, Iraqi security forces (ISF) captured the Qayyarah Airfield from ISIL militants. The capture is a strategic victory for the ISF, as it will serve as a staging area from which forces will continue on to Mosul.<sup>27</sup>
  - On July 11, US Defense Secretary Ash Carter announced that the US would be sending an additional 560 troops to Iraq in order to provide “infrastructure and logistical support” for Qayyarah Airfield.<sup>28</sup>
  - On July 13, ISIL-affiliated Amaq News Agency reported that ISIL Defense Minister Omar al-Shishani had been killed in clashes in the town of Shirqat, near Mosul. US defense officials first reported al-Shishani’s death in March 2016.<sup>29</sup>
  - On July 13, ISF reached the western bank of the Tigris river, effectively closing off communication between the key cities of recently liberated Qayyarah and ISIL-held Shirqat.<sup>30</sup>
2. Baghdad Governorate:
  - On July 12, a car bombing struck an outdoor market in the majority Shia-district of al-Rashidiyah, killing 12 people and wounding dozens more.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> See: “US DOD News Release Military Strikes Hit ISIL in Syria, Iraq”. *Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve*. News Release No: [829742](#), [831437](#), [832428](#), [832556](#), [832748](#), [834172](#), [835698](#), [837450](#), [839425](#), [841917](#), [842004](#), [842268](#), [849059](#), [850304](#)

<sup>24</sup> <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/07/russian-airstrikes-in-syria-june-18.html>

<sup>25</sup> [http://www.rferl.org/content/syrian-forces-announce-unilateral-3-day-cease-](http://www.rferl.org/content/syrian-forces-announce-unilateral-3-day-cease-fire/27841325.html)

[http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-36722942)

[36722942 ; http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2016/07/06/Syrian-army-announces-72-hour-nationwide-ceasefire.html](http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2016/07/06/Syrian-army-announces-72-hour-nationwide-ceasefire.html)

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-ceasefire-idUSKCN0ZP0GK>

<sup>27</sup> [http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-qayyarah-](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-qayyarah-idUSKCN0ZP0FN)

[idUSKCN0ZP0FN ; http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/07/iraq-situation-report-july-7-13-2016.html](http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/07/iraq-situation-report-july-7-13-2016.html)

<sup>28</sup> [http://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/u-s-deploy-560-more-troops-iraq-defense-secretary-ash-](http://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/u-s-deploy-560-more-troops-iraq-defense-secretary-ash-n607086)  
[n607086 ; https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2016/07/11/seizure-of-key-air-base-near-mosul-raises-prospect-of-u-s-escalation-against-isis/](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2016/07/11/seizure-of-key-air-base-near-mosul-raises-prospect-of-u-s-escalation-against-isis/)

<sup>29</sup> <http://time.com/4405609/senior-commander-al-shishani-reported-dead/>

<sup>30</sup> <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/07/iraq-control-of-terrain-map-july-14-2016.html>

<sup>31</sup> [http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/07/iraq-deaths-car-bomb-market-attack-baghdad-](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/07/iraq-deaths-car-bomb-market-attack-baghdad-160712070446950.html)  
[160712070446950.html ; http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/baghdad-bombing-al-rashidiya-](http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/baghdad-bombing-al-rashidiya-1.3674804)  
[1.3674804 ; http://www.voanews.com/content/car-bomb-near-baghdad/3414668.html](http://www.voanews.com/content/car-bomb-near-baghdad/3414668.html)

- On July 13, a suicide bomber targeted a police checkpoint in the district of al-Rashidiyah, killing eight people and wounding 11 more. ISIL later claimed responsibility for the attack.<sup>32</sup>
  - On July 15, thousands of supporters of Shia cleric leader Moqtada al-Sadr gathered in Baghdad's Tahrir Square, ignoring government requests to cancel any protests due to security concerns.<sup>33</sup>
3. Salah ad Din Governorate:
- On July 7, ISIL militants staged a large-scale suicide, mortar fire, and gunfire attack at the Shia site of the Mausoleum of Sayyid Muhammad bin Ali al-Hadi in the town of Balad, killing 37 people most of whom had come to worship during the holiday of Eid al-Fitr.<sup>34</sup>

**Other Key Points:**

- During the reporting period, the US-led coalition conducted airstrikes in the areas of Baghdadi, Bashir, Beiji, Habbaniyah, Haditha, Hit, Huwayjah, Kisik, Mosul, Qaim, Qayyarah, Ramadi, Rawah, Sinjar, Sultan Abdullah, Tal Afar, and Waleed.<sup>35</sup>
- On July 7, Human Rights Watch released a report raising concern about a lack of accountability for Shia militias accused of abducting hundreds of Sunni residents from the towns of Saqlawiyah, Karma, and Sajar.<sup>36</sup>
- On July 7, Pentagon officials reported that ISIL militants have begun using "small commercial drones armed with improvised explosives devices or spy cameras that can avoid detection." The Pentagon is now exploring counter-drone technologies.<sup>37</sup>
- On July 17, Shia Muslim Cleric Moqtada al-Sadr instructed followers of his, which includes members of Shia militias, to target American forces in Iraq.<sup>38</sup>

**Other significant political and military events during the reporting period:**

- On July 14, Secretary of State John Kerry met with his counterpart in Moscow to discuss potential collaboration between Russian and US military forces in Syria.<sup>39</sup>
- On July 16, ISIL claimed responsibility for the July 14, 2016 attack in Nice, France. No link has yet been proven between the group and the perpetrator, Mohamed Lahouaiej Bouhlel, whose attack killed 84 people.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.voanews.com/content/second-suicide-bombing-rocks-baghdad-suburb/3416267.html>

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-politics-idUSKCN0ZV0VY> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/07/iraq-situation-report-july-13-18-2016.html>

<sup>34</sup> <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/iraqi-officials-attack-shiite-shrine-kills-37-wounds-40426464> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-36742581> ; <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/08/world/middleeast/dozens-of-iraqis-killed-in-suicide-attack-on-shiite-mosque.html> ; <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-iraq-security-idUKKCN0ZN2LA>

<sup>35</sup> See: "US DOD News Release Military Strikes Hit ISIL in Syria, Iraq". *Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve*. News Release No: [829742](#), [831437](#), [832428](#), [832556](#), [832748](#), [834172](#), [837450](#), [839425](#), [841917](#), [842004](#), [842268](#), [849059](#), [850304](#)

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/07/07/iraq-fallujah-abuses-inquiry-mired-secretcy>

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-07-07/armed-drones-used-by-islamic-state-posing-new-threat-in-iraq>

<sup>38</sup> <http://mobile.reuters.com/article/idUSKCN0ZX0XL> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/07/iraq-situation-report-july-13-18-2016.html>

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-russia-idUSKCN0ZT2QZ>

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/18/world/europe/3-more-reported-held-in-bastille-day-truck-attack-in-nice.htm>



- On July 15, members of the Turkish army calling themselves the ‘committee of national peace’ staged a failed coup, attempting to wrestle power from President Erdogan. Clashes in the country killed at least 265 people and wounded approximately 1,440 more. The events in Turkey raised concerns for the US-led coalition against ISIL<sup>41</sup>
- On July 18, ISIL took credit for an attack on a German train carried out by an Afghan teenager that injured five people.<sup>42</sup>

## Satellite Imagery and Geospatial Analysis

New looting incidents have been identified at the site of Nineveh. ASOR CHI has previously reported on looting taking place within the ancient site of Nineveh. In **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0010 UPDATE** in **Weekly Report 91-92** eight looting pits were identified around the city walls and near the mound of Kuyunjik based upon DigitalGlobe satellite imagery from May 9, 2016. These looting pits are the entrances to tunnels dug into the side of the former city wall and the sides of the ancient mound.

Since May, an additional 21 looting tunnels have been identified at Nineveh using satellite imagery. Between April 1 and May 9, 13 tunnels were started. Some of these were not previously identified as they were very small, having just begun around May 9th. By the next image on May 15, these tunnels had expanded, with visible spoil heaps. Between May 9 and June 16, only five new looting tunnels were identified, primarily located along the eastern city wall. Then another 11 looting tunnels appeared between June 16 and July 17th, many of which were dotting the eastern city wall on both the northern and southern portions of Nineveh.

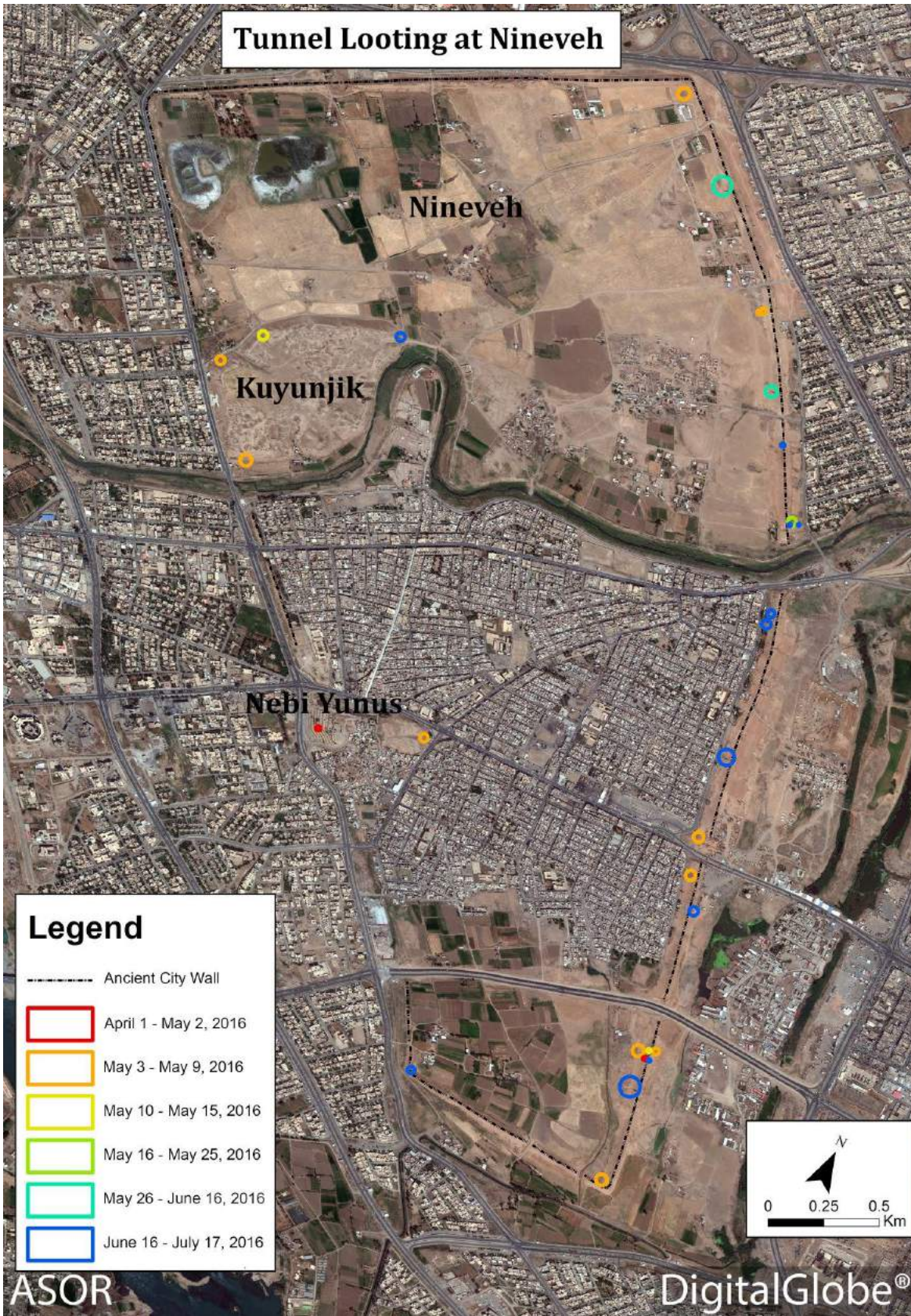
Some of these looting tunnels are clustered together indicating that looters are moving to new tunnels within the same area once they’ve exhausted one location. This is best seen on the eastern side of the southern half of Nineveh where five tunnels are located in close proximity to one another. This area was first disturbed between April 1 and May 2, with new tunnels added every few weeks.

Further information on these looting tunnels is forthcoming in **Weekly Report 103-104**.

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<sup>41</sup> <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/07/16/failed-coup-could-upend-turkish-military/>; <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/841966/obama-briefed-on-turkey-situation-incirlik-closed-but-safe-officials-say>; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/07/failed-coup-attempt-in-turkey.html>; [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/turkish-purges-spread-to-police-forces-in-the-wake-of-quashed-coup/2016/07/18/b31b37de-4cb9-11e6-aa14-e0c1087f7583\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/turkish-purges-spread-to-police-forces-in-the-wake-of-quashed-coup/2016/07/18/b31b37de-4cb9-11e6-aa14-e0c1087f7583_story.html); <http://www.dailysabah.com/nation/2016/07/16/incirlik-air-base-to-resume-operations-after-being-shortly-sealed-off-following-coup-attempt>

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/07/18/german-train-axe-attack-many-injured/>; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36832909>





## Incident Reports: Syria

### SHI 16-0071 UPDATE

**Report Date:** May 22-July 5, 2016

**Site Name:** Al Bara bin Malek Mosque (جامع البراء بن مالك)

**Date of Incident:** May 20, 2016

**Location:** Hreitan, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Mosque

**Site Date:** Unknown

**Incident Summary:** New video footage shows damage to a mosque in Hraitan.

**Incident Source and Description:** On July 5, 2016 video footage shared by Hreitan City showed detail of the damage to Al Bara bin Malek Mosque, including detail of damage to the minaret.<sup>43</sup> On May 22, 2016 the Instagram account of Hreitan City shared a photograph of the damage.

On May 20, 2016 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that a SARG airstrike had partially destroyed the Al Bara bin Malek Mosque in Hreitan, Aleppo Governorate.<sup>44</sup> For more information on this damage, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0071** in **Weekly Report 93-94**.<sup>45</sup>

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor damage to Al Bara bin Malek Mosque, as well as other heritage sites located in regions subject to ongoing aerial bombardment campaigns and intense military activity.

### Sources:

#### Online Reporting:

Hreitan City Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/lens.huraytan/>

Information Center of Hraytan Youtube:

May 20, 2016: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kCfZyurvncM>

May 22, 2016: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L78rkk\\_Fjto](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L78rkk_Fjto)

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<sup>43</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qKM38gYkgbc>

<sup>44</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/05/20/government-forces-targeted-al-baraa-bin-malek-mosque-hraitan-city-aleppo-governorate-may-20-2/>

<sup>45</sup> <https://www.instagram.com/lens.huraytan/> ; <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/05/20/government-forces-targeted-al-baraa-bin-malek-mosque-hraitan-city-aleppo-governorate-may-20-2/>

SNHR: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/05/20/government-forces-targeted-al-baraa-bin-malek-mosque-hraitan-city-aleppo-governorate-may-20-2/>

Thiqa: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X9cSm0H8gPY>



Damage to Al Bara bin Malek Mosque (Hraitan City; May 22, 2016)



Video still of damage to the minaret of Al Bara bin Malek Mosque (Hreitani City; July 5, 2016)



Video still of damage to the minaret of Al Bara bin Malek Mosque (Hreitani City; July 5, 2016)



An airstrike strikes near Al Bara bin Malek Mosque (Hreitan City; May 22, 2016)



Al Baraa Bin Malek Mosque partially damaged (DigitalGlobe; May 22, 2016)



Visible damage to the north wall, roof, and dome of the mosque (DigitalGlobe; July 13, 2016)



## SHI 16-0082 UPDATE

**Report Date:** July 5, 2016

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

**Date of Incident:** May 30, 2016

**Location:** Hreitan, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Mosque

**Site Date:** Unknown

**Incident Summary:** New video footage shows damage to mosque.

**Incident Source and Description:** New video footage of Abu Bakr al-Sedeiq Mosque shared on July 5, 2016 shows damage to the mosque's dome and minaret.<sup>46</sup> The damage to the mosque was reportedly a result of Russian airstrikes. Abu Bakr al-Sedeiq Mosque has been struck on at least two previous occasions. On May 31, 2016 Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that SARG barrel bombs struck Abu Bakr al-Sedeiq Mosque in Hreitan, causing damage to the building. For more information on this damage, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0082** in **WR 95-96**.<sup>47</sup> On April 26-27, 2016 the Instagram account of Hreitan City shared a photograph of damage to Abu Bakr al-Sedeiq Mosque including damage to the minaret.<sup>48</sup>

Airstrikes by both SARG and Russian forces have been reported over Hreitan, with an increase in airstrikes over the past few months as SARG forces advance in opposition-held areas of Aleppo.

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives.

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

### Sources:

#### Online Reporting:

Hreitan City Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qKM38gYkgbc>

Hreitan City Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/lens.huraytan/>

#### Information Center Hraytan:

September 20, 2014: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LdOZtnpsius>

June 1, 2016: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WGNEIFU7uNY>

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<sup>46</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qKM38gYkgbc>

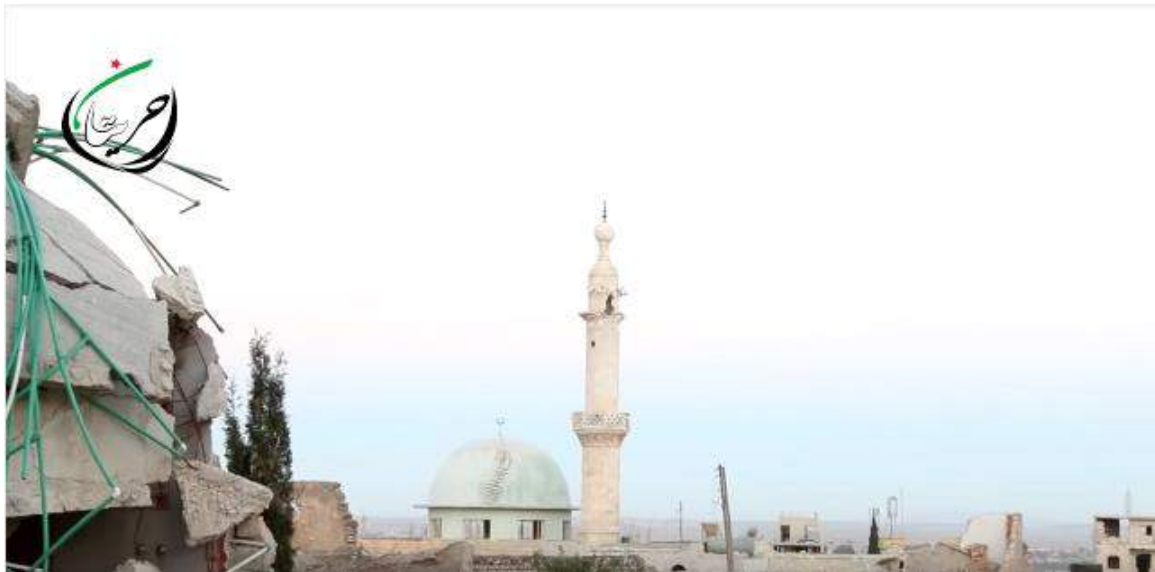
<sup>47</sup> <https://twitter.com/snhr/status/737647417827459073>

<sup>48</sup> <https://www.instagram.com/lens.huraytan/>

SNHR: <https://twitter.com/snhr/status/737647417827459073>



A photograph of Abu Bakr al-Sedeiq Mosque (Hreitan City; April 27, 2016)



Video still of Abu Bakr al-Sedeiq Mosque showing light damage to the dome and minaret (Hreitan City; July 5, 2016)





Video still of Abu Bakr al-Sedeiq Mosque showing light damage to the dome and minaret (Hreitan City; July 5, 2016)



A photograph of Abu Bakr al-Sedeiq Mosque (Hreitan City; April 26, 2016)

## SHI 16-0092 UPDATE

**Report Date:** July 3, 2016

**Site Name:** Khaled Bin al-Walid Mosque (مسجد خالد بن الوليد)

**Date of Incident:** Undetermined

**Location:** Hreitan, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Mosque

**Site Date:** Unknown

**Incident Summary:** New photograph shows material damage to mosque.

**Incident Source and Description:** Video footage shared on July 3 and July 5, 2016 by Hreitan City showed new views of the damage caused by airstrikes that struck Khalid Bin al-Waleed Mosque in Hreitan.<sup>49</sup>

On June 19, 2016 the Instagram account of Hreitan City shared a photograph of damage to Khalid bin al-Walid Mosque.<sup>50</sup> On the same date local news source 'Hraitan City' released a video showing material to the mosque.<sup>51</sup> It is unclear if the damage to the mosque was inflicted on the same day as the publication of the video. The video shows severe damage to the mosque's minaret. The interior of the mosque is filled with broken glass and other debris. For more information on this damage, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0092** in **Weekly Report 97-98**.<sup>52</sup>

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor reports of damage to Khalid Bin al-Walid Mosque, as well as other heritage sites subject to ongoing military activity and aerial bombardment.

### Sources:

#### Online Reporting:

Hreitan City Youtube:

July 3, 2016: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00T9vYIWYj4>

July 5, 2016: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qKM38gYkgbc>

July 7, 2016: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OYQdH56qtL4>

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<sup>49</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qKM38gYkgbc> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OYQdH56qtL4>

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.instagram.com/lens.huraytan/>

<sup>51</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PZj7ShFxsI0>

<sup>52</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PZj7ShFxsI0>



Khalid bin Waleed Mosque prior to damage to the minaret (Hraitan Media Center; January 23, 2016)



Damage to Khalid bin Waleed Mosque (Hraitan City; June 19, 2016)



Video still of damage to Khalid bin Waleed Mosque (Hreitan City; July 5, 2016)



Video still of Khalid Bin al-Waleed (Hreitan City; July 3, 2016)





Khalid bin Waleed Mosque with damage seen around the minaret and on the roof (DigitalGlobe; July 13, 2016)

**SHI 16-0102**

**Report Date:** July 7, 2016

**Site Name:**

- Ali Sayyad Mosque (مسجد علي الصياد)
- al-Quds Mosque (جامع القدس)
- al-Abbas Mosque (جامع العباس)
- Mosque in Tel Msebeen Village (مسجد قرية تل مصيبيين)

**Date of Incident:** January-April 2016; Between June 30 and July 7, 2016

**Location:** Hreitan, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Mosques in Hreitan City.

**Site Date:** Unknown

**Incident Summary:** Reported Russian airstrike damages mosque; Social media account shares photographs of three mosques in Hreitan.

**Incident Source and Description:**

- Ali Sayyad Mosque (مسجد علي الصياد) - On July 7, 2016 Hreitan City posted photographs of damage to Ali Sayyad Mosque on its Facebook page. The damage was allegedly caused by Russian airstrikes on the city.<sup>53</sup> The photographs show severe damage to the mosque; the roof appears to have caved in in several areas, the interior is filled with debris, and some walls appear to have collapsed. The group also published a video on Youtube showing damage to the mosque and its surroundings.<sup>54</sup> An examination of recent DigitalGlobe satellite imagery of the mosque indicates the damage occurred on July 6–7, 2016. Within the satellite imagery there is now a large hole in the roof, and the two small domes appear to have collapsed. There is also a new bomb crater in the adjacent cemetery. This is the second time in the past month that airstrikes have struck and damaged Ali Sayyad Mosque. For more information on previous damage to Ali Sayyad Mosque, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0099** in **Weekly Report 99–100**.
- al-Quds Mosque (جامع القدس) - On April 13, 2016 the Instagram account of Hreitan City shared a photograph of al-Quds Mosque as it appeared on that day.<sup>55</sup> The windows of the mosque are missing and there appears to be some damage to the exterior of the mosque. Scaffolding around the minaret suggests that the mosque had been undergoing some sort of construction. Video footage shared on July 3 and July 5, 2016 by Hraitan Media Center shows rubble surrounding the mosque.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/hreitan.city/posts/649034138596887>

<sup>54</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OYQdH56qtL4>

<sup>55</sup> <https://www.instagram.com/lens.huraytan/>

<sup>56</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qKM38gYkgbc> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OYQdH56qtL4>

- al-Abbas Mosque (جامع العباس) - On January 18, 2016 the Instagram account of Hreitan City shared a photograph of al-Abbas Mosque showing what appears to be some damage to the dome of the mosque.<sup>57</sup>
- Mosque in Tel Msebeen Village (مسجد قرية تل مصيبين) - On January 15, 2016 the Instagram account of Hreitan City shared a photograph of a mosque in Tel Msebeen.<sup>58</sup> The photograph shows extensive damage to the minaret. The cause of damage to the mosque is not specified, however airstrikes have been frequent over Aleppo Governorate.

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of mosques in Hreitan, as well as the condition of other heritage sites located in regions subject to ongoing aerial bombardment campaigns and intense military activity.

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

Hreitan City Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/hreitan.city/posts/649034138596887>

Hreitan City Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/lens.huraytan/>

Hreitan City Youtube:

July 3, 2016: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0OT9vYIWYj4>

July 5, 2016: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qKM38gYkgbc>

July 7, 2016: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OYQdH56qtL4>

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<sup>57</sup> <https://www.instagram.com/lens.huraytan/>

<sup>58</sup> <https://www.instagram.com/lens.huraytan/>

Ali Sayyad Mosque (مسجد علي الصياد)



Severe damage to Ali Sayyad Mosque in Hreitan (Hreitan City/Facebook; July 7, 2016)



Damage to interior of Ali Sayyad Mosque in Hreitan (Hreitan City/Facebook; July 7, 2016)





Damage to interior of Ali Sayyad Mosque in Hreitan (Hreitan City/Facebook; July 7, 2016)



Severe damage to roof of Ali Sayyad Mosque in Hreitan (Hreitan City/Facebook; July 7, 2016)



Severe damage to roof of Ali Sayyad Mosque in Hreitan (Hreitan City/Facebook; July 7, 2016)



Severe damage to Ali Sayyad Mosque in Hreitan (Hreitan City/Facebook; July 7, 2016)





Severe damage to Ali Sayyad Mosque in Hreitan (Hreitan City/Facebook; July 7, 2016)



Rubble at the base of Ali Sayyad Mosque (Hreitan Media Center; July 5, 2016)





Ali Sayyad Mosque after the minaret was damaged. The red arrow points to the damaged area (DigitalGlobe; June 30, 2016)



Ali Sayyad Mosque with additional damage especially to the eastern portion of the building. The red arrows point to the large hole in the roof, and the two small domes, which appear to have collapsed. There is also a new bomb crater in the cemetery (DigitalGlobe; July 7, 2016)

al-Quds Mosque (جامع القدس) (CHI # 12993)



al-Quds Mosque (Hreitan City; April 13, 2016)



al-Quds Mosque and scaffolding (Hreitan City; January 13, 2016)





Video still of al-Quds Mosque showing its proximity to al-Martyrs Cemetery (Hreitani City; July 5, 2016)



Video still of the base of al-Quds Mosque showing rubble surrounding the area (Hreitani City; July 3, 2016)



al-Quds Mosque prior to damage from airstrike (DigitalGlobe; April 8, 2016)



Visible damage to the windows and eastern wall of the mosque (DigitalGlobe; April 15, 2016)

**al-Abbas Mosque (جامع العباس)**



al-Abbas Mosque as it appeared on January 18, 2016 showing some minor damage to the dome (Hreit City; January 18, 2016)

**Mosque in Tel Msebeen Village (مسجد قرية تل مصيبين)**



Damage to the minaret of the mosque in Tel Msebeen (Hreitan City; January 15, 2016)



**SHI 16-0103****Report Date:** July 10, 2016**Site Name:** al-Musafir Mosque (مسجد المسافر)**Date of Incident:** July 9, 2016**Location:** Ghernata, Homs Governorate, Syria**Site Description:** Mosque**Site Date:** Unknown**Incident Summary:** Alleged SARG airstrikes damage mosque.

**Incident Source and Description:** On July 9, 2016 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that SARG airstrikes struck al-Musafir Mosque in the village of Ghernata, causing significant damage.<sup>59</sup> Photographs of the damage indicate part of the mosque's facade has completely collapsed.

Since the end of the declared ceasefire over Syria in May 2016, areas across Homs Governorate have been subject to ongoing aerial bombardment causing damage to at least six mosques. For more information on this damage, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0067** in **Weekly Report 93-94**, **SHI 16-0069** in **Weekly Report 93-94**, and **SHI 16-0074** in **Weekly Report 95-96**.

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives.

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

**Sources:**Online Reporting:

SNHR: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/07/10/government-forces-allies-targeted-al-musafer-mosque-ghernata-village-homs-governorate-july-9/>

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<sup>59</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/07/10/government-forces-allies-targeted-al-musafer-mosque-ghernata-village-homs-governorate-july-9/>



Damage to al-Musafir Mosque (SNHR; July 10, 2016)





Damage to al-Musafir Mosque (Twitter; July 9, 2016)



al-Musafir Mosque prior to damage  
(DigitalGlobe; May 30, 2016)



al-Musafir Mosque with damage to its western  
wall (DigitalGlobe; July 14, 2016)

**SHI 16-0104**

**Report Date:** July 6, 2016

**Site Name:**

- Hunaifi Mosque (جامع حنيفي)
- al-Sharaya School (مدرسة دار الأرقم الشرعية ; المدرسة الشرعية)
- al-Miqdad Mosque (مسجد المقداد)
- al-Fatah Mosque (مسجد الفتح)
- Haj Nebu Mosque (مسجد حاج نبو)
- al-Aqsa Mosque (جامع الأقصى)
- al-Khair Mosque (مسجد الخير)
- Ajan al-Hadeed Mosque (مسجد عجان الحديد)

**Date of Incident:** January 2014 - July 2016.

**Location:** Manbij, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Mosques and an associated religious school in Manbij.

**Site Date:** Unknown

**Incident Summary:** Reports of other damaged previously mosques in Manbij and a recent alleged US-led coalition airstrike destroys a mosque.

**Incident Source and Description:** ISIL militants seized the city of Manbij in January 2014. Shortly thereafter, ISIL reportedly began destroying some of the dozens of mosques located in the city.<sup>60</sup> ISIL militants also removed any monuments they deemed as “pagan or polytheistic” and reportedly vandalized cemeteries.<sup>61</sup> Local news source El Dorar also reported that ISIL had commandeered many of the mosques in the city in order to give propaganda-laced sermons and even closed some of the mosques during the Eid holidays.<sup>62</sup> On May 31, 2016 Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) began an offensive to recapture Manbij. The SDF is backed by US-led Coalition airstrikes, which have been a daily occurrence in the city and in surrounding areas.<sup>63</sup>

- Hunaifi Mosque (جامع حنيفي) - On July 4, 2016 local reporting group Manbij Mubashar reported that a US-led coalition airstrike struck Hunaifi Mosque in Manbij.<sup>64</sup> On July 6, 2016 the Local Coordination Committees in Syria (LCCSy) reported that the airstrike had destroyed Hunaifi Mosque in a southeast suburb of Manbij.<sup>65</sup> LCCSy did not clarify the name of the suburb where Hunaifi Mosque is located but did state that the airstrike struck near the local automated oven (the site of local bread production). No photographs of the damage were available at the time of publication. Local media group Manbej Mubashar reported that the Hunaifi Mosque was the

<sup>60</sup> <http://eldorar.com/node/55170>

<sup>61</sup> <http://www.alhayat.com/Articles/2271640/في-منبج-داعش-يفرض-قوانينه-على-الأموات-والمدينة-تتزنح>

<sup>62</sup> <http://eldorar.com/node/55170>

<sup>63</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-offensive-idUSKCN0YN377>

<sup>64</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/manbej.mubashar/posts/847695148695539>

<sup>65</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/LCCSy/posts/1431105390249926> ; <https://www.facebook.com/LCCSy/posts/1431081940252271>

fourth mosque in the city to be destroyed after al-Sharaya Mosque, al-Miqdad Mosque, and Haj Nebu Mosque.<sup>66</sup>

- al-Sharaya School (مدرسة دار الأرقم الشرعية ; المدرسة الشرعية) - On July 12, 2016 Aleppo 24 and Halab News Network reported that the school had been destroyed by US-led coalition airstrikes.<sup>67</sup> As of the same date, the SDF was reported to be in control of al-Sharaya School and members of the group may now be occupying the school.<sup>68</sup> Some sources state that the compound which included the school and a mosque was being used as a training center for the so-called ‘cubs of the caliphate’, young children living in ISIL-held territories being trained to fight.<sup>69</sup> This religious school is associated with the al-Miqdad Mosque and part of the larger compound.
- al-Miqdad Mosque (مسجد المقداد) - On July 11, 2016 new video footage showed the destruction to al-Miqdad Mosque and the adjoining al-Sharaya School. Extensive destruction to the mosque is clear as at least one side of the mosque has collapsed and severe interior damage has been inflicted. al-Miqdad Mosque was first reported as being struck by US-led coalition airstrikes on June 29, 2016. For more information on previous damage to al-Miqdad mosque, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0097** in **Weekly Report 99–100**.
- al-Fatah Mosque (مسجد الفتح) - On July 10, 2016 Manbij News reported that clashes and airstrikes occurred inside al-Fatah Mosque.<sup>70</sup> Any damage to the mosque as a result of the nearby fighting and airstrikes is unknown, however extensive fighting has been reported in the area surrounding the mosque which includes the ISIL former headquarters located in the National Hospital.<sup>71</sup>
- al-Aqsa Mosque - On July 17, 2016 clashes between SDF and ISIL were reported around al-Aqsa Mosque.<sup>72</sup> Any damage as a result of the clashes remains unknown. No photographs of al-Aqsa Mosque were available at the time of publication.
- al-Khair Mosque (مسجد الخير) - On June 20, 2016 an account on Twitter reported that ISIL recruitment took place in al-Khair Mosque.<sup>73</sup> ISIL has previously used mosques in Manbij in order to recruit residents. For more information on the use of mosques for recruitment, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0085** in **Weekly Report 97–98**. One year earlier, on July 20, 2015 SMART News Agency reported that SARG airstrikes struck near al-Khair Mosque causing undetermined damage.<sup>74</sup> No photographs of the damage to al-Khair Mosque were available at the time of publication.

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<sup>66</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/manbej.mubashar/posts/847695148695539>

<sup>67</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/HNN.Halab/posts/788342617935669> ; <https://twitter.com/24Aleppo/status/752855042152075265>

<sup>68</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/MANBIJ.NEWS.PRESS/posts/1203677089664033>

<sup>69</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XaJNngFCh3s>

<sup>70</sup> <https://twitter.com/NewsManbij/status/752157219307851776>

<sup>71</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/manbej.mubashar/posts/852877708177283> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-headquarters-idUSKCN0ZZ1D9>

<sup>72</sup> <https://twitter.com/24Aleppo/status/754639266718838784>

<sup>73</sup> [https://twitter.com/F\\_Aldooleme12/status/744659749698936833](https://twitter.com/F_Aldooleme12/status/744659749698936833)

<sup>74</sup> <https://smartnews-agency.com/ar/wires/3900/أكثر-من-100-قتيل-وجريح-بقصف-جوي-على>

- Haj Nebu Mosque (مسجد حاج نبو) - On July 4, 2016 local reporting group Manbij Mubashar reported that the Haj Nebu Mosque had been severely damaged.<sup>75</sup> The group did not share the date of damage to the mosque, nor the cause of the damage. On July 18, 2016 airstrikes were again reported near the mosque.<sup>76</sup> No photographs of the damage to Haj Nebu Mosque were available at the time of publication.
- Ajan al-Hadeed Mosque (مسجد عجان الحديد) - On May 11, 2014 Al Hayat reported that ISIL militants had demolished Ajah al-Hadeed Mosque in the district of al-Bab al-Majaoura.<sup>77</sup> The destruction likely occurred around the same time that ISIL militants destroyed al-Sheikh al-Aqeel Mosque. No photographs of the damage to Ajan al-Hadeed Mosque were available at the time of publication.

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of the mosques in Manbij, as well as the condition of other heritage sites located in regions subject to ongoing aerial bombardment campaigns and intense military activity.

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

Al An TV:

<http://www.alaan.tv/news/world-news/110258/isis-employs-platforms-propaganda-and-prevents-eid-prayers-mosques-manbij-east-aleppo>

Al Hayat:

<http://www.alhayat.com/Articles/2271640/في-منبج-داعش-يفرض-قوانينه-على-الأموات-والمدينة-تترنح>

Aleppo 24:

July 12, 2016: <https://twitter.com/24Aleppo/status/752855042152075265>

July 17, 2016: <https://twitter.com/24Aleppo/status/754639266718838784>

Ajansa Hawar ANHA: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XaJNngFCh3s>

El Dorar: <http://eldorar.com/node/55170>

Halab News Network: <https://www.facebook.com/HNN.Halab/posts/788342617935669>

LCCSy: <https://www.facebook.com/LCCSy/posts/1431081940252271>  
<https://www.facebook.com/LCCSy/posts/1431105390249926>

Manbij Mubashar:

July 4, 2016: <https://www.facebook.com/manbij.mubashar/posts/847695148695539>

July 13, 2016: <https://www.facebook.com/manbij.mubashar/posts/852877708177283>

July 18, 2016: <https://www.facebook.com/manbij.mubashar/posts/856027464528974>

<sup>75</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/manbij.mubashar/posts/847695148695539>

<sup>76</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/manbij.mubashar/posts/856027464528974>

<sup>77</sup> <http://www.alhayat.com/Articles/2271640/في-منبج-داعش-يفرض-قوانينه-على-الأموات-والمدينة-تترنح>



Manbij News:

July 10, 2016: <https://twitter.com/NewsManbij/status/752157219307851776>

July 12, 2016: <https://www.facebook.com/manbejnews55/posts/634818986683381>  
<https://www.facebook.com/manbejnews55/videos/vb.623992464432700/634812523350694/>

<https://www.facebook.com/manbejnews55/posts/634766250021988:0>

Manbij News Press:

<https://www.facebook.com/MANBIJ.NEWS.PRESS/posts/1203677089664033>

<https://www.facebook.com/MANBIJ.NEWS.PRESS/videos/1203707886327620/>

Manbij Om al-Duonia:

July 6, 2016: <https://www.facebook.com/alduania/posts/304514093221350>

July 7, 2016: <https://www.facebook.com/alduania/posts/304772833195476>

SMART News Agency:

<https://smartnews-agency.com/ar/wires/3900/أكثر-من-100-قتيل-وجريح-بقصف-جوي-على>

**al-Sharaya School (مدرسة دار الأرقم الشرعية ; المدرسة الشرعية)**



al-Sharaya School prior to any damage (Manbij News; shared July 12, 2016)



Damage to al-Sharaya School (Manbej Mubashar; July 13, 2016)



Severe damage to al-Sharaya School (ANHA; July 11, 2016)



Severe damage to al-Sharaya School (ANHA; July 11, 2016)



Severe damage to al-Sharaya School (ANHA; July 11, 2016)





Severe damage to al-Sharaya School (Manbej Mubashar; July 13, 2016)



Severe damage to al-Sharaya School (Manbej Mubashar; July 13, 2016)



Severe damage to al-Sharaya School (Manbej Mubashar; July 13, 2016)



Severe damage to al-Sharaya School (Twitter; July 12, 2016)





Materials on the floor of al-Sharaya School (Twitter; July 12, 2016)



Damage to al-Sharaya School and al-Miqdad Mosque (ANHA; July 11, 2016)

al-Miqdad Mosque (مسجد المقداد)



al-Miqdad Mosque prior to any damage (Manbij News; shared July 12, 2016)





A collapsed wall at al-Miqdad Mosque (ANHA; July 11, 2016)



Detail of a collapsed wall at al-Miqdad Mosque (Twitter; July 12, 2016)



Damage to al-Miqdad Mosque (ANHA; July 11, 2016)



Interior damage to al-Miqdad Mosque (ANHA; July 11, 2016)





Damage to al-Miqdad Mosque (Twitter; July 12, 2016)



A collapsed wall at al-Miqdad Mosque (Manbej Mubashar; July 13, 2016)





Detail of damage to al-Miqdad Mosque (Manbej Mubashar; July 13, 2016)



Damage to the minaret of the al-Miqdad Mosque and visible impact craters in the courtyard of the al-Sharaya School (DigitalGlobe; June 26, 2016)



Severe damage to the al-Sharaya School with several portions of the building collapsed (DigitalGlobe; July 6, 2016)

**al-Fatah Mosque (مسجد الفتح)**



A photograph of al-Fatah Mosque released by ISIL media (Twitter); November 7, 2015)



A photograph of al-Fatah Mosque released by ISIL media (Twitter; November 7, 2015)





A photograph of largely undamaged al-Fatah Mosque as clashes continue in the surrounding area (Twitter; July 11, 2016)



A close up photograph of al-Fatah Mosque (Twitter; July 3, 2016)



**SHI 16-0105**

**Report Date:** July 13, 2016

**Site Name:** National Museum of Aleppo (متحف حلب الوطني)

**Date of Incident:** July 11, 2016

**Location:** Aleppo, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** The National Museum building consists of two storeys arranged around a central courtyard. To the right of the entrance to the main building is the administration annex.<sup>78</sup> The first floor contains a number of exhibits showing objects from al-Jazeera Hills, Mari, the Hama region, Ugarit, Tell Halaf, Arslan Tash, Tell Ahmar, Ebla, and an exhibit on ancient statues and cuneiform scripts. The second floor contains Greco-Roman and Islamic era artifacts, and modern art. The internal courtyard of the museum is home to Roman and Hittite statuary and a large 3rd-century CE mosaic. The exterior courtyard contains large artifacts from Assyrian, Aramaean, Byzantine, and Arabic civilizations.<sup>79</sup>

**Site Date:** 1966 CE

**Incident Summary:** The National Museum of Aleppo suffers severe damage from shelling.

**Incident Source and Description:** On July 13, 2016 the Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums (DGAM) reported that the National Museum of Aleppo had been severely damaged by recent shelling “fired by armed extremist gangs.”<sup>80</sup> The report was accompanied by eight photographs of the damage, which includes a large hole in the roof of the museum, shattered windows, and an unexploded mortar shell in the rubble around the exterior of the museum. No artifacts are visible in the photographs provided by the DGAM. According to UNESCO, the shelling occurred on July 11, 2016.<sup>81</sup>

According to APSA, an explosion on October 3, 2012 caused windows to break and the museum ceiling to partially collapse. Further damage occurred as a result of a nearby car bomb on January 2, 2013.<sup>82</sup> As a result, the DGAM reported artifacts were transferred to an undisclosed location for safety. On April 27, 2014 a nearby explosion caused minor damage to windows, ceiling panels, and floor tiles.<sup>83</sup> On June 1, 2014 the museum was hit by a mortar shell, damaging the building’s roof.<sup>84</sup> In November 2014, shells struck an electrical box on the roof. For more information on damage to the National Museum of Aleppo see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 14-0077** in **Weekly Report 15**.

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives.

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<sup>78</sup> Burns 2009: 50

<sup>79</sup> [http://www.aleppo.us/news/view/30/ar/متحف\\_حلب\\_الوطني.html](http://www.aleppo.us/news/view/30/ar/متحف_حلب_الوطني.html)

<sup>80</sup> <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2008>

<sup>81</sup> [http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/unesco\\_director\\_general\\_deplores\\_heravy\\_damages\\_at\\_the\\_nation#.V4eoODkrI1j](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/unesco_director_general_deplores_heravy_damages_at_the_nation#.V4eoODkrI1j)

<sup>82</sup> <http://apsa2011.com/apsanew/report-on-syrian-museums-2011-2012/>

<sup>83</sup> <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=1262>

<sup>84</sup> <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=1290>

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the status of the National Museum of Aleppo and other museums in Syria, many of which have been damaged throughout the course of the current conflict.

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

Aleppo.us: <http://www.aleppo.us/news/view/30/ar/متحف حلب الوطني.html>

APSA: <http://apsa2011.com/apsanew/report-on-syrian-museums-2011-2012/>

DGAM:

July 13, 2016: <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2008>

June 1, 2014: <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=1290>

May 6, 2014: <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=1262>

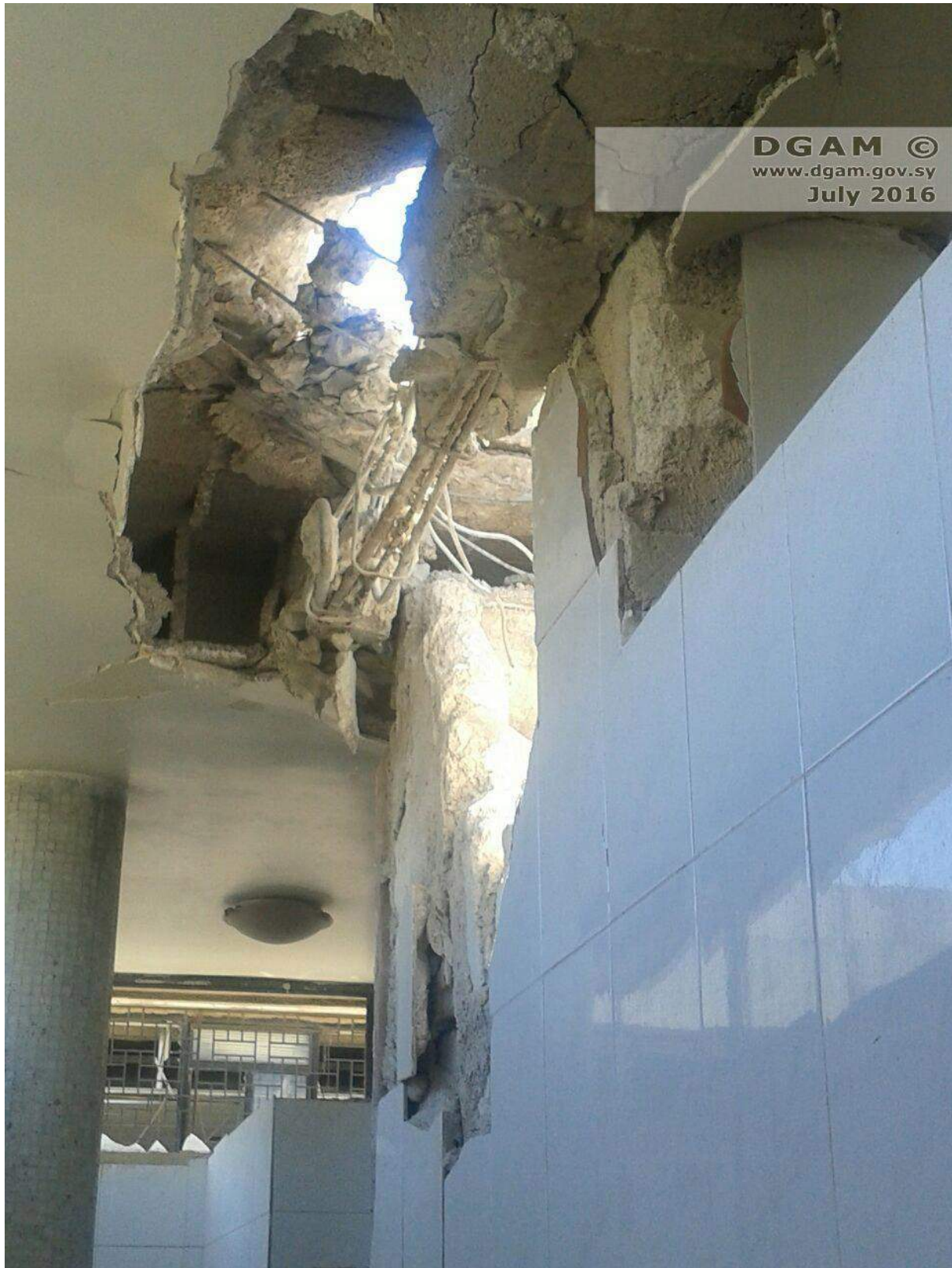
UNESCO:

[http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/unesco\\_director\\_general\\_deplores\\_heavy\\_damages\\_at\\_the\\_nation#.V4eoODkr11j](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/unesco_director_general_deplores_heavy_damages_at_the_nation#.V4eoODkr11j)



Damage to exterior of National Museum of Aleppo (DGAM; July 13, 2016)





Damage to exterior of National Museum of Aleppo (DGAM; July 13, 2016)





Damage to interior of National Museum of Aleppo (DGAM; July 13, 2016)





**DGAM** ©  
www.dgam.gov.sy  
July 2016

Damage to interior of National Museum of Aleppo (DGAM; July 13, 2016)





Damage to interior of National Museum of Aleppo (DGAM; July 13, 2016)



Damage to exterior of National Museum of Aleppo (DGAM; July 13, 2016)





**DGAM** ©  
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July 2016

Damage to roof of National Museum of Aleppo (DGAM; July 13, 2016)





Damage to exterior of National Museum of Aleppo and unexploded mortar shell (DGAM; July 13, 2016)





Aleppo Museum Complex showing previous damage from 2014 to the electrical transformer. Additional damage appears in the courtyard (DigitalGlobe; August 18, 2015)



Aleppo Museum prior to the most recent damage. Clear visible damage to the main courtyard and there are possibly stone statues under the metal roof that may have suffered damage as well (DigitalGlobe; June 24, 2016)



**SHI 16-0106**

**Report Date:** July 14, 2016

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

**Date of Incident:** July 13, 2016

**Location:** Al Bou Omar (بلدة البو عمرو), Deir ez Zor Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Mosque

**Site Date:** Unknown

**Incident Summary:** SARG airstrikes damage a mosque.

**Incident Source and Description:** On July 13, 2016 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that SARG warplanes “fired missiles” on Omar Bin al-Khattab Mosque in the town of Al Bou Omar causing moderate material damage.<sup>85</sup> Local sources state that SARG airstrikes were targeting ISIL positions in the area.<sup>86</sup> No photographs of the damage were available at the time of publication.

Airstrikes carried out by SARG, Russian, and US-led Coalition forces have been frequent over Deir ez Zor Governorate, where the majority of the territory remains under the control of ISIL.

**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 ongoing aerial bombardment campaigns and intense military activity.

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

SNHR:

<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/07/14/government-forces-targeted-mosque-al-bou-omar-town-deir-ez-zour-governorate-july-13/>

Step News Agency: [https://twitter.com/Step\\_Agency/status/753330754218754048](https://twitter.com/Step_Agency/status/753330754218754048)

Syria News Center:

<http://syriannewscenter.com/ar/article/17929--الطيران-الحربي-يدمر-تحصينات-وآليات-لدا-عش-في-البو-عمر-شرق-دير-الزور.html>

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<sup>85</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/07/14/government-forces-targeted-mosque-al-bou-omar-town-deir-ez-zour-governorate-july-13/>

<sup>86</sup> <http://syriannewscenter.com/ar/article/17929--الطيران-الحربي-يدمر-تحصينات-وآليات-لدا-عش-في-البو-عمر-شرق-دير-الزور.html>



Syrian Press Center:

<https://syrianpc.com/en/a-bomb-blew-up-in-sarmeen-in-idlub-countryside-raids-in-deir-alzure/>

**SHI 16-0107****Report Date:** July 14, 2016**Site Name:** Tell Taban (تل طابان)**Date of Incident:** Unknown**Location:** Taban, Hasakah Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Tell Taban (ancient Tabatum or Tabetu) was first mentioned in the 18th-century BCE in the tablets of the kingdom of Mari. Tabetu was destroyed by the Babylonians and subsequently came under Assyrian rule. An autonomous dynasty ruled the city from the 14th to 12th centuries BCE under the authority of the Middle Assyrian kings. Tablets from the 12th-century BCE were discovered at the site.<sup>87</sup> Archaeologists from Kokushikan University in Tokyo excavated at the site from 1994 to 2011.<sup>88</sup>

**Site Date:** 18th to 7th-century BCE**Incident Summary:** Looting tunnels discovered at Tell Taban.

**Incident Source and Description:** On July 14, 2016 the Director-General of Antiquities and Museums reported that looting tunnels had been discovered at Tell Taban when the DGAM visited the site on July 12, 2016. Three tunnels up to 20 meters long had been dug into the northern and western sides of the tell, causing extensive damage.<sup>89</sup> The report did not speculate as to the identity of the looters, but the Syrian Arab News Agency blamed “armed terrorist organizations” for the tunnels.<sup>90</sup>

**Pattern:** Illegal excavation.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the situation at Tell Taban and other heritage sites where looting has reportedly occurred.

**Sources:**Online Reporting:DGAM: <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2010>SANA: <http://sana.sy/en/?p=82675>

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<sup>87</sup> <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2010>

<sup>88</sup> <https://www.cairn.info/revue-d-assyriologie-2011-1-page-61.htm>

<sup>89</sup> <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2010>

<sup>90</sup> <http://sana.sy/en/?p=82675>

Scholarly:

Numoto, H., Shibata, D., & Yamada, S. (2013) "Excavations at Tell Taban, Continuity and Transition in Local Traditions at Ṭābatum/Ṭābetu during the second Millennium BC", in D. Bonatz, *100 Jahre archäologische Feldforschungen in Nordost-Syrien -eine Bilanz*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Yamada, S. (2011) "An Adoption Contract from Tell Taban, the Kings of the Land of Hana, and the Hana-style Scribal Tradition" in *Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale*. Vol. 105. p. 61-84.





Looting tunnel at Tell Taban (DGAM; July 14, 2016)



Looting tunnel at Tell Taban (DGAM; July 14, 2016)





Looting tunnel at Tell Taban (DGAM; July 14, 2016)



Looting tunnel at Tell Taban (DGAM; July 14, 2016)

**SHI 16-0108**

**Report Date:** July 16, 2016

**Site Name:** Kafr Hamra Cemetery (مقبرة كفر حمرة); Abu Bakr al-Sidiq Mosque (مسجد أبو بكر الصديق)

**Date of Incident:** July 9, 2016; July 14, 2016

**Location:** Kafr Hamra, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Cemetery and mosque in Kafr Hamra.

**Site Date:** Unknown

**Incident Summary:** Reported Russian airstrikes damage cemetery and mosque.

**Incident Source and Description:** On July 9, 2016 Anadan Media Center reported that Russian airstrikes struck a cemetery in Kafr Hamra, Aleppo Governorate.<sup>91</sup> Photographs of the damage show craters in the ground and broken gravestones.

On July 14, 2016 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) tweeted a photograph of damage to Abu Bakr al-Sidiq Mosque in Kafr Hamra, allegedly the result of Russian airstrikes that occurred on that day.<sup>92</sup> The photograph shows severe damage to the front of the mosque. Part of the roof has caved in and the area is filled with debris.

Several mosques in Kafr Hamra have been badly damaged in recent airstrikes. These include Ammar bin Yasser Mosque (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0071 in Weekly Report 93-94**), al-Farouq Mosque (**SHI 16-0099 in Weekly Report 99-100**), and al-Hassan wa al-Hussein Mosque (**SHI 16-0099 in Weekly Report 99-100**).

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of the cemetery in Kafr Hamra and Abu Bakr al-Sidiq Mosque, as well as the condition of other heritage sites located in regions subject to ongoing aerial bombardment campaigns and intense military activity.

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

Anadan Media Center:

<https://www.facebook.com/Anadan.Media.Center3/posts/1310519692296323>

SNHR: <https://twitter.com/SN4HR/status/754150870615547905>

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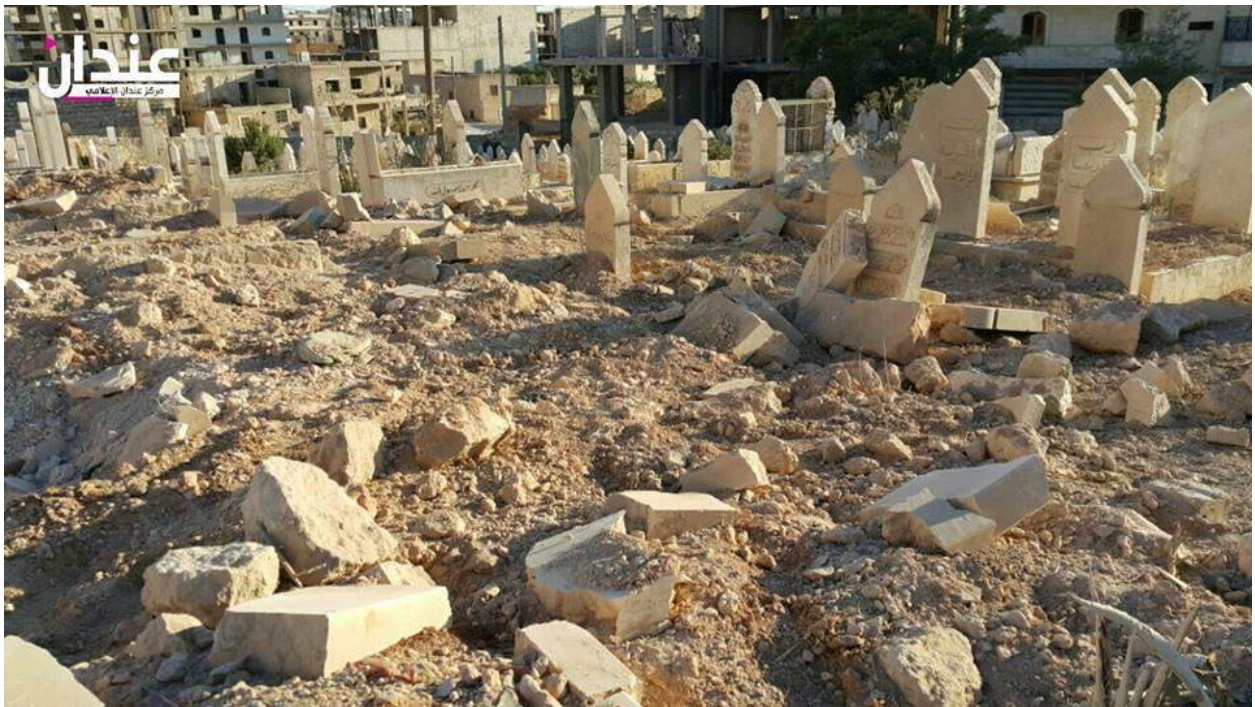
<sup>91</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/Anadan.Media.Center3/posts/1310519692296323>

<sup>92</sup> <https://twitter.com/SN4HR/status/754150870615547905>





A crater and broken graves at Kafr Hamra Cemetery (Anadan Media Center; July 9, 2016)



Broken graves at Kafr Hamra Cemetery (Anadan Media Center; July 9, 2016)





Kafr Hamra Cemetery (DigitalGlobe; July 7, 2016)



Kafr Hamra Cemetery with visible bomb crater (DigitalGlobe; July 9, 2016)



Severe damage to Abu Bakr al-Sidiq Mosque (SNHR/Twitter; July 14, 2016)

## SHI 16-0109

**Report Date:** July 17, 2016

**Site Name:**

- al-Tawabin Mosque (مسجد التوابين)
- Shuhada al-Aqsa Mosque (مسجد شهداء الأقصى)
- al-Maqamat Mosque (جامع المقامات; Qarasunqur Mausoleum; ضريح قرار سنقر)
- al-Saleheen Mosque (مسجد الصالحين; Ibrahim Saleheen Mausoleum)

**Date of Incident:** July 13-16, 2016

**Location:** Aleppo, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Mosques in the city of Aleppo

- **al-Maqamat Mosque** - Also known as the Mausoleum of Qarasunqur (the mosque's founder), this structure was built between 1303 and 1309 CE. It consists of two buildings separated by a small square courtyard. The southern building is a mausoleum consisting of a dome, a mihrab, and a portico. This chamber contains several tombs, including that of Qarasunqur al-Mansuri (dating to 1309 CE). A fountain in the courtyard dates to 1303 CE.<sup>93</sup>
- **al-Saleheen Mosque** - This mosque, also known as the Mausoleum of Ibrahim Saleheen, commemorates the patriarch Abraham's legendary visit to Aleppo during his journey from Ur to Hebron. An inscription dated 1106 CE over the entrance to the prayer hall claims the rock contained in the room dates from Abraham's visit and bears traces of his footprints.<sup>94</sup> Much of the mosque was constructed in the 12th-century CE and the surrounding cemetery contains 12th-century tombs.<sup>95</sup>

**Site Date:**

- al-Tawabin Mosque: Unknown
- Shuhada al-Aqsa Mosque: Unknown
- al-Maqamat Mosque: ca. 1303 CE
- al-Saleheen Mosque: 1106 CE

**Incident Summary:** Reported SARG and Russian shelling damages mosques in Aleppo.

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<sup>93</sup> Hadjar 2003: 107

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.* 108

<sup>95</sup> Burns 2009: 50



## Incident Source and Description:

- Tawabin Mosque (مسجد التوابين) - On July 13, 2016 Baladi News reported that Russian warplanes shelled al-Tawabin Mosque in the Leiramoun neighborhood of Aleppo. A least three civilians were killed and several others injured.<sup>96</sup> The Facebook group Leiramoun al-Hadath posted photographs of the aftermath of the shelling, including one that shows the area around al-Tawabin Mosque<sup>97</sup> The minaret of the mosque has partially collapsed and many other buildings in the area appear to be seriously damaged.
- Shuhada al-Aqsa Mosque (مسجد شهداء الأقصى) - On July 14, 2016 Halab Today reported on Twitter that an airstrike allegedly conducted by Russian warplanes damaged Shuhada al-Aqsa Mosque in the Tariq al-Bab neighborhood of Aleppo.<sup>98</sup> Several buildings in the surrounding area were also damaged.<sup>99</sup> At least 10 people were killed, including the imam of the mosque.<sup>100</sup> Aleppo Media Center published a video of the aftermath of the bombing showing members of the Syrian Civil Defense and others working to clear away rubble in and around the mosque.<sup>101</sup> At least one exterior wall of the mosque appears to have collapsed and the interior is filled with debris. Shuhada al-Aqsa Mosque has reportedly been damaged at least twice before. On September 16, 2012 Syrian Revolution Coordinators Union in Aleppo published a video showing minor damage to the interior of the mosque (including broken windows and other debris) that resulted from shelling.<sup>102</sup> On March 9, 2013 El Dorar reported a SARG airstrike hit the mosque during evening prayers, destroying its upper floor.<sup>103</sup>
- al-Maqamat Mosque (جامع المقامات; Qarasunqur Mausoleum; ضريح قرار سنقر) - On July 16, 2016 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that SARG helicopters dropped barrel bombs near al-Maqamat Mosque, damaging it severely.<sup>104</sup> A photograph provided by SNHR shows a large amount of rubble in the mosque's courtyard and on its roof.
- al-Saleheen Mosque (مسجد الصالحين) - On July 16, 2016 SNHR reported that SARG helicopters dropped barrel bombs near al-Saleheen Mosque, damaging the mosque severely.<sup>105</sup> A photograph provided by SNHR shows a great deal of debris in the mosque's interior. The windows appear to be blown out. SMART News Agency published a video of damage to the mosque, although the video attributes the bombing to Russian planes rather than SARG helicopters.<sup>106</sup> At least seven bystanders were wounded in the blast, which destroyed several

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<sup>96</sup> <http://baladi-news.com/ar/news/details/8243/عشرات الشهداء يادلب وحمص والثوار يتقدمون شمال حلب>

<sup>97</sup> [https://ar-ar.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=1728587504083150&id=1437850263156877](https://ar-ar.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1728587504083150&id=1437850263156877) ; <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/07/14/russian-forces-targeted-al-tawabein-mosque-al-lairamoon-neighborhood-aleppo-city-july-13/>

<sup>98</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/07/15/russian-forces-targeted-al-aqsa-martyrs-mosque-tareiq-al-bab-neighborhood-aleppo-city-july-14/>

<sup>99</sup> <https://twitter.com/HalabTodayTV/status/753509031793270784>

<sup>100</sup> <https://rfsmediaoffice.com/2016/07/14/37185/#.V4fQAJkrLow>

<sup>101</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I-ALSAEJcCY>

<sup>102</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Dm23ZTjed8>

<sup>103</sup> <http://eldorar.com/node/5319>

<sup>104</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/07/16/government-forces-targeted-al-maqamat-mosque-al-maadi-neighborhood-aleppo-city-july-16/>

<sup>105</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/07/16/government-forces-targeted-mosque-al-saleheen-neighborhood-aleppo-city-july-16/>

<sup>106</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WoFXuto4FHE>

sections of the mosque. Rubble and debris covers the interior and exterior of the mosque. Several arches have collapsed and there are large holes in several walls.

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of mosques in Aleppo as well as the condition of other heritage sites located in regions subject to ongoing aerial bombardment campaigns and intense military activity.

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

Aleppo Media Center: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I-AISAEJcCY>

Aleppo Today: <https://twitter.com/HalabTodayTV/status/753509031793270784>

Baladi News:

<http://baladi-news.com/ar/news/details/8243/عشرات الشهداء بإدلب وحمص والثوار يتقدمون شمال حلب>

El Dorar: <http://eldorar.com/node/5319>

Leiramoun al-Hadath:

July 13, 2016:

[https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=1728587504083150&id=1437850263156877](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1728587504083150&id=1437850263156877)

<https://www.facebook.com/1437850263156877/photos/a.1437867849821785.1073741827.1437850263156877/1728539594087941/>

RFS Media Office: <https://rfsmediaoffice.com/2016/07/14/37185/#.V4fQAjkrLow>

SMART News Agency: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WoFXuto4FHE>

Syrian Revolution Coordinators Union in Aleppo:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Dm23ZTjed8>

SNHR:

July 14, 2016:

<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/07/14/russian-forces-targeted-al-tawabein-mosque-al-lairamoon-neighborhood-aleppo-city-july-13/>

July 15, 2016:

<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/07/15/russian-forces-targeted-al-aqsa-martyrs-mosque-tareiq-al-bab-neighborhood-aleppo-city-july-14/>

July 16, 2016:

<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/07/16/government-forces-targeted-al-maqamat-mosque-al-maadi-neighborhood-aleppo-city-july-16/>

<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/07/16/government-forces-targeted-mosque-al-saleheen-neighborhood-aleppo-city-july-16/>

Scholarly:

Burns, R. (2009) *Monuments of Syria*. London: I.B. Tauris. 50.

Hadjar, A. (2003) *Historical Monuments of Aleppo*. trans. K. al-Jbaili. Aleppo: Automobile and Touring Club of Syria. 107.



Damage to minaret of Tawabin Mosque (Leiramoun al-Hadath/Facebook; July 13, 2016)





Damage to Shuhada al-Aqsa Mosque (Halab Today/Twitter; July 14, 2016)



Video still of damage to mosque's interior (Aleppo Media Center/Youtube; July 14, 2016)



Video still of damage to mosque's interior (Aleppo Media Center/YouTube; July 14, 2016)



Video still of damage to mosque's interior (Aleppo Media Center/YouTube; July 14, 2016)





Damage to Shuhada al-Aqsa Mosque in 2013 (El Dorar; March 9, 2013)



Severe damage to al-Maqamat Mosque (SNHR; July 16, 2016)





Severe damage to al-Saleheen Mosque (SNHR; July 16, 2016)



Video still of damage to exterior of al-Saleheen Mosque (SMART News Agency; July 16, 2016)



Video still of damage to exterior of al-Saleheen Mosque (SMART News Agency; July 16, 2016)



Video still of damage to al-Saleheen Mosque (SMART News Agency; July 16, 2016)





Video still of damage to al-Saleheen Mosque (SMART News Agency; July 16, 2016)



Video still of damage to exterior of al-Saleheen Mosque (SMART News Agency; July 16, 2016)





Video still of damage to al-Saleheen Mosque (SMART News Agency; July 16, 2016)



Video still of damage to al-Saleheen Mosque (SMART News Agency; July 16, 2016)

**SHI 16-0110**

**Report Date:** July 18, 2016

**Site Name:** Mar Sharbel Church (كنيسة القديس مار شربل; Mar Gergis, Mar Bar Had Bshabo)

**Date of Incident:** July 17, 2016

**Location:** al-Witwitiyah Village (قرية الوطوية), Hasakah Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Mar Sharbel Church is a Syrian Orthodox Church that was originally built in 1969 using bricks from a nearby hill that overlooks the village. The church was originally named after Saint George (Mar Gergis). The church was rebuilt in 1996 on the same location and named after the saints Mar Sharbel, Mar Gergis, and Mar Bar Had Bshabo. The new church was consecrated in 2002.<sup>107</sup>

**Site Date:** est. 1969 CE, rebuilt 1996 CE

**Incident Summary:** Unknown attackers firebomb and vandalize a church.

**Incident Source and Description:** On July 17, 2016 ARA News reported that unidentified assailants threw molotov cocktails into the Mar Sharbel Church. The attack started a fire in the church, causing extensive interior damage. Local reports also claimed that donation money kept in the church was stolen and that religious icons were vandalized.<sup>108</sup> This was reportedly the first attack on the church.

**Pattern:** Vandalism; Theft.

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

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

ARA News: <http://aranews.org/2016/07/مجهولون-يعتدون-على-كنيسة-مار-شربل-بريف/>

Bas News: <http://www.basnews.com/index.php/ar/news/kurdistan/287901>

تراب ديريك الغالي: <https://www.facebook.com/qurban.trab.direk/posts/1365150313501127>

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<sup>107</sup> <http://aranews.org/2016/07/مجهولون-يعتدون-على-كنيسة-مار-شربل-بريف/>

<sup>108</sup> <http://aranews.org/2016/07/مجهولون-يعتدون-على-كنيسة-مار-شربل-بريف/>; <http://www.basnews.com/index.php/ar/news/kurdistan/287901>



Mar Sharbel Church ( تراب ديريك الغالي /Facebook ; July 18, 2016)



The exterior of Mar Sharbel Church (Bas News; July 18, 2016)





The altar inside Mar Sharbel Church (Bas News; July 18, 2016)



The altar and interior of Mar Sharbel Church showing no apparent damage ( تراب دير بك / Facebook ; July 18, 2016)



Detail of the ceiling of the Mar Sharbel Church showing no signs of damage (Bas News; July 18, 2016)



A religious painting showing some smoke damage leans against the wall on the floor in Mar Sharbel Church ( تراب ديريك الغالي /Facebook ; July 18, 2016)



Fire and smoke damage in Mar Sharbel Church ( تراب ديريك الغالي /Facebook; July 18, 2016)



Burned and damaged materials inside Mar Sharbel Church ( تراب ديريك الغالي /Facebook; July 18, 2016)





Damage outside of Mar Sharbel Church (Bas News; July 18, 2016)



Fire damage in Mar Sharbel Church ( تراب ديريك الغالي /Facebook; July 18, 2016)



Fire damage to Mar Sharbel Church ( تراب ديريك الغالي /Facebook; July 18, 2016)



## Incident Reports: Iraq

### IHI 16-0019 UPDATE

**Report Date:** July 18, 2016

**Site Name:**

- al-Mudallal Mosque (جامع المدلل)
- al-Taqwa Mosque (جامع التقوى)
- al-Anbia Mosque (جامع الانبياء)

**Date of Incident:** June 13-28, 2016

**Location:** Fallujah, al-Anbar Governorate, Iraq

**Site Description:** Mosques in Fallujah.

**Site Date:** Various. Late 19th-century CE to early 21st-century CE

**Incident Summary:** Twitter users and activist groups share new photographs of damaged mosques in Fallujah.

**Incident Source and Description:**

- al-Mudallal Mosque (جامع المدلل) - On July 5, 2016 Twitter user posted photographs showing the destruction of al-Mudallal Mosque.<sup>109</sup> The mosque courtyard is filled with debris and part of the mosque appears to have collapsed. The minaret is still standing. DigitalGlobe satellite imagery shows this extensive damage to al-Mudallal Mosque occurred between June 13 and 28, 2016. For more information on damage to this mosque, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0019** in **Weekly Report 99-100**.
- al-Taqwa Mosque (جامع التقوى) - On July 8, 2016 Twitter user published photographs of severe damage to al-Taqwa Mosque. The minaret has collapsed and much of the mosque has been reduced to rubble.<sup>110</sup> According to DigitalGlobe satellite imagery and a photograph of the damage to the mosque shared on various social media accounts beginning June 22, 2016 the mosque was severely damaged sometime between June 13 and June 22, 2016.<sup>111</sup> For more information on the damage to al-Taqwa Mosque, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0019** in **Weekly Report 99-100**.
- al-Anbia Mosque (جامع الانبياء) - On July 9, 2016 Iraqi Spring Media Center reported on its Facebook page that members of the Popular Mobilization Force had blown up al-Anbia Mosque.<sup>112</sup> A photograph provided by the group shows the mosque has been almost completely destroyed. DigitalGlobe satellite imagery indicates this destruction occurred between June 13

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<sup>109</sup> <https://twitter.com/aln3ems7529/status/750270467986952192>

<sup>110</sup> <https://twitter.com/pwlog/status/751804518086606848>

<sup>111</sup> <https://twitter.com/mastafa2016302/status/745697721911230469>

<sup>112</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/IraqiSMCEn/photos/a.326098917558627.1073741827.325968694238316/596885543813295/?type=1&theater>

and 28, 2016. For more information on damage to al-Anbia Mosque, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0019** in **Weekly Report 99-100**.

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives, intentional destruction.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor reports of damage to mosques in Fallujah, focusing particular attention on the cause of such damage.

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

Iraqi Spring Media Center:

<https://www.facebook.com/IraqiSMCEn/photos/a.326098917558627.1073741827.325968694238316/596885543813295/?type=1&theater>

PWL Media Office: <https://twitter.com/pwlorq/status/751804518086606848>

**al-Mudallal Mosque (جامع المدلل)**



Previous damage to the metal roof over the courtyard of the al-Mudallal Mosque (DigitalGlobe; May 31, 2016)



Extensive damage to al-Mudallal Mosque and complex which occurred between June 13 and 28. (DigitalGlobe; June 28, 2016)



Destruction of building adjacent to al-Mudallal Mosque (Twitter; July 5, 2016)





Destruction and debris in courtyard of al-Mudallal Mosque (Twitter; July 5, 2016)



Minor debris in interior of al-Mudallal Mosque (Twitter; July 5, 2016)

**al-Taqwa Mosque (جامع التقوى)**



al-Taqwa Mosque with little visible damage  
(DigitalGlobe; June 13, 2016)



al-Taqwa Mosque with severe damage to the  
minaret, the mosque, and exterior buildings  
(DigitalGlobe; June 28, 2016)



Destruction of al-Taqwa Mosque (Twitter; July 9, 2016)





Destruction of al-Taqwa Mosque (Twitter; July 9, 2016)



Destruction of al-Taqwa Mosque (Twitter; July 9, 2016)





Pile of religious texts outside of al-Taqwa Mosque (Twitter; July 9, 2016)



**al-Anbia Mosque (جامع الانبياء)**



al-Anbia Mosque with no visible damage  
(DigitalGlobe; June 13, 2016)



Complete destruction of al-Anbia Mosque  
(DigitalGlobe; June 28, 2016)



The destruction of al-Anbia Mosque (Iraqi Spring Media Center/Facebook; July 9, 2016)

## IHI 16-0022

**Report Date:** July 9, 2016

**Site Name:**

- al-Fath al-Mubin Mosque (جامع الفتح المبين)
- al-Furqan Mosque (جامع الفرقان)
- al-Firdous Mosque (جامع الفردوس)
- Abu Obeida Mosque (جامع ابو عبيدة)
- Prophet Yunus Mosque (جامع نبي الله يونس)
- al-Maadidi Mosque (جامع المعاضيدي)

**Date of Incident:** June 28 - July 9, 2016

**Location:** Fallujah, al-Anbar Governorate, Iraq

**Site Description:** Mosques in Fallujah.

**Site Date:** Various. Late 19th-century CE to early 21st-century CE

**Incident Summary:** Destruction of mosques in Fallujah following the recapture of the city from ISIL militants.

**Incident Source and Description:** Fallujah was the first city to fall to ISIL in January 2014.<sup>113</sup> The city was first declared as recaptured on June 17, 2016 after months of preparation and approximately one month of military operations to reach the center of the city.<sup>114</sup> On June 26, 2016 Iraqi security forces, backed by US-led coalition airstrikes completed clearing operations in Fallujah.<sup>115</sup> During the fight to reclaim Fallujah, the Iraqi Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) accused ISIL militants of using mosques as mortar firing positions.<sup>116</sup> Prior to Iraqi forces advancing into Fallujah, many feared that ISIL militants had booby trapped mosques as well as other civilian sites.<sup>117</sup> According to a June 27, 2016 AP article, after Iraqi forces expelled ISIL from the city “almost all [mosques in the city] [were] still standing, but many have their intricate tile work chipped away by small arms fire and artillery.”<sup>118</sup>

Since the start of operations to reclaim Fallujah, several instances of sectarian violence have been reported, with Shia militia members accused of looting and burning civilian homes as well as mosques.<sup>119</sup> The presence of Shia militia graffiti as well as various group’s flags have been

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<sup>113</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A4I-vPCCBoU>

<sup>114</sup> <http://www.wsj.com/articles/iraqi-city-of-fallujah-fully-liberated-from-islamic-state-iraqicommander-says-1466934423>

<sup>115</sup> <http://post.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/isis-sanctuary-map-july-1-2016>

<sup>116</sup> [https://twitter.com/pmu\\_english/status/743358164372885507](https://twitter.com/pmu_english/status/743358164372885507)

<sup>117</sup> <http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/isis-booby-trapped-mosques-minarets-fallujah-says-official/>

<sup>118</sup> <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/13376bf19d044b5bbf47103539997d15/dozens-homes-burned-looted-iraqi-city-freed>

<sup>119</sup> <https://twitter.com/fallujahtv/status/747746381897433088> ; <http://english.aawsat.com/2016/06/article55353572/al-hashd-al-shaabi-burns-homes-fallujah> ; <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/13376bf19d044b5bbf47103539997d15/dozens-homes-burned-looted-iraqi-city-freed> ; <http://english.aawsat.com/2016/06/article55353349/anbar-council-pmf-militants-stage-bigoted-crimes-fallujah> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-falluja-idUSKCN0ZJ0T2>



photographed in the city.<sup>120</sup> However, in many cases it is unclear who perpetrated the damage at the mosques or when it occurred. Many mosques in Fallujah have sustained some form of damage (particularly collateral damage resulting from Iraqi government airstrikes) since January 2014.

- al-Fath al-Mubin Mosque (جامع الفتح المبين) - On July 4, 2016 Iraq News Center reported on Twitter that members of a Shia militia burned and damaged al-Fath al-Mubin Mosque.<sup>121</sup> Ahrar al-Rafidain Network for Human Rights published photographs of the damage to the mosque on its Facebook page.<sup>122</sup> These show minor damage to the facade, roof, and exterior of the complex, as well as serious damage to the minaret, the top of which has collapsed. On July 10, 2016 Twitter user published more photographs of damage to the mosque, including fire damage to the interior.<sup>123</sup>
- al-Furqan Mosque (جامع الفرقان) - On July 5, 2016 Twitter user reported that al-Furqan Mosque had been bombed, reportedly by members of the PMF.<sup>124</sup> The head of the Anbar Provincial Council confirmed the bombing of this mosque on July 7, 2016.<sup>125</sup> On July 13, 2016 a Twitter account published a photograph of the damaged mosque.<sup>126</sup> The minaret, which was still standing in DigitalGlobe satellite imagery from June 28, 2016, has completely collapsed. For previous damage to this mosque in 2014 and during the Battle of Fallujah in June 2016, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0019** in **Weekly Report 99–100**.
- al-Firdous Mosque (جامع الفردوس) - On July 5, 2016 Hader News published a series of photographs on Twitter showing the detonation of the minaret of al-Firdous Mosque, allegedly by members of the PMF.<sup>127</sup> There are no photographs of the aftermath of the explosion, however the minaret appears to have completely collapsed. The head of the Anbar Provincial Council confirmed the bombing of this mosque on July 7, 2016.<sup>128</sup> On June 18, 2016 Firdous Mosque was included in an article describing shelling damage to mosques in Fallujah.<sup>129</sup> On April 16, 2016 photographs of what was reported to Firdous Mosque were shared on social media.<sup>130</sup> The photographs showed significant interior damage. On the same date, ISIL-affiliated Amaq News Agency released a video of damage to the mosque.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> <https://www.yahoo.com/news/despite-fears-iraq-militiamen-joined-battle-inside-fallujah-170114139.html> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xn83NljqXgg>

<sup>121</sup> <https://twitter.com/Newsofiraq/status/749973326148300800>

<sup>122</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/MonitoringandInformationCenter9/photos/pcb.855877861184510/855877627851200/?type=3&theater>

<sup>123</sup> [https://twitter.com/hu\\_daly/status/752102662380937216](https://twitter.com/hu_daly/status/752102662380937216)

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<sup>125</sup> <http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/anbar-council-direct-ministries-of-defense-and-interior-to-arrest-perpetrators-of-fallujah-mosques-bombings/>

<sup>126</sup> <https://twitter.com/hunaalfallujah/status/753354524849496065>

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<sup>129</sup> <http://www.alkulasa.net/artical/1932/>

<sup>130</sup> [https://twitter.com/Dr\\_Magid1987/status/721424092147093504](https://twitter.com/Dr_Magid1987/status/721424092147093504)

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- Abu Obeida Mosque (جامع ابو عبيدة) - On July 7, 2016 activist group Fariq al-Muraslin reported on Twitter that Abu Obeida Mosque had been bombed, allegedly by members of the PMF.<sup>132</sup> Before and after photographs accompanying the post indicate that the mosque's minaret, which was still standing in DigitalGlobe satellite imagery from June 28, 2016, has collapsed. The head of the Anbar Provincial Council confirmed the bombing of this mosque on July 7, 2016.<sup>133</sup> For previous damage to this mosque in May and June 2016, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0019** in **Weekly Report 99–100**.
- Prophet Yunus Mosque (جامع نبي الله يونس) - On July 7, 2016 Twitter user included Prophet Yunus Mosque on a list of mosques recently damaged.<sup>134</sup> No photographs were available at the time of publication.
- al-Maadidi Mosque (جامع المعاضيدي) - On July 7, 2016 a Twitter account reported that members of the PMF had blown up al-Maadidi Mosque.<sup>135</sup> No photographs were available at the time of publication. According to a March 2014 Azzaman article, ISIL militants had established a Sharia court in al-Maadidi Mosque.<sup>136</sup>

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

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor reports of damage to mosques in Fallujah, focusing particular attention on the cause of such damage.

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**al-Fath al-Mubin Mosque (جامع الفتح المبين)**



Gunfire damage and graffiti on exterior wall and minaret of al-Fath al-Mubin Mosque (Ahrar al-Rafidain Network for Human Rights/Facebook; July 4, 2016)



Fire damage to part of al-Fath al-Mubin Mosque complex (Ahrar al-Rafidain Network for Human Rights/Facebook; July 4, 2016)



Damage to facade and roof of al-Fath al-Mubin Mosque (Ahrar al-Rafidain Network for Human Rights/Facebook; July 4, 2016)





Damage to top of minaret of al-Fath al-Mubin Mosque (Ahrar al-Rafidain Network for Human Rights/Facebook; July 4, 2016)





Damage to al-Fath al-Mudin Mosque (Twitter; July 10, 2016)



Vandalism and damage to al-Fath al-Mudin Mosque entrance (Twitter; July 10, 2016)





Fire damage in al-Fath al-Mudin Mosque interior (Twitter; July 10, 2016)



**al-Furqan Mosque (جامع الفرقان)**



Destroyed minaret of al-Furqan Mosque (Twitter; July 13, 2016)

al-Firdous Mosque (جامع الفردوس)



Destruction of minaret of al-Firdous Mosque (Hader News/Twitter; July 5, 2016)





photo : Mahmoud Hosseini

Alleged Shia militiamen in front of al-Firdous Mosque before destruction of the minaret (Hader News/Twitter; July 5, 2016)



photo : Mahmoud Hosseini

Alleged Shia militiamen in front of al-Firdous Mosque before destruction of the minaret (Hader News/Twitter; July 5, 2016)



**Abu Obeida Mosque (جامع ابو عبيدة)**



Minaret of Abu Obeida Mosque before its destruction (Fariq al-Muraslin/Twitter; July 7, 2016)





Destruction of the minaret of Abu Obeida Mosque (Fariq al-Muraslin/Twitter; July 7, 2016)

## IHI 16-0023

**Report Date:** July 8, 2016

**Site Name:** Mausoleum of Sayyid Muhammad bin Ali al-Hadi (لمرقّد سيد محمد)

**Date of Incident:** July 7, 2016

**Location:** al-Zahra neighborhood, Balad, Salah ad Din Governorate, Iraq

**Site Description:** The Mausoleum of Sayyid Muhammad bin Ali al-Hadi (d. 866 CE) is the resting place of “a son of the 10th imam who is revered among [Shias].”<sup>137</sup> According to Dabrowska, Hann, and Townsend-Greaves the mausoleum:

“is a typically large Shia shrine with a magnificent dome and minarets. The entranceway is covered with flower-pattern tile work and the archway has gold Kufic script adorning it. Inside the large rectangular tomb is encased in a silver cage topped by a gold roof. The gateway suffered minor damage when attacked by insurgents over the last few years, so the shrine is now surrounded by railings...The place where the shrine is built used to be the cemetery of Shias. During the time of Caliph Hujjah bin Yusuf thousands of Shias were imprisoned and not allowed to leave Balad. Many died and were buried here, and the cemetery has now also become a place of worship.”<sup>138</sup>

According to a recent interview with the guardian of the site, both Sunni and Shia Muslims visit this site.<sup>139</sup>

**Site Date:** circa 866 CE

**Incident Summary:** ISIL militants attack mausoleum inflicting unknown damage to site.

**Incident Source and Description:** On July 7, 2016 ISIL militants carried out as many as three suicide bombings near the Mausoleum of Sayyid Muhammad bin Ali al-Hadi in the town of Balad, 58 miles (93 kilometers) north of Baghdad.<sup>140</sup> According to reports, worshippers at or near the shrine were celebrating the end of Ramadan holiday Eid al-Fitr. The site first came under mortar fire and then the first of the bombers “struck a market at the entrance to the shrine.”<sup>141</sup> The first suicide bombing, which was also reported to be at the “external gate of the museum,” struck around 11pm.<sup>142</sup> The explosion allowed “several gunmen to storm the site and start shooting worshippers.”<sup>143</sup> Following the mortar fire and first explosion, “at least one bomber blew himself outside the mausoleum, which was then stormed by gunmen.”<sup>144</sup> A third bomber was reportedly shot and killed before he was able to detonate his explosive vest.<sup>145</sup> The New York Times reported that between nine and 20 ISIL militants, possibly wearing military uniform to disguise themselves,

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<sup>137</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/08/world/middleeast/dozens-of-iraqis-killed-in-suicide-attack-on-shiite-mosque.html>

<sup>138</sup> Dabrowska et al. 2015: 184-185

<sup>139</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kqJECVzxAlg>

<sup>140</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-36742581> ; <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-iraq-security-idUKKCN0ZN2LA>

<sup>141</sup> <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-iraq-security-idUKKCN0ZN2LA>

<sup>142</sup> <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-iraq-security-idUKKCN0ZN2LA>

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<sup>145</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-36742581>



were able to overwhelm both Iraqi police and Shia militia guards. ISIL militants then “seized control of the compound for about a half-hour” before reinforcements from the federal and local police, as well as members of the Popular Mobilization Front (PMF), arrived.<sup>146</sup> The attack killed 37 people, reportedly both Shia and Sunni worshippers, and injured about 50 more.<sup>147</sup> ISIL immediately took credit for the attack stating that five ISIL members, including three suicide bombers, had carried out the attack.<sup>148</sup> ISIL often targets Shia sites as the group believes that Shia Muslims are apostates.<sup>149</sup> It is not clear how much damage was inflicted on the mausoleum, however on July 8, 2016 local media source Balad Book shared photographs of journalists reporting from the interior of the mosque which appears to have been largely unharmed in the attack.<sup>150</sup> An additional photograph from the same date shows worshippers inside the mosque praying at the site of the tomb, which also appears to be unharmed.

ISIL militants have targeted dozens of Shia and Sunni religious sites across Iraq. Many of those sites have been demolished when no worshippers were in attendance, causing extensive damage but no casualties. However, ISIL often targets Shia sites of worship in Iraq with the intention of inflicting casualties on Shia Muslims, which the group views as religious apostates. For more information on these attacks, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 15-0098** in **Weekly Report 67-68**, **IHI 15-0100** in **Weekly Report 71-72**, **IHI 16-0006** in **Weekly Report 81-82**, **IHI 16-0007** in **Weekly Report 81-82**, and **IHI 16-0021** in **Weekly Report 99-100**.

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives, gunfire/light weaponry.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of the Mausoleum of Sayyid Muhammad bin Ali al-Hadi, as well as the condition of other heritage sites located in regions subject to ongoing military activity and sectarian violence.

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<sup>146</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/08/world/middleeast/dozens-of-iraqis-killed-in-suicide-attack-on-shiite-mosque.html>

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Fire and smoke at the Mausoleum of Sayyid Muhammad bin Ali al-Hadi (Twitter; July 7, 2016)





Fire blazes at the external gate of the Mausoleum of Sayyid Muhammad bin Ali al-Hadi (PressTV US; July 7, 2016)



Fire burning outside the Mausoleum of Sayyid Muhammad bin Ali al-Hadi (Twitter; July 8, 2016)



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The site of at least one of the suicide bombings near the Mausoleum of Sayyid Muhammad bin Ali al-Hadi (BBC/AFP; July 8, 2016)



Shia militia members from Saraya al-Salem gather outside the Mausoleum of Sayyid Muhammad bin Ali al-Hadi after the suicide attack (Reuters; July 8, 2016)





People outside the entrance of the Mausoleum of Sayyid Muhammad bin Ali al-Hadi  
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Shia fighters from the militia Saraya al-Salam gather outside the Mausoleum of Sayyid Muhammad bin Ali al-Hadi (Washington Post/Reuters; July 8, 2016)



People gather at the Mausoleum of Sayyid Muhammad bin Ali al-Hadi one day after the attack (Reuters; July 8, 2016)





Damage to the Mausoleum of Sayyid Muhammad bin Ali al-Hadi (Ahmed Mahar/BBC; July 8, 2016)



A fireman douses a shop with a water following the suicide attack at the Mausoleum of Sayyid Muhammad bin Ali al-Hadi (Reuters; July 8, 2016)



Damage and the presence of unidentified Iraqi security groups (Balad Book/Facebook; July 8, 2016)



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Locals and Shia militias inspecting the damage to Sayyid Muhammad bin Ali al-Hadi (Twitter; July 7, 2016)





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Journalists conduct interviews inside the Mausoleum of Sayyid Muhammad bin Ali al-Hadi (Balad Book/Facebook; July 8, 2016)



Worshippers surround the tomb of Sayyid Muhammad bin Ali al-Hadi (Reuters; July 8, 2016)





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