

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

S-IZ-100-17-CA021

## March 2017 Monthly Report

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

## Other Key Points

- Newly released video shows destruction of Othman bin Affan Mosque, Homs Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0031**
- Newly released photographs show condition of the Hypogeum of the Three Brothers, Palmyra, Homs Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0034**
- New photographs show reuse of historic building materials and illegal excavation at Bakirha, Idlib Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0035**
- Suicide bombings strike near the Cemetery of Bab al-Saghir, Damascus Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0036**
- Suicide bombings strike near the Palace of Justice, Damascus Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0037**
- A reported US-led Coalition airstrike damages the Omar Ibn al-Khattab Mosque compound, Aleppo Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0038**
- Suspected Russian airstrikes struck the al-Kabir Mosque, Idlib Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0039**
- Suspected Russian airstrikes struck the al-Kabir Mosque, Aleppo Governorate, causing partial damage. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0040**
- Reported SARG missile damaged Khaled bin al Waleed Mosque, Hama Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0041**
- Reported SARG/Russian airstrikes severely damage al Rawda Mosque in Rif Dimashq Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0042**
- Reported SARG/Russian airstrike damages Ahmad al Refa'ei Mosque, Hama Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0043**
- Reported SARG/Russian airstrike damages al-Kabir Mosque in Halfaya City, Hama Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0044**
- Suspected Russian airstrikes struck al-Rahman Mosque, Idlib Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0045**
- Reported Syrian Regime artillery shelled near the al-Shamali Mosque, Rif Dimashq Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0046**
- Video shows heavy machine damage/illegal excavation at Tell Sabi Abyad, Raqqa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0047**
- The Umm al-Mauna Church was repurposed into an ISIL military training facility, Ninawa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 17-0018**
- Explosions damage the Sadiq Rashaan Mosque in Mosul, Ninawa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 17-0019**
- Reportedly explosions damage Omar al-Aswed mosque in Mosul, satellite imagery does not support this, Ninawa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 17-0020**

## Military and Political Context

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

1. Homs Governorate:
  - On March 1, SARG forces and pro-regime militias including members of Hezbollah, backed by Russian airstrikes, reportedly recaptured the Palmyra Citadel and a “modern palatial complex to the southwest” of the site.<sup>2</sup>
  - On March 2, SARG forces and pro-regime militias recaptured Palmyra from ISIL.<sup>3</sup>
  - On March 13, Syrian opposition forces reached a deal with the Syrian regime to evacuate the last opposition-held area of the city of Homs, al-Waer. Evacuations began several days later.<sup>4</sup>
  - On March 25, reported SARG airstrikes struck a hospital in the opposition-held town of Lataminah, killing two people. According to Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF), chemical weapons may have been used in the attack.<sup>5</sup>
2. Aleppo Governorate:
  - During the reporting period, US forces increased their numbers near the town of Manbij in response to rising concerns of clashes erupting between Syrian and Turkish forces in the area.<sup>6</sup>
  - On March 2, the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) branch known as the Manbij Military Council announced that they would hand over villages located west of the town of Manbij to the Syrian army in order to prevent the advancement of Turkish-backed Syrian opposition forces.<sup>7</sup>
  - On March 2, the US Department of Defense (DOD) reported that a Russian airstrike had struck villages held by US-backed Syrian opposition forces.<sup>8</sup>
  - On March 2-7, opposition groups Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (formerly Jabhat Fatah al-Sham) and Ahrar al-Sham clashed in Aleppo Governorate.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-palmyra-idUSKBN16847B> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-39133343> ; <http://www.ibtimes.com/whats-happening-palmyra-syrian-army-russia-battle-isis-historic-city-where-islamic-2500193>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.yahoo.com/news/pulls-back-syrias-palmyra-monitor-072131017.html> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-islamic-state-idUSKBN1691GI> ; <http://bigstory.ap.org/c84f7ce8788942a38a4bc079318812e5> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-palmyra-idUSKBN16A1L2> ; <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/03/04/syrian-troops-clear-palmyra-mines-scale-fresh-damage-revealed/> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-39147612>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-39255980> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rrnu8qsr6-c> ; <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-03-19/syrian-rebel-militants-bussed-out-of-homs/8367160> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/03/syria-situation-report-march-17-30-2017.html>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-hospital-idUSKBN1722S1> ; <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/03/25/syrian-regime-forces-dropped-poison-gas-barrel-bomb-al-latamina-town-hama-governorate-march-25/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/04/us/politics/us-troops-syria.html> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/03/syria-situation-report-march-2-9-2017.htm>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-39140880> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/03/syria-situation-report-march-2-9-2017.html>

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.upi.com/Top\\_News/World-News/2017/03/01/Syria-rids-key-Palmyra-zone-of-militants-Russia-denies-bombing-US-coalition/8701488398369/](http://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2017/03/01/Syria-rids-key-Palmyra-zone-of-militants-Russia-denies-bombing-US-coalition/8701488398369/)

- On March 4-9, pro-regime forces captured the Jirah Airbase, Khafsa Water Treatment Plant, and dozens of towns in Aleppo Governorate from ISIL.<sup>10</sup>
  - On March 5, an unidentified attacker carried out a suicide bombing against the headquarters of the Turkish-backed Syrian opposition group 'Levant Front' in the town of Azaz, killing at least eight people.<sup>11</sup>
  - On March 20, the Syrian Kurdish YPG reported that Russia had deployed forces in Afrin Canton in order to establish a military base in a cooperative agreement against terrorism, which would include military training for YPG forces.<sup>12</sup>
  - On March 29, pro-regime forces, backed by Russia and Iran, captured the town of Deir Hafir from ISIL after a weeklong offensive.<sup>13</sup>
  - On March 30, Turkey announced that it had "successfully" finished its seven-month military campaign known as 'Euphrates Shield'.<sup>14</sup>
3. Damascus Governorate:
- On March 11, twin bombings struck Damascus killing at least 40 people. The attacks appeared to have targeted Shia Pilgrims, including Iraqi nationals, visiting religious sites in the capital.<sup>15</sup>
  - On March 15, a suicide bombing struck the Palace of Justice, the main court complex in Damascus, killing at least 31 people. The Al Qaeda-linked group Tahrir al-Sham later took responsibility for the attack.<sup>16</sup>
  - On March 19, Syrian opposition forces launched a major offensive against the neighborhoods of Jobar and Abbasiyin, bringing them closer to the Old City of Damascus. SARG forces retaliated with "intense bombardment" of opposition-held areas.<sup>17</sup>
4. Rif Dimashq Governorate:
- On March 6-9, pro-regime forces carried out airstrikes and artillery bombardment against Syrian opposition-held areas of Eastern Ghouta despite an announced two-week "regime of silence" declared by the Russian Ministry of Defense. Salafi-Jihadist opposition group Jaish al-Islam targeted pro-regime forces in the Qalamoun Mountains in retaliation for the attack on Eastern Ghouta.<sup>18</sup>
  - On March 13, a United Nations report blamed the Syrian regime for deliberately targeting the Ain al-Fijeh Spring in December 2016, disturbing much of the water supply for 5.5 million people who live in Damascus and the surrounding area.<sup>19</sup>
  - On March 20, SARG forces reportedly bombarded opposition-held areas east of the capital Damascus including the neighborhood of Jobar, and the surrounding areas of Qaboun and Arbin.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/03/syria-situation-report-march-2-9-2017.html>

<sup>10</sup> <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/03/syria-situation-report-march-2-9-2017.html>

<sup>11</sup> <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/03/syria-situation-report-march-2-9-2017.html>

<sup>12</sup> <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/03/syria-situation-report-march-17-30-2017.html>

<sup>13</sup> <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/03/syria-situation-report-march-17-30-2017.html>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-39439593>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-damascus-idUSKBN16I0B2>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-39277179>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-jobar-idUSKBN16Q09X> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-39337944> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/03/syria-situation-report-march-17-30-2017.html>

<sup>18</sup> <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/03/syria-situation-report-march-2-9-2017.html>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-39266213>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-39326699> ; <https://guardian.ng/news/clashes-in-syria-capital-after-surprise-rebel-assault/>



5. Idlib Governorate:
  - On March 2-7, opposition groups Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (formerly Jabhat Fatah al-Sham) and Ahrar al-Sham clashed in Idlib Governorate.<sup>21</sup>
  - On March 21-27, US-led Coalition airstrikes reportedly targeted Al Qaeda-affiliated officials in Idlib Governorate.<sup>22</sup>
6. Raqqa Governorate:
  - On March 8, the US deployed up to 400 marines to Raqqa Governorate in order to support the SDF in the upcoming fight against ISIL in the city of Raqqa.<sup>23</sup>
  - On March 22, the US-backed SDF began operations to recapture the Tabqa Dam from ISIL. US forces are “providing airlift and artillery support” to the SDF.<sup>24</sup>
  - On March 25-30, the SDF turned over areas seized from ISIL to the “affiliated ar-Raqqa Council.”<sup>25</sup>
  - On March 28, a senior Russian general accused the US-led Coalition of targeting the Tabqa Dam in Raqqa Governorate in the Coalition’s efforts to target ISIL. A spokesman for the coalition stated that there was no known damage to the dam.<sup>26</sup>
7. Deir ez Zor Governorate:
  - On March 6, the SDF captured the village of Kubar along the Euphrates River, effectively severing the “ground line of communication” for ISIL between Raqqa and Deir ez Zor Governorates.<sup>27</sup>
8. Hama Governorate:
  - On March 21-30, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and Ahrar al-Sham launched an offensive against pro-regime forces in Hama Governorate, capturing at least 17 villages and bringing opposition forces to “within four kilometers of Hama City.”<sup>28</sup>
9. Tartus Governorate:
  - On March 13, Russia announced that it would soon begin a five-year expansion of its naval base located in Tartus.<sup>29</sup>

Other Key Points:

- During the reporting period, the US-led coalition conducted airstrikes in the areas of Abu Kamal, Deir ez Zor, Manbij, Palmyra, Raqqa, Shadaddi, and Tabqa.<sup>30</sup>
- During the reporting period, heavy Russian airstrikes were reported over Homs, Aleppo, Idlib, Deraa, and Hama Governorates.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>21</sup> <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/03/syria-situation-report-march-2-9-2017.html>

<sup>22</sup> <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/03/syria-situation-report-march-17-30-2017.html>

<sup>23</sup> <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/03/syria-situation-report-march-2-9-2017.html>

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.cnn.com/2017/03/22/politics/syria-tabqa-dam/index.html> ; <https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-increases-support-for-new-anti-isis-operation-in-syria-1490220210>

<sup>25</sup> <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/03/syria-situation-report-march-17-30-2017.html>

<sup>26</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/russia-criticizes-us-led-coalition-over-bombing-of-syria-dam/2017/03/28/6257d852-139c-11e7-bb16-269934184168\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/russia-criticizes-us-led-coalition-over-bombing-of-syria-dam/2017/03/28/6257d852-139c-11e7-bb16-269934184168_story.html) ; <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/amp/39399803>

<sup>27</sup> <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/03/syria-situation-report-march-2-9-2017.html>

<sup>28</sup> <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/03/syria-situation-report-march-17-30-2017.html> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-idUSKBN16U0RA>

<sup>29</sup> <https://news.usni.org/2017/03/13/russia-reported-start-syrian-naval-base-expansion-spring>

<sup>30</sup> See: “US DOD News Release Military Strikes Hit ISIL in Syria, Iraq”. *Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve*. News Release No: [1102647](#), [1099956](#), [1102927](#), [1103147](#), [1104533](#), [1106368](#), [1107703](#), [1109534](#), [1110449](#), [1110498](#), [1110728](#), [1114019](#), [1120231](#), [1121784](#), [1123178](#), [1123105](#), [1123331](#), [1124653](#), [1126350](#), [1127685](#), [1129185](#), [1130217](#), [1130275](#), [1130445](#), [1133495](#), [1134815](#), [1136394](#), [1137745](#)

<sup>31</sup> [http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/03/russian-airstrikes-in-syria-january-26\\_23.html](http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/03/russian-airstrikes-in-syria-january-26_23.html)

- During the reporting period, Syrian opposition forces advanced in areas held by ISIL, taking advantage of ISIL's deployment to Deir ez Zor and Raqqa Governorates. Areas recaptured include territory near Damascus and the Jordanian border.<sup>32</sup>
- On March 2, UN Human Rights Council investigators released a new report that accused the Syrian regime and Syrian opposition forces of committing war crimes throughout the 2016 battle for Aleppo.<sup>33</sup>
- On March 4, a Syrian fighter plane crashed in Turkey after reportedly being shot down by Syrian opposition group Ahrar al-Sham.<sup>34</sup>
- On March 23-28, ISIL reportedly withdrew from "more than twenty villages, hills, and other positions in the tri-border region of Deraa, Rif Dimashq, and Suwayda" Governorates, moving its forces toward Eastern Syria.<sup>35</sup>
- On March 30, US Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley announced a change in priorities under the Trump administration regarding the necessity of the ouster of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. According to Haley and US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, the focus is no longer on removing Assad from power. Tillerson added that the Syrian people must determine Assad's fate. Remarks from long-time members of the US Senate, including Senator John McCain, suggest that the American government does not unanimously hold change in position. France and Britain also reiterated their position that President Assad must step down.<sup>36</sup>

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

1. Ninawa Governorate:
  - During the reporting period, a large sinkhole south of Mosul was discovered to be a mass burial site used by ISIL to dump more than 6,000 victims of the group. ISIL rigged the sinkhole, known as "the Khasfa" by locals, with explosives to prevent the recovery of the bodies.<sup>37</sup>
  - During the reporting period Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), backed by US-led Coalition airstrikes, recaptured one third of Mosul's West Bank. Efforts continued to recapture the Old City.<sup>38</sup>
  - During the reporting period, reports surfaced of ISIL militants using civilians in Mosul as human shields against ISF.<sup>39</sup>
  - On March 1, Iraqi army units captured the Mosul International Airport and the "last major road" out of the western bank of Mosul, blocking the last exit for ISIL militants.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-rebels-idUSKBN1711KI>

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-39126653>

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/syrian-jet-crashes-near-turkish-border-after-attack-ahrar-al-sham-2128027468> ; <http://www.voanews.com/a/turkey-rescues-syrian-pilot-crash-near-border/3750229.html> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/03/syria-situation-report-march-2-9-2017.html>

<sup>35</sup> <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/03/syria-situation-report-march-17-30-2017.html>

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-usa-haley-idUSKBN1712QL>

<sup>37</sup> <http://news.sky.com/story/is-turn-mosul-sinkhole-into-biggest-mass-grave-in-iraq-10815499> ; <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/03/22/iraq-isis-dumped-hundreds-mass-grave>

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.france24.com/en/20170313-jihadists-trapped-iraqi-forces-take-third-west-mosul> ; <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-iraq-mosul-idUKKBN16K194> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/03/the-campaign-for-mosul-march-9-16-2017.html> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/03/the-campaign-for-mosul-march-17-29-2017.html>

<sup>39</sup> <http://time.com/4717319/mosul-iraq-offensive-civilians-human-shields/> ♠

- On March 2-3, Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP)-backed Rojava Peshmerga clashed with Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) Yezidi militia near Sinjar.<sup>41</sup>
  - On March 3, ISIL militants launched a chemical attack in two separate incidents in east Mosul, injuring twelve civilians.<sup>42</sup>
  - On March 7, ISF recaptured a government complex and a second bridge during operations to reach Mosul.<sup>43</sup>
  - On March 8, Iraqi and American military officials stated their belief that ISIL leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi had fled Mosul, leaving operational commanders in charge of the battle to hold the city.<sup>44</sup>
  - On March 8, Iraqi forces recaptured Badush Prison where ISIL militants executed up to 600 inmates on June 10, 2014.<sup>45</sup>
  - On March 17, a blast in a residential area of al-Jadida neighborhood killed more than 200 civilians, including women and children. According to an Iraqi Commander the cause of the blast was booby traps placed by ISIL militants. Mosul Eye, a local reporting group, confirmed the presence of booby-traps but stated that the traps were set-off by car bombs placed by ISIL and blown up by the US-led Coalition. The US-led Coalition later confirmed that an airstrike likely contributed to the collapse of the building.<sup>46</sup>
2. Baghdad Governorate:
    - On March 20, ISIL detonated a car bomb in the neighborhood of al-Amil in western Baghdad, killing 23 people and wounding 45 others.<sup>47</sup>
    - On March 29, a suicide truck bomb killed at least 17 people and wounded around 60 more in southern Baghdad. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack.<sup>48</sup>
  3. Salah ad Din Governorate:
    - On March 8, two ISIL suicide bombers carried out an attack against a wedding party in the village of Hajaj, killing 26 people.<sup>49</sup>
  4. Kirkuk Governorate:
    - On March 2, Peshmerga forces associated with the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) seized an oil pumping facility owned by the Iraqi Government and issued demands for the government to build an oil refinery in Kirkuk.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-mosul-road-idUSKBN1683H8> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-39126647> ; <https://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1099269/iraqi-forces-retake-mosul-airport-inherent-resolve-commander-says/source/GovDelivery/>

<sup>41</sup> <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/03/iraq-situation-report-march-1-20-2017.html>

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-39152075>

<sup>43</sup> <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/03/the-campaign-for-mosul-march-2-8-2017.html>

<sup>44</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-baghdadi-idUSKBN16F1DF>

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2017/Mar-08/396638-iraqi-forces-retake-infamous-isis-prison-military.ashx>

<sup>46</sup> <http://www.rferl.org/a/iraq-mosul-blast-100-killed/28387059.html> ; <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/03/23/coalition-air-strikes-kill-100-civilians-one-building-mosul/> ; <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/28/world/middleeast/iraq-american-airstrike-mosul.html> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/03/the-campaign-for-mosul-march-17-29-2017.html>

<sup>47</sup> <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/03/iraq-situation-report-march-1-20-2017.html>

<sup>48</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-mosul-idUSKBN1700YW> ; <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/29/world/middleeast/baghdad-suicide-truck-bomb-isis.html>

<sup>49</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-39215496>

<sup>50</sup> <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/03/iraq-situation-report-march-1-20-2017.html>

5. al-Qaim Governorate:

- On March 31, US-led Coalition airstrikes targeted ISIL Deputy Leader Ayad al-Jumaili who was believed to have been at the ISIL headquarters in al-Qaim. Iraqi intelligence later confirmed the strike and death of Ayad al-Jumaili.<sup>51</sup>

Other Key Points:

- During the reporting period, the US-led coalition conducted airstrikes in the areas of Asad, Beiji, Huwajjah, Haditha, Kirkuk, Kisik, Mosul, Qaim, Rawah, Sinjar, and Tal Afar.<sup>52</sup>

## Syrian Network For Human Rights Videos

Beginning March 23, 2016 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) published backdated videos on YouTube of combat damage inflicted on schools, bakeries, hospitals, marketplaces, and other types of infrastructure and civilian sites. ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the SNHR YouTube channel and archive videos that document heritage destruction. The following sites have been documented as damaged in the videos released during the current reporting period:

1. al-Omari Mosque, in al-Waer Neighborhood, Homs, Homs Governorate damaged on multiple dates in 2014.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-islamicstate-idUSKBN1733IU>

<sup>52</sup> See: "US DOD News Release Military Strikes Hit ISIL in Syria, Iraq". *Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve*. News Release No: [1102647](#), [1099956](#), [1102927](#), [1103147](#), [1104533](#), [1106368](#), [1107703](#), [1109534](#), [1110449](#), [1110498](#), [1110728](#), [1114019](#), [1120231](#), [1121784](#), [1123178](#), [1123105](#), [1123331](#), [1124653](#), [1126350](#), [1127685](#), [1129185](#), [1130217](#), [1130275](#), [1130445](#), [1133495](#), [1134815](#), [1136394](#), [1137745](#)

<sup>53</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zz5aSE2r6pl> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mbRnn99Kivw> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gldBT4XvgOI> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6fhwYy1JnkM>

## Incident Reports: Syria

**SHI 17-0030**

**Report Date:** March 2, 2017

**Site Name:** Qalaat Shirkuh (Qal'at Fakr al-Din al-Maani) (قلعة فخر الدين المعني)

**Date of Incident:** March 2, 2017

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

**Site Description:** From Ross Burns, *The Monuments of Syria*:

“The castle has for long been attributed to the Lebanese Maanite amir, Fakhr al-Din (1590-1635), who tested the limits of Ottoman flexibility in the early 17th century ... Recent Polish research has confirmed, however, that Fakhr al-Din simply briefly occupied an earlier Ayyubid castle built by the Homs amir, al-Mujahid Assad al Din Shirkuh II (r. 1186-1240) who was also responsible for Qalaat al-Shmemis and Qalaat Rahba.

Relatively small in size, the fortifications are based on an original triangular fortress of seven towers (1230), extended later in the 13th century with curtain walls to the east and west, the whole ringed by a deep ditch. The effect is spectacular. You enter from the south via a metal bridge that brings you to a landing between two towers. Like many Muslim castles, the internal arrangement of chambers and defences is compact, with a steep passage taking you up to the internal court. This is surrounded by battlements with a substantial thickening of the defences on the south side.”<sup>54</sup>

**Site Date:** 1230 CE

**Incident Summary:** Video footage and photographs show the condition of the Citadel.

**Incident Source and Description:** On March 2, 2017 DGAM and other news outlets reported that Syrian Arab Republican Guard (SARG) troops, with Russian aerial support, recaptured the ancient city of Palmyra from ISIL. Video footage and photographs show SARG forces inside the Citadel, evidence of militarization of the site, and extensive damage due to explosives including aerial bombardment.<sup>55</sup> The Syrian Army is not stationed inside the Citadel as it is reportedly filled with improvised explosive devices.<sup>56</sup> It is difficult to distinguish from this footage new damage to the Citadel as opposed to damage sustained during ISIL’s first occupation of the site.

Reuters reported on March 3, 2017 that damage to the Citadel under ISIL (prior to this offensive) may be less than earlier believed. According to Maamoun Abdulkarim, “we had received terrifying information that there might have been a revenge crime against the entire Citadel....there is some damage, but in general, the Citadel is fine too.”<sup>57</sup> The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) also reported on March 2, 2017 that ISIL had withdrawn completely from Palmyra and that government troops had encountered a large number of mines and explosives, a signature tactic of

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<sup>54</sup> Burns 2009: 243

<sup>55</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zAm4dfbkzIc>

<sup>56</sup> <https://www.rt.com/news/379073-syrian-palmyra-Citadel-isis/>

<sup>57</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-palmyra-idUSKBN16A1L2>

the militant group.<sup>58</sup> Following the recapture of the area, Russian forces began to clear the site and town of explosives.<sup>59</sup>

ISIL has occupied Palmyra twice, from May 2015 to March 2016, and again from December 2016 until this most recent offensive (March 2017). During these periods of occupation, ISIL has systematically destroyed many of the site's ancient monuments and temples, looted and trafficked artifacts from the site and site museum, and used the site as a staging ground for some of its worst atrocities.

For other reports of damage to the ancient site of Palmyra during this reporting period, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0032**; **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0033**; and **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0034**.

For more information on previous damage to the ancient site of Palmyra, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0134** in **Weekly Report 59-60**; **SHI 15-0145** in **Weekly Report 65-66**; **SHI 16-0035** in **Weekly Report 83-84**; and **SHI 16-0042** in **Weekly Report 85-86**.

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

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will attempt to gather further information on these reports via in country sources as well as DigitalGlobe satellite imagery as it becomes available, and is continuing to monitor the condition of Qalaat Shirkuh and Palmyra. The militarization of cultural property goes against the principles of the 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict.

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AP/LA Times: <http://www.latimes.com/world/la-fg-syria-palmyra-20170302-story.html>

BBC: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-39133343>

DGAM: <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2229>

Financial Times: <https://www.ft.com/content/d3a4a734-ff5f-11e6-96f8-3700c5664d30>

Lizzie Phelan, RT: <https://twitter.com/LizziePhelan/status/837388713579642881>

Palmyra Coordination Committee:

<https://www.facebook.com/revo.palmyra3/posts/657047111086898:0>

Private Twitter Account

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<sup>58</sup> <http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=61973>

<sup>59</sup> <http://tass.com/world/933640>

RIA: <https://ria.ru/syria/20170302/1489150385.html>

Reuters:

March 2, 2017:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-islamic-state-idUSKBN1691GI>; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-syria-palmyra-idUSKBN16921M>

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United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization - World Heritage Centre. 2015. State of Conservation (SOC) Site of Palmyra (Syrian Arab Republic) - 2014. UNESCO-World Heritage Centre. <http://whc.unesco.org/en/soc/2913>.



Damage to front of the Citadel (DGAM; March 2, 2017)



Damage to the back of the Citadel (Private Twitter Account: March 2, 2017)



Video still of the back of Citadel (War Media; March 2, 2017)



Video still of destruction to the causeway of the Citadel (Ruptly TV; March 1, 2017)





Video still of damage to the front of the Citadel (Ruptly TV; March 1, 2017)



Video still of rubble and military equipment inside the Citadel (Ruptly TV; March 1, 2017)



Video still of smoke rising over Palmyra from Citadel (Ruptly TV; March 1, 2017)



Video still of damage to the stairs inside the Citadel (Ruptly TV; March 1, 2017)



Video still of damage to the inside of the Citadel (Ruptly TV; March 1, 2017)





Syrian forces inside the Citadel (Lizzie Phelan; March 2, 2017)

**SHI 17-0031**

**Report Date:** March 2, 2017

**Site Name:** Othman bin Affan Mosque

**Date of Incident:** Unknown

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

**Site Description:** Sunni Mosque

**Site Date:** Unknown

**Incident Summary:** Newly released video shows destruction mosque.

**Incident Source and Description:** On March 2, 2017 the Central Military Information channel released a video showing damage to Palmyra after pro-regime forces liberated it. Towards the end of the video a shot shows the Othman bin Affan Mosque, with only the minaret remaining. On March 16, 2016 the mosque was severely damaged by Russian airstrikes.<sup>60</sup> However, the mosque was left standing after this damage. The new video shows complete destruction of the building and dome, with the minaret still standing.

DigitalGlobe satellite imagery shows that Othman bin Affan Mosque was further damaged between January 10, 2017 and February 26, 2017. The dome and the western half of the mosque has collapsed. The damage was likely caused by SARG and Russian forces, but the exact date of destruction is unknown.

For more information on previous damage to the Othman bin Affan Mosque please see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0039** in **WR 85-86**.

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

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of the Othman bin Affan Mosque in Palmyra, as well as the condition of other religious sites located in areas subject to ongoing aerial bombardment.

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

Central Military Information: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BTftFilkvU>

LA Times: <http://www.latimes.com/world/middleeast/la-fg-syria-palmyra-town-20170521-story.html>

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<sup>60</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/revo.palmyra3/photos/pcb.483939675064310/483939621730982/>





Video still of destruction of Othman bin Affan Mosque (Central Military Information; March 2, 2017)



Othman bin Affan Mosque prior to damage (DigitalGlobe; January 10, 2017)



Othman bin Affan Mosque severely damaged with a collapsed dome (DigitalGlobe; February 26, 2017)

**SHI 17-0032**

**Report Date:** March 4, 2017

**Site Name:** Roman Theater (المسرح الروماني بتدمر)

**Date of Incident:** Between December 26, 2016 and January 19, 2017

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

**Site Description:** According to Sear, Palmyra's 2nd century CE Severan period theater is located southwest of the colonnaded decumanus. The theater is unfinished, consisting only of the lowest level of seating, the ima cavea (the media cavea and summa cavea would normally be above this lowest section, which is reserved for higher classes).<sup>61</sup>

**Site Date:** 2nd century CE

**Incident Summary:** Video footage and photographs show condition of the Roman Theater.

**Incident Source and Description:** On March 2, 2017 DGAM and other news outlets reported that Syrian Arab Republican Guard (SARG) troops, with Russian air support, had recaptured the ancient city of Palmyra from ISIL. Newly released video and photographs show the condition of the Roman Theater. ISIL militants recaptured the ancient site in December 2016. ISIL likely intentionally damaged the site between December 26, 2016 and January 19, 2017.<sup>62</sup>

For other reports of damage to the ancient site of Palmyra during this reporting period, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0030**; **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0033**; **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0034**.

For more information on previous damage to the Roman Theater, see **ASOR Incident Report SHI 15-0096** in **Weekly Report 45**; **SHI 15-0104** in **Weekly Report 47- 48**; **SHI 16-0026** in **Weekly Report 79-80**; **SHI 16-0041** in **Weekly Report 85-86**; **SHI 16-0041 UPDATE** in **Weekly Report 87-88**; **SHI 17-0012** in **Monthly Report 125-128**; **ASOR CHI Special Report: New Damage in Palmyra Uncovered by ASOR CHI**.

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

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will attempt to gather further information on these reports via in country sources as well as DigitalGlobe satellite imagery as it becomes available, and is continuing to monitor the condition of the theater and Palmyra.

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

AFP/Yahoo News: <https://www.yahoo.com/news/pulls-back-syrias-palmyra-monitor-072131017.html>

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<sup>61</sup> Sear, F. 2006. p. 321.

<sup>62</sup> <http://www.asor-syrianheritage.org/new-damage-in-palmyra-uncovered-by-asor-chi/>

AP/LA Times: <http://www.latimes.com/world/la-fg-syria-palmyra-20170302-story.html>

BBC: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-39133343>

DGAM:

March 4: <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2232>

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March 2, 2017: <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-islamic-state-idUSKBN1691GI>

March 3, 2017: <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-syria-palmyra-idUSKBN16921M>

RT:

March 1, 2017: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cEDfpKs7ASA>

March 2, 2017: <https://www.rt.com/news/379073-syrian-palmyra-citadel-isis/>

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Damage to the front and stage of the theater (Private Twitter Account; March 2, 2017)





Damage to the front and stage of theater (RIA; March 3, 2017)



Damage to the front and stage of the theater (Private Twitter Account; March 2, 2017)





Detail of damage to front of stage (DGAM; March 2, 2017)

**SHI 17-0033**

**Report Date:** March 4, 2017

**Site Name:** Tetrapylon (التتراييل)

**Date of Incident:** Between December 26, 2016 and January 19, 2017

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

**Site Description:** According to Darke, unlike most Roman cities in the region, Palmyra did not conform to the standard city plan of two intersecting streets (a decumanus running east-west and a cardo running north-south). The main colonnaded street of Palmyra changes direction twice, and at these points unique architectural devices, namely as the Triumphal Arch and the Tetrapylon, were built to make the route appear more harmonious. The Tetrapylon consists of four large plinths, each supporting four columns topped by a massive corinth. This type of tetrapylon is called a tetrakionion, in which the four corners of the structure are not connected overhead. Only one of the original pink Egyptian granite columns survives — the others are modern reproductions.<sup>63</sup>

**Site Date:** Late 2nd-century CE

**Incident Summary:** Newly released photographs show condition of Tetrapylon.

**Incident Source and Description:** On March 2, 2017 DGAM and other news outlets reported that Syrian Arab Republican Guard (SARG) troops, with Russian air support, had recaptured the ancient city of Palmyra from ISIL. Newly released video and photographs show damage to the tetrapylon. ISIL militants recaptured the ancient site in December 2016. ISIL likely intentionally damaged the site between December 26, 2016 and January 19, 2017.<sup>64</sup>

For other reports of damage to the ancient site of Palmyra during this reporting period, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0030**; **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0032**; **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0034**.

For more information on previous damage, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0041** in **Weekly Report 85-86**; **SHI 16-0041 UPDATE** in **Weekly Report 87-88**; **SHI 17-0013** in **Monthly Report 125-128**; **ASOR CHI Special Report: New Damage in Palmyra Uncovered by ASOR CHI**.

**Pattern:** Military Activity: intentional destruction.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will attempt to gather further information on these reports via in country sources as well as DigitalGlobe satellite imagery as it becomes available, and is continuing to monitor the condition of the Tetrapylon and Palmyra.

**Sources:**

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<sup>63</sup> Darke (2006): 238

<sup>64</sup> <http://www.asor-syrianheritage.org/new-damage-in-palmyra-uncovered-by-asor-chi/>



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Tass: <http://tass.com/world/933640>

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United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization - World Heritage Centre. 2015. State of Conservation (SOC) Site of Palmyra (Syrian Arab Republic) - 2014. UNESCO-World Heritage Centre. <http://whc.unesco.org/en/soc/2913>.



Damage to the tetrapylon (DGAM; March 2, 2017)

**SHI 17-0034**

**Report Date:** March 6 2017

**Site Name:** Three Brothers Tomb (Hypogeum of the Three Brothers)

**Date of Incident:** Unknown

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

**Site Description:** The Hypogeum of the Three Brothers, located in the Southwest Necropolis, is considered one of the most beautiful and important tombs in the necropoli of Palmyra. Constructed around 142 CE, the tomb was carefully restored by the DGAM in 1947 and 2000. The tomb consists of a main corridor and two side wings. There are a total of 65 side-chambers within these, each containing six loculi for a total of 360 loculi. One of the corridors contains three beautiful sarcophagi. The tomb also offers rich insight into Palmyrene painting. The main corridor has a fresco displaying the eponymous three brothers in circular frames carried by winged victories. Other frescoes include Zeus with Ganymede and a depiction of Achilles at Skyros.

A sarcophagus for one of the brothers is dated 142 CE. Several inscriptions in the tomb state that in 160, 191, and 241 CE parts of the tomb were sold or granted to non-relatives and their families, including (in one inscription) to a freedman.

**Site Date:** ca. 142 CE

**Incident Summary:** Newly released photographs show condition of tomb.

**Incident Source and Description:** On March 6, 2017 a team from the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums went to Palmyra to conduct a survey of the monuments. They recorded slight damage to the Three Brothers Tomb. Published photographs show little to no damage at the tomb, the erased faces, and missing heads of statues was done in antiquity. The entrances to the tomb chambers have been blocked and plastered; it is unknown when this occurred.

For other reports of damage to the ancient site of Palmyra during this reporting period, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0030**; **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0032**; and **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0033**.

**Pattern:** Site Management: tourism/visitor activities.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of the Hypogeum of the Three Brothers, as well as the condition of other sites located in recently liberated regions.

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

DGAM:

June 3, 2017: <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2242>; <http://dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2239>



Scholarly:

Burns, Ross. 2009. *The monuments of Syria: A guide*. 3rd ed. London: I. B. Tauris.



Sarcophagi in the hypogeum (DGAM; March 6, 2017)



Sarcophagus in the hypogeum (DGAM; March 6, 2017)



Blocking and plaster over the entrances to the tombs (DGAM; March 6, 2017)



Blocking and plaster over the entrances to the tombs and plaster over part of a painting (DGAM; March 6, 2017)





Blocking and plaster over the entrances to the tombs, the sarcophagi, and trash in the tomb (DGAM; March 6, 2017)



Blocking and plaster over the entrances to the tombs, and restoration of the end of the Hypogeum (DGAM; March 6, 2017)

**SHI 17-0035**

**Report Date:** March 9, 2017

**Site Name:** Bakirha (Baqirha)

**Date of Incident:** Ongoing

**Location:** Jebel Barisha, Idlib Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** A dead city located in the Jebel Barisha, this site is part of the Ancient Villages of Northern Syria UNESCO World Heritage Site. The ancient village of Bakirha was first constructed in the second century CE, including ruins of 2 churches (one of which dates to the 5th century and the other to the 6th century), a huge Roman temple that dates to the second century, several olive presses, and several 2-story dwellings. Bakirha is also known for the large blocks of stone used to build its mortar-less masonry walls inscribed with significant ornaments.

**Site Date:** Second Century CE; Roman/Byzantine

**Incident Summary:** New photographs show the condition of Bakirha.

**Incident Source and Description:** On March 7, 2017 the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums (DGAM) published photographs from the ancient city of Bakirha.<sup>65</sup> These photographs show the breaking of stones possibly for transport in order to use for modern construction, as well as evidence of illegal excavation.

**Pattern:** Reuse of ancient/historic building materials (non-combatants); Illegal excavation.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of Bakirha as well as remote sites vulnerable to vandalism, construction, and illegal excavation in Syria, Iraq, and Libya.

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

DGAM: <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2245>

Scholarly:

Burns, R. 2009. *Monuments of Syria*. I.B. Tauris & Co. New York.

Tchalenko. 1953. *Villages I*. 1953: 51 n3, p.106-7, 110-1

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<sup>65</sup> <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2245>



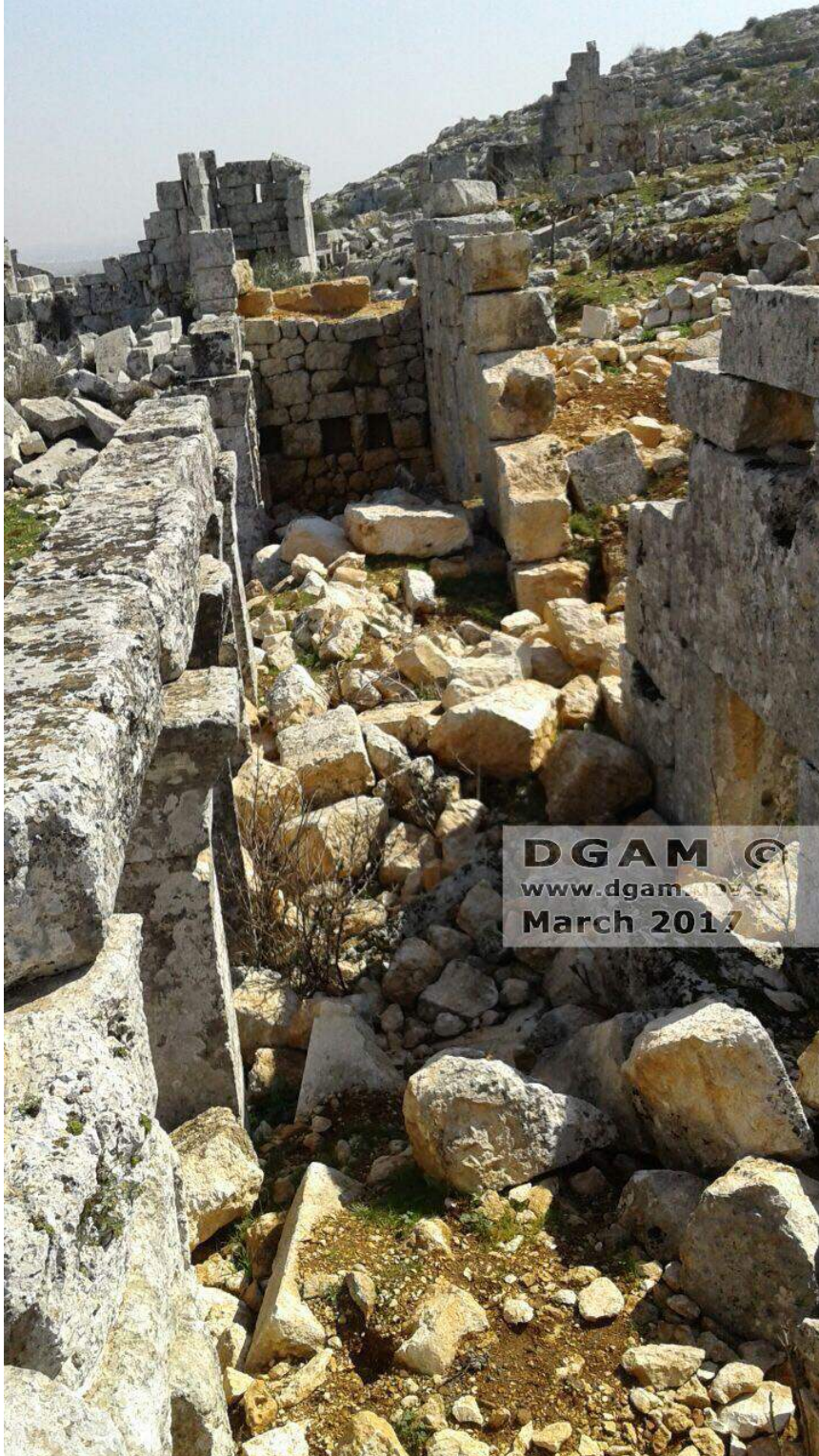


Bakirha, the orange and white rocks are ones that are broken, possibly for transport/new construction (DGAM; March 7, 2017)



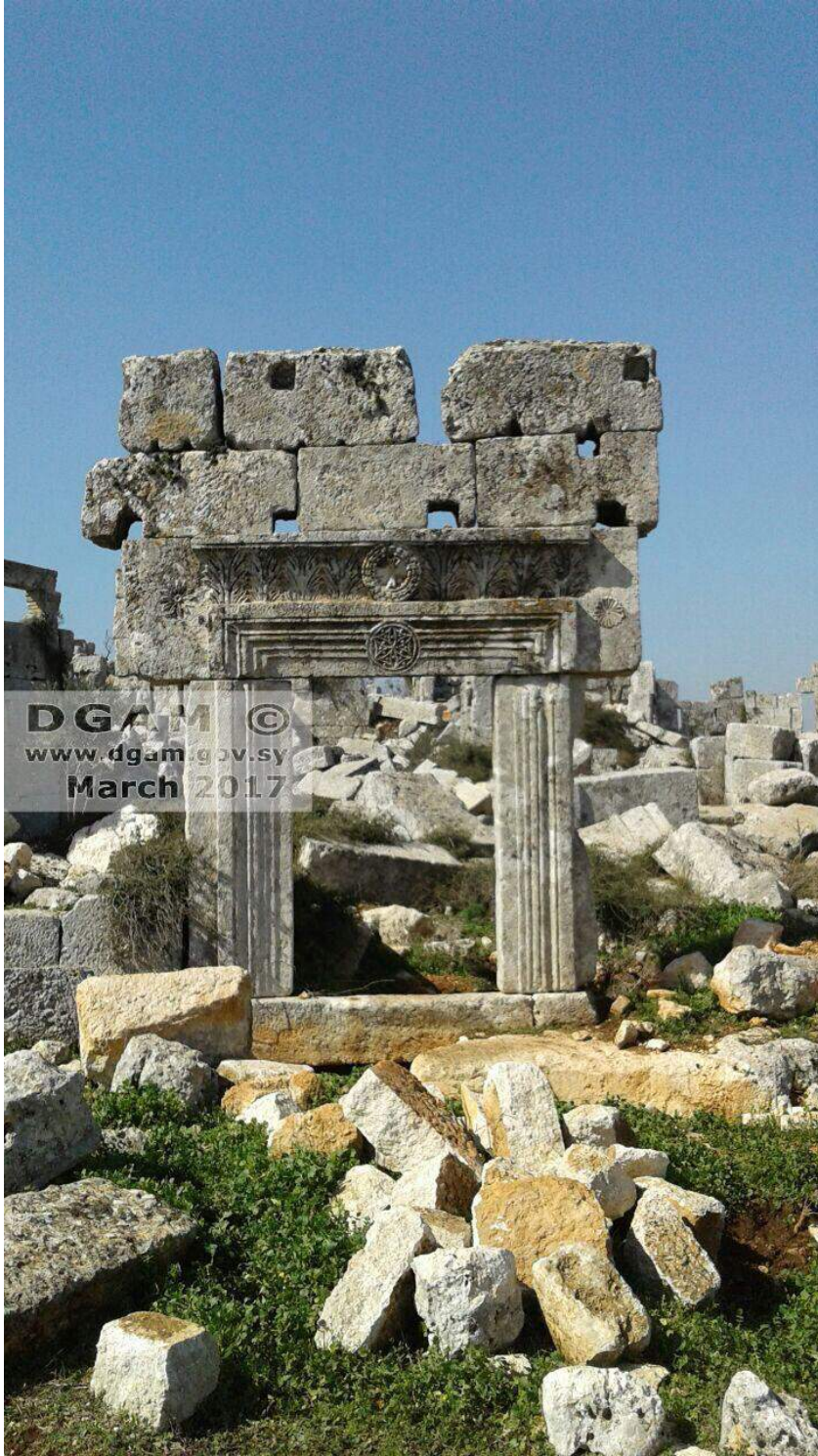
Bakirha, the orange and white rocks are ones that are broken, possibly for transport/new construction (DGAM; March 7, 2017)





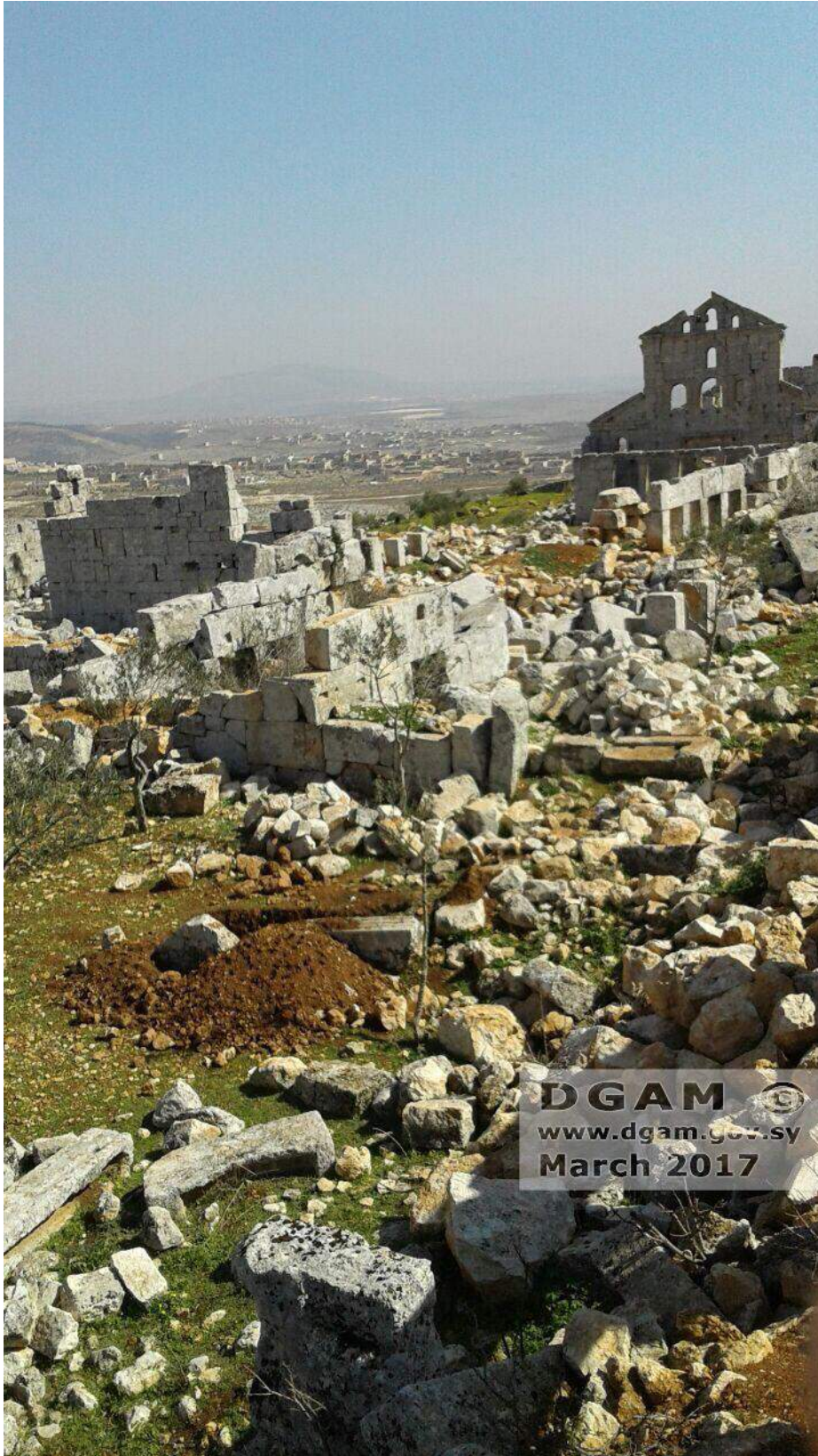
Bakirha, the orange and white rocks are ones that are broken, possibly for transport/new construction (DGAM; March 7, 2017)





Bakirha, the orange and white rocks are ones that are broken, possibly for transport/new construction (DGAM; March 7, 2017)





Fresh dirt, where illegal excavation is taking place (DGAM; March 7, 2017)





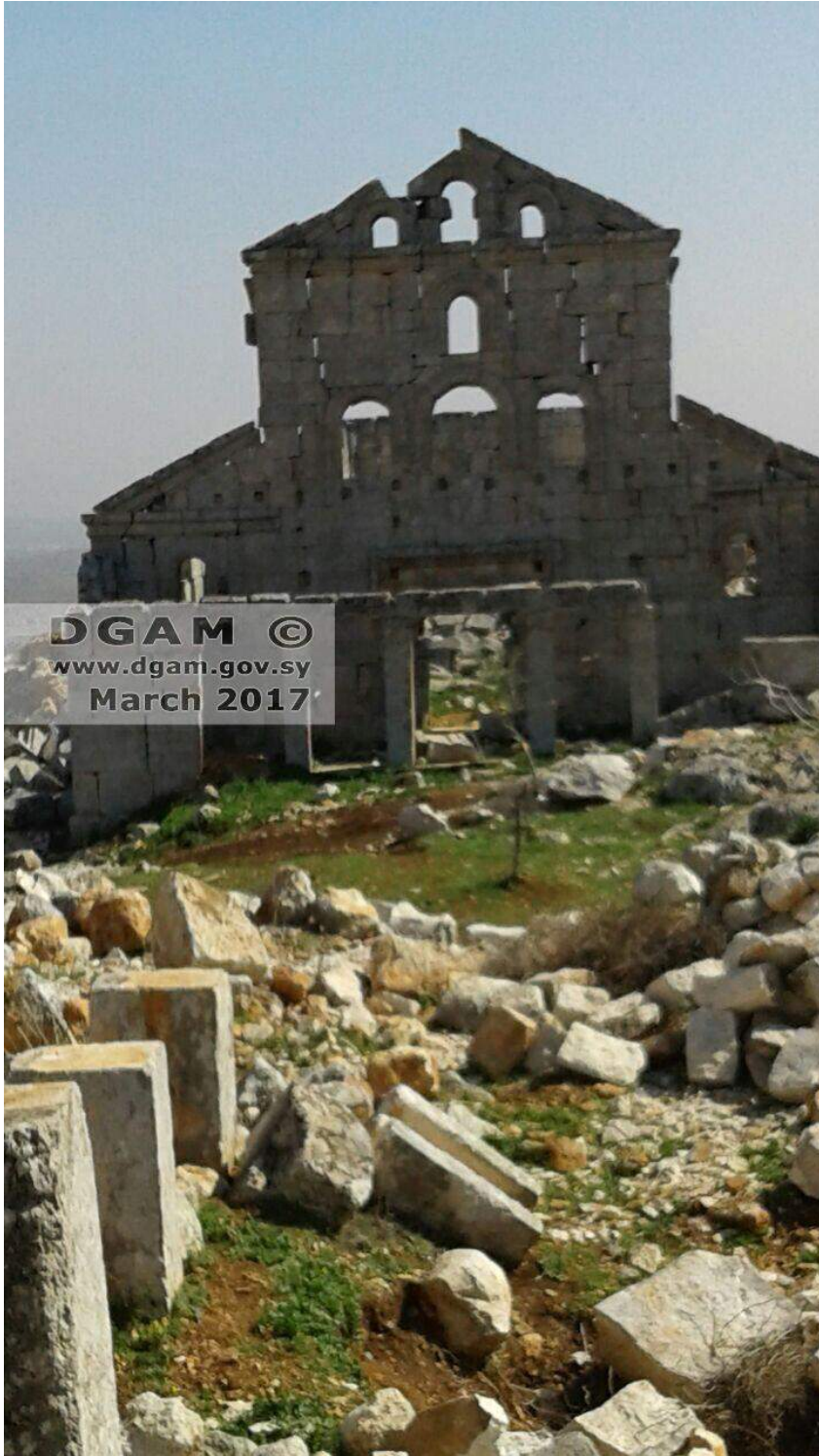
Fresh dirt, where illegal excavation is taking place (DGAM; March 7, 2017)





Fresh dirt, where illegal excavation is taking place (DGAM; March 7, 2017)





Fresh dirt, where illegal excavation is taking place, and possible broken stones (DGAM; March 7, 2017)



**SHI 17-0036**

**Report Date:** March 14, 2017

**Site Name:** Cemetery of Bab al-Saghir (مقبرة الباب الصغير)

**Date of Incident:** March 11, 2017

**Location:** Damascus, Damascus Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Bab al-Saghir is “one of the seven gates of the old city of Damascus and houses a cemetery where a number of early Islam religious figures, including family members of Prophet Muhammad and figures revered by Shiites, are buried.”<sup>66</sup> At least seven shrines of individuals revered in Islam are located inside the cemetery.<sup>67</sup>

**Site Date:** Unknown

**Incident Summary:** Suicide bombings strike near cemetery.

**Incident Source and Description:** On March 11, 2017 two bombings struck near the Cemetery of Bab al-Saghir. According to reports, the bombings killed dozens of people including 40 Iraqi Shia pilgrims. Syrian Interior Minister reported that the attack targeted “civilians...who were touring the areas shrines.”<sup>68</sup> According to a local reporter, the pilgrims targeted in the attack had arrived at the cemetery following a visit to the shrine of Sayeda Zeinab.<sup>69</sup> According to reports, the cause of the bombing is unclear as to whether both explosions were the result of suicide bombers or if a bomb was placed inside the cemetery.<sup>70</sup> Details of damage to the cemetery remain unclear.

According to DigitalGlobe satellite imagery from May 3, 2017 there is no visible damage to the cemetery. For other damage due to a suicide bombing in Damascus during this reporting period, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0037**.

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor reports of damage to the Cemetery of Bab al-Saghir, as well as the condition of other heritage sites located in regions subject to insecure security situations.

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

Al Jazeera: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/03/bombs-damascus-fatalities-reported-170311101052510.html>

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<sup>66</sup> <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/syria-attack-kills-dozens-holy-shrines-damascus/>

<sup>67</sup> <http://www.islamiclandmarks.com/syria/bab-al-saghir-cemetery>

<sup>68</sup> <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/syria-attack-kills-dozens-holy-shrines-damascus/>

<sup>69</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-damascus-idUSKBN16I0B2>

<sup>70</sup> <http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/03/11/519811636/explosions-in-damascus-target-shiites-from-iraq-kill-at-least-40>

CBS: <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/syria-attack-kills-dozens-holy-shrines-damascus/>

Islamic Landmarks: <http://www.islamiclandmarks.com/syria/bab-al-saghir-cemetery>

NPR: <http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/03/11/519811636/explosions-in-damascus-target-shiites-from-iraq-kill-at-least-40>

Reuters: <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-damascus-idUSKBN16I0B2>

Syria Photo Guide: <http://www.syriaphotoguide.com/home/damascus-bab-al-saghir-cemetery-دمشق-مقبرة-الباب-الصغير/>

Syrian Observatory for Human Rights: <http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=62898>

**SHI 17-0037**

**Report Date:** March 14, 2017

**Site Name:** Palace of Justice (Adli Palace)

**Date of Incident:** March 14, 2017

**Location:** Damascus, Damascus Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** According to Love Damascus: "The Palace of Justice houses many courts of the Syrian judicial system. However, its grounds were home to a Mamluk palace, which had existed up to 1850 when the Ottomans built an army barracks in its place. During the French Mandate, the barracks became the headquarters of the French High Commissioner. After a major fire that destroyed the barracks in 1945, the building was restored to its existing form."<sup>71</sup>

**Site Date:** Adli Palace constructed during Mamluk period, torn down and barracks constructed 1850, restored after fire in 1945 CE.

**Incident Summary:** Suicide bombing causes minimal damage.

**Incident Source and Description:** On March 14, 2017 a suicide bomber detonated his device inside the Palace of Justice in Damascus, causing minimal damage.<sup>72</sup> The blast killed at least 25 people. Photographs from the site show minimal damage to the site. The bomber may have been intending to detonate his device inside the Souk Hamidiyeh, located next to the Palace of Justice.<sup>73</sup> A second bombing occurred at a restaurant in the area of Rabweh shortly after the explosion inside the Palace of Justice.

For other damage due to suicide bombing in Damascus during this reporting period, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0036**.

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor reports of damage to the Palace of Justice, 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 Jazeera: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/03/suicide-attack-hits-justice-palace-syria-damascus-170315114623986.html>

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<sup>71</sup> <http://www.lovedamascus.com/en/what-to-see/tourist-attractions/al-qanawat/016ta003/the-palace-of-justice>

<sup>72</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/03/suicide-attack-hits-justice-palace-syria-damascus-170315114623986.html>

<sup>73</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-39277179>

BBC: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-39277179>

CBS:

<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/syria-says-palace-of-justice-in-damascus-hit-by-twin-terrorist-explosions/>

Love Damascus: <http://www.lovedamascus.com/en/what-to-see/tourist-attractions/al-qanawat/016ta003/the-palace-of-justice>

Syrian Observatory for Human Rights: <http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=62898>



Security forces stand outside the Palace of Justice after cordoning off the area (Al Jazeera/AFP; March 14, 2017)





The exterior of the Palace of Justice following the suicide bombing attack (Reuters; March 14, 2017)



Damage to the interior of the Palace of Justice following the suicide bombing attack (Reuters; March 14, 2017)

**SHI 17-0038**

**Report Date:** March 16, 2017

**Site Name:** Omar Ibn al-Khattab Mosque (مسجد عمر بن الخطاب) (Village Mosque /al-Jeineh Mosque)

**Date of Incident:** March 16, 2017

**Location:** al-Jeineh (الجينة), Aleppo Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Village mosque in al-Jeineh. The mosque is next to another building (part of a compound) built by the 'Da'awe' order which contains a restaurant, a second mosque, and an empty space above the mosque that houses internally displaced persons (IDPs).<sup>74</sup> The Omar Ibn al-Khattab Mosque may feature two separate mosque spaces, older and newer. The mosque reportedly had a capacity of 200.<sup>75</sup> The mosque compound also contains a religious school (Sharia School). As of March 2017, the compound, including the Omar Ibn al-Khattab Mosque, remained under construction according to a sign seen outside the mosque.<sup>76</sup> The northern part of the new mosque is possibly a set of meeting rooms.<sup>77</sup>

**Site Date:** Post-2011 CE.<sup>78</sup>

**Incident Summary:** A reported US-led Coalition airstrike damages a mosque compound.

**Incident Source and Description:** On March 16, 2017 the Syrian Human Rights Committee (SRC) reported that a suspected US-led Coalition airstrike had targeted Omar Ibn al-Khattab in the town of al-Jeineh during Friday prayers. According to SRC "tens of worshippers were in the mosque... [where] religious talks had been taking place following the evening prayers" when the airstrike occurred.<sup>79</sup> According to local residents "at least 200 people were gathered in the mosque and a nearby building for religious instruction."<sup>80</sup> According to witnesses and monitoring groups, dozens of the people in attendance were killed and hundreds more injured.<sup>81</sup> Later reports stated that as many as 46 people were killed, the majority of whom were civilians.<sup>82</sup> Rescue workers, including

<sup>74</sup> <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2017/03/29/u-s-bombs-syrian-village-and-shrugs.html>

<sup>75</sup> <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/mena/2017/03/16/us-missile-remains-reportedly-recovered-from-site-of-aleppo-mosque-bombing/>

<sup>76</sup> <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/mena/2017/03/16/us-missile-remains-reportedly-recovered-from-site-of-aleppo-mosque-bombing/>

<sup>77</sup> <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/mena/2017/03/16/us-missile-remains-reportedly-recovered-from-site-of-aleppo-mosque-bombing/>

<sup>78</sup> <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/mena/2017/03/16/us-missile-remains-reportedly-recovered-from-site-of-aleppo-mosque-bombing/>

<sup>79</sup> <http://www.shrc.org/en/?p=29230>

<sup>80</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/mounting-claims-of-civilian-deaths-after-us-targets-al-qaeda-in-syria/2017/03/17/350d5838-0ae9-11e7-8884-96e6a6713f4b\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/mounting-claims-of-civilian-deaths-after-us-targets-al-qaeda-in-syria/2017/03/17/350d5838-0ae9-11e7-8884-96e6a6713f4b_story.html)

<sup>81</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/panic-spreads-in-iraq-syria-as-record-numbers-of-civilians-are-reported-killed-in-us-strikes/2017/03/28/3cbce7f8-13bb-11e7-bb16-269934184168\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/panic-spreads-in-iraq-syria-as-record-numbers-of-civilians-are-reported-killed-in-us-strikes/2017/03/28/3cbce7f8-13bb-11e7-bb16-269934184168_story.html) ; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/17/syria-mosque-airstrike-kills-dozens-of-civilians-near-aleppo>

<sup>82</sup> <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/syria-mosque-airstrike-aleppo-kills-civilians-us-military-missiles-idlib-al-jineh-west-a7634556.html> ; <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2017/03/29/u-s-bombs-syrian-village-and-shrugs.html>

members of the Civil Defense, responded to the scene in order to remove the rubble and pull out victims and survivors. A local reporter stated that the mosque had been destroyed.<sup>83</sup>

The US-led Coalition confirmed an airstrike over the area, however a spokesman stated that the target was not the mosque and that there was a “mosque within 50 feet of that building that is still standing.”<sup>84</sup> Later comments stated the airstrike had targeted the community building adjacent to the mosque.<sup>85</sup> The targets appear to have been al-Qaeda linked forces, however local residents dispute the claim that any militants were present at the site and that the meeting was made up of civilians who were listening to a religious discussion by a moderate Islamist proselytizing group.<sup>86</sup> According to the analyst group Bellingcat, the US-led Coalition is likely referencing the “smaller and older mosque” in the compound, which remains undamaged.<sup>87</sup> An aerial photograph released by the Pentagon appears to confirm this theory.<sup>88</sup> Much of northwestern Syria, including this area of Aleppo Governorate, is host to “al-Qaeda-linked alliance of rebel groups known as Tahrir al-Sham.”<sup>89</sup>

The following day an AP reporter was able to access the scene of the airstrike and reported, “much of the building, identified by a black placard outside as a mosque, had been flattened. The empty prayer hall was covered in debris, and rescue workers stepped through it carefully, deliberating about how to break down a wall to search for more survivors.”<sup>90</sup> Photographs released from the site show munitions that are manufactured in the United States.<sup>91</sup> According to the Washington Post, “aerial imagery appeared to confirm that much of the northern section of [the mosque] was destroyed, although it was unclear whether the strike was a direct one.”<sup>92</sup>

On March 19, 2017 a journalist from On the Ground News (OGN TV) captured video footage from inside the mosque, which showed moderate interior damage.<sup>93</sup> According to the journalist, the first strike leveled the area of the mosque compound that included a kitchen and eating area.

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

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<sup>83</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/mounting-claims-of-civilian-deaths-after-us-targetsal-qaeda-in-syria/2017/03/17/350d5838-0ae9-11e7-8884-96e6a6713f4b\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/mounting-claims-of-civilian-deaths-after-us-targetsal-qaeda-in-syria/2017/03/17/350d5838-0ae9-11e7-8884-96e6a6713f4b_story.html)

<sup>84</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/16/world/middleeast/us-military-denies-reports-it-bombed-mosque-in-syria.html> ; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/17/syria-mosque-airstrike-kills-dozens-of-civilians-near-aleppo>

<sup>85</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/mounting-claims-of-civilian-deaths-after-us-targetsal-qaeda-in-syria/2017/03/17/350d5838-0ae9-11e7-8884-96e6a6713f4b\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/mounting-claims-of-civilian-deaths-after-us-targetsal-qaeda-in-syria/2017/03/17/350d5838-0ae9-11e7-8884-96e6a6713f4b_story.html)

<sup>86</sup> <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2017/03/29/u-s-bombs-syrian-village-and-shrugs.html> ; [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/mounting-claims-of-civilian-deaths-after-us-targetsal-qaeda-in-syria/2017/03/17/350d5838-0ae9-11e7-8884-96e6a6713f4b\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/mounting-claims-of-civilian-deaths-after-us-targetsal-qaeda-in-syria/2017/03/17/350d5838-0ae9-11e7-8884-96e6a6713f4b_story.html) ; [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M81w\\_lAWt3s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M81w_lAWt3s)

<sup>87</sup> <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/mena/2017/03/16/us-missile-remains-reportedly-recovered-from-site-of-aleppo-mosque-bombing/>

<sup>88</sup> <https://www.defense.gov/Photos/Photo-Gallery/igphoto/2001718389>

<sup>89</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/mounting-claims-of-civilian-deaths-after-us-targetsal-qaeda-in-syria/2017/03/17/350d5838-0ae9-11e7-8884-96e6a6713f4b\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/mounting-claims-of-civilian-deaths-after-us-targetsal-qaeda-in-syria/2017/03/17/350d5838-0ae9-11e7-8884-96e6a6713f4b_story.html)

<sup>90</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/17/syria-mosque-airstrike-kills-dozens-of-civilians-near-aleppo>

<sup>91</sup> [https://twitter.com/Charles\\_Lister/status/842749042950115329](https://twitter.com/Charles_Lister/status/842749042950115329)

<sup>92</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/mounting-claims-of-civilian-deaths-after-us-targetsal-qaeda-in-syria/2017/03/17/350d5838-0ae9-11e7-8884-96e6a6713f4b\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/mounting-claims-of-civilian-deaths-after-us-targetsal-qaeda-in-syria/2017/03/17/350d5838-0ae9-11e7-8884-96e6a6713f4b_story.html)

<sup>93</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KuH\\_XvDrSEg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KuH_XvDrSEg)



**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor reports of damage to Omar ibn 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:

Air Wars: <https://airwars.org/news/unilateral-strike/>

Bellingcat: <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/mena/2017/03/16/us-missile-remains-reportedly-recovered-from-site-of-aleppo-mosque-bombing/>

Charles Lister (Senior Fellow, Middle East Institute):  
[https://twitter.com/Charles\\_Lister/status/842749042950115329](https://twitter.com/Charles_Lister/status/842749042950115329)

The Daily Beast: <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2017/03/29/u-s-bombs-syrian-village-and-shrugs.html>

Foreign Policy: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/03/17/u-s-says-airstrike-in-syria-did-not-hit-mosque/>

The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/17/syria-mosque-airstrike-kills-dozens-of-civilians-near-aleppo>

Independent IE: <http://www.independent.ie/world-news/middle-east/airstrike-hit-alqaida-meeting-not-mosque-says-us-35542674.html>

Independent UK: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/syria-mosque-airstrike-aleppo-kills-civilians-us-military-missiles-idlib-al-jineh-west-a7634556.html>

Al Jazeera: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/03/syria-mosque-attack-170318010309757.html>

Al Jazeera English: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bNV74uQkk-o>

Al Jisr Satellite Channel: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M81w\\_lAWt3s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M81w_lAWt3s)

Live UA Map Syria: <https://syria.liveuamap.com/en/2017/17-march-bilal-abdul-kareem-us-claims-that-its-airstrike>

Masr Alarabia: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PdgWSHemGQk>

Moaz al-Shami: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7JxirYM5I58>

New York Times: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/16/world/middleeast/us-military-denies-reports-it-bombed-mosque-in-syria.html>

On The Ground News (OGN TV): [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KuH\\_XvDrSEg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KuH_XvDrSEg)

Orient News: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ga7eCkDavyU>

RT: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H4-FKWFmBFw>

Ruptly TV: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2fUsKYujR1g>

SMART News Agency: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dYhnwag8H4g>

Syrian Human Rights Committee (SRC): <http://www.shrc.org/en/?p=29230>

US Department of Defense (DOD): March 17, 2017: <https://www.defense.gov/Photos/Photo-Gallery/igphoto/2001718389>

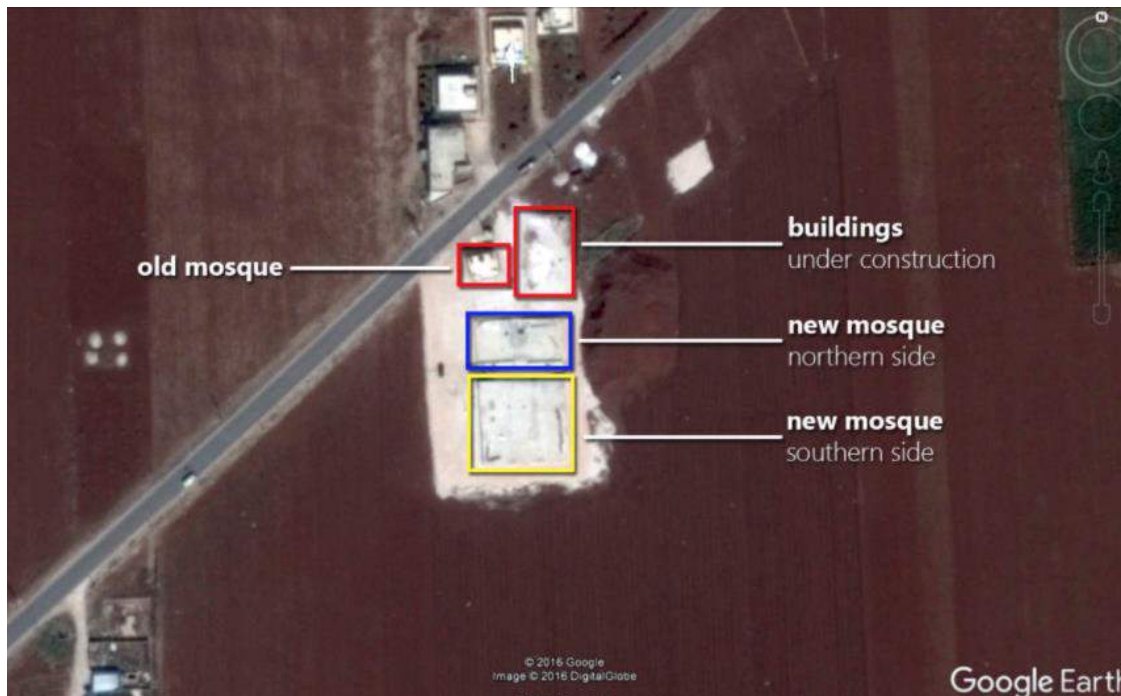
March 17, 2017: <https://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1122791/pentagon-spokesman-dozens-of-terrorists-believed-killed-in-us-strike-in-syria/source/GovDelivery/>

Al Watan TV: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DUq6kLsO34U>

Washington Post:

March 17, 2016: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/mounting-claims-of-civilian-deaths-after-us-targets-al-qaeda-in-syria/2017/03/17/350d5838-0ae9-11e7-8884-96e6a6713f4b\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/mounting-claims-of-civilian-deaths-after-us-targets-al-qaeda-in-syria/2017/03/17/350d5838-0ae9-11e7-8884-96e6a6713f4b_story.html)

March 28, 2016: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/panic-spreads-in-iraq-syria-as-record-numbers-of-civilians-are-reported-killed-in-us-strikes/2017/03/28/3cbce7f8-13bb-11e7-bb16-269934184168\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/panic-spreads-in-iraq-syria-as-record-numbers-of-civilians-are-reported-killed-in-us-strikes/2017/03/28/3cbce7f8-13bb-11e7-bb16-269934184168_story.html)



A labeled map of the mosque compound, the US-led Coalition claimed that their airstrike targeted the building under construction (Charles Lister/Bellingcat; March 17, 2017)



A photograph released by the Department of Defense shows the airstrike occurring on the compound, the old mosque is in the upper left corner and remains undamaged (DOD; March 16, 2017)



Damage seen to the mosque (SRC; March 16, 2017)





Video still of local residents search rubble for victims (SMART News Agency; March 16, 2017)



Video still of collapsed level of mosque compound (Moaz al-Shami; March 16, 2017)



A video still shows what appears to be the leveling of the second floor of the mosque compound (Ruptly TV; March 17, 2017)



Video still of collapsed level of mosque compound (Moaz al-Shami; March 16, 2017)



Damage seen to the mosque compound (SMART News Agency; March 16, 2017)



Video still of damage to the mosque compound (OGN TV; March 17, 2017)





Video still shows damage to the mosque compound (Masr Alarabia; March 18, 2017)



Video still shows damage to Omar Ibn al-Khattab Mosque (Masr Alarabia; March 18, 2017)



Video still of the damaged nameplate of the mosque compound, including the label of mosque and school (Masr alArabia; March 18, 2017)



Damaged religious texts seen inside the compound (Masr alArabia; March 18, 2017)



Damaged religious texts seen inside the compound (Masr alArabia; March 18, 2017)



Video still of damaged religious texts seen inside the compound (Masr alArabia; March 18, 2017)





Video still of damaged religious texts at the mosque compound (Moaz al-Shami; March 16, 2017)



Video still shows smaller mosque near severely damaged compound (Al Watan TV; March 18, 2017)



A man inspects damage to the mosque compound (Independent IE/Reuters; March 18, 2017)



Damage seen to area surrounding the mosque compound, including to this smaller mosque seen in the photograph (RFS/Bellingcat; March 16, 2017)





Video still showing the collapse of part of the compound, the smaller mosque is possibly seen in the top right (Al Jisr Satellite TV; March 19, 2017)



Extensive damage seen to mosque compound (Charles Lister; March 17, 2017)





Debris being cleared from the mosque compound (Al Watan TV; March 18, 2017)



Video still shows damage to the musalla (prayer area) inside the mosque (OGN TV; March 19, 2017)



Video still shows the leveled kitchen area inside the mosque compound (OGN TV; March 19, 2017)



Video still of the moderately damaged musalla of the mosque compound, the room located above has collapsed (Moaz al-Shami; March 16, 2017)



Video still of the moderately damaged musalla of the mosque compound, the room located above has collapsed (Moaz al-Shami; March 16, 2017)



Fragments of an alleged US-manufactured munition found at the site of the airstrike (Charles Lister; March 17, 2016)



**SHI 17-0039**

**Report Date:** March 20 2017

**Site Name:** al-Kabir Mosque

**Date of Incident:** March 20, 2017

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

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

**Site Date:** 1658 CE

**Incident Summary:** Suspected Russian airstrikes damage mosque.

**Incident Source and Description:** On March 20, 2017 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that suspected Russian warplanes had fired missiles on al-Kabir Mosque in the city of Jisr al-Shughour, causing partial damage.<sup>94</sup> In their March 2017 report (published April 13, 2017) SNHR reported that the mosque's fence was partially destroyed and its furniture was moderately damaged.<sup>95</sup> The report includes a photograph showing damage to the mosque's interior.

For other damage to mosques due to airstrikes in Idlib Governorate during this reporting period, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0045**.

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

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

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

SNHR:

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

April 13, 2017: [http://sn4hr.org/wp-content/pdf/english/114\\_incidents\\_of\\_assault\\_on\\_civilian\\_vital\\_centers\\_in\\_March\\_2017\\_en.pdf](http://sn4hr.org/wp-content/pdf/english/114_incidents_of_assault_on_civilian_vital_centers_in_March_2017_en.pdf)

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<sup>94</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/03/20/media-activist-daraa-killed-isis-wadi-al-yarmouk-daraa-governorate-march-20/>

<sup>95</sup> [http://sn4hr.org/wp-content/pdf/english/114\\_incidents\\_of\\_assault\\_on\\_civilian\\_vital\\_centers\\_in\\_March\\_2017\\_en.pdf](http://sn4hr.org/wp-content/pdf/english/114_incidents_of_assault_on_civilian_vital_centers_in_March_2017_en.pdf)



Damage to the interior of the mosque (SNHR; April 13, 2017)

**SHI 17-0040**

**Report Date:** March 20, 2017

**Site Name:** al-Kabir Mosque (المسجد الكبير) (Grand Mosque; جامع الأتارب الكبير)

**Date of Incident:** March 20, 2017

**Location:** Ma'aret al-Atareb, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Mosque in al-Atareb.

**Site Date:** Unknown

**Incident Summary:** Airstrikes near mosque cause partial damage.

**Incident Source and Description:** On March 20, 2017 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that “suspected” Russian fixed-wing warplanes fired a number of missiles near the Grand Mosque in Ma'aret al-Atareb town, causing partial damage to the building and its furniture.<sup>96</sup>In its March 2017 report (published April 13, 2017) SNHR published a photo showing damage near the mosque caused by the airstrike. Previous video footage shows damage occurring to al-Kabir Mosque as a result of the ongoing conflict.<sup>97</sup>

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

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor reports of damage to al-Kabir 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:

Shaam News Network: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w2zahwkilE4>

SNHR:

March 21, 2017: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/03/21/suspected-russian-forces-shelled-mosque-maaret-al-atareb-town-aleppo-governorate-march-20/>

April 13, 2017: [http://sn4hr.org/wp-content/pdf/english/114\\_incidents\\_of\\_assault\\_on\\_civilian\\_vital\\_centers\\_in\\_March\\_2017\\_en.pdf](http://sn4hr.org/wp-content/pdf/english/114_incidents_of_assault_on_civilian_vital_centers_in_March_2017_en.pdf)

Union of Aleppo: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sKEesjKtN\\_c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sKEesjKtN_c)

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<sup>96</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/03/21/suspected-russian-forces-shelled-mosque-maaret-al-atareb-town-aleppo-governorate-march-20/>

<sup>97</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w2zahwkilE4> ; [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sKEesjKtN\\_c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sKEesjKtN_c)





Damage near al-Kabir Mosque (SNHR; April 13, 2017)

**SHI 17-0041**

**Report Date:** March 25, 2017

**Site Name:** Khaled bin al-Waleed Mosque

**Date of Incident:** March 21, 2017

**Location:** al-Amqeya Village, Hama Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Mosque

**Site Date:** Unknown

**Incident Summary:** Reported SARG missile damages mosque.

**Incident Source and Description:** On March 21, 2017 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that a SARG missile had hit the Khaled bin al-Waleed Mosque in al-Amqeya village in Sahl al Ghab area in Hama governorate western suburbs, partially damaging its ceiling.<sup>98</sup> Photographs released by SNHR show damage to the ceiling and rubble on the floor of the mosque.

For other damage to mosques in Hama Governorate during this reporting period, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0043**, and **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0044**.

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives.

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

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

SNHR:

March 21, 2017:<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/03/21/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-mosque-al-amqeya-village-sahl-al-ghab-area-hama-governorate-march-21/>

April 13, 2017:[http://sn4hr.org/wp-content/pdf/english/114\\_incidents\\_of\\_assault\\_on\\_civilian\\_vital\\_centers\\_in\\_March\\_2017\\_en.pdf](http://sn4hr.org/wp-content/pdf/english/114_incidents_of_assault_on_civilian_vital_centers_in_March_2017_en.pdf)

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<sup>98</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/03/21/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-mosque-al-amqeya-village-sahl-al-ghab-area-hama-governorate-march-21/>



Damage to the ceiling of the Khaled bin al-Waleed Mosque (SNHR; March 21, 2017)





Rubble from the ceiling of the Khaled bin al-Waleed Mosque (SNHR; April 13, 2017)



Mosque with prior damage to building and wall on the northeast (DigitalGlobe; February 15, 2017)



Visible hole in the roof of the mosque (DigitalGlobe; April 3, 2017)

**SHI 17-0042**

**Report Date:** March 25, 2017

**Site Name:** al-Rawda Mosque

**Date of Incident:** March 25, 2017

**Location:** Hamouriya, Rif Dimashq Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Mosque

**Site Date:** Unknown

**Incident Summary:** Reported SARG/Russian airstrikes severely damages mosque.

**Incident Source and Description:** On March 25, 2017 SNHR reported that SARG/Russian warplanes had fired a missile near the al Rawda Mosque, in the center of Hamouriya (a town in the east suburbs of Damascus), severely damaging it and rendering it inoperable.<sup>99</sup> On March 30, 2017 SNHR published a YouTube video showing extensive damage to the immediate neighborhood of the al Rawda Mosque.<sup>100</sup>

On April 30, 2017 SNHR released a comprehensive report on the events of March 25, 2017 entitled: "The Syrian Regime Perpetrates a Massacre in Hamouriya Town Two Days After Geneva Talks' Fifth Round Start".<sup>101</sup> According to the report, at approximately 9:40am, fixed-wing SARG warplanes fired at least four missiles into al-Rawda Street (the main market in the center of Hamouriya), which resulted in the deaths of 17 civilians, including three children, and injured at least 30 others. The al-Rawda Mosque was heavily damaged in the shelling. SNHR notes that the targeted areas were populated exclusively by civilians, "no military centers or weapon warehouses for armed opposition factions or extremist Islamic groups were found before or during the attack."

SNHR previously reported damage to the mosque after a SARG airstrike on Dec 9, 2015 in its December Vital Facilities Report.<sup>102</sup> ASOR CHI noted this in the executive summary appearing in **Weekly Report 77-78**.

For other damage to mosques in Rif Dimashq Governorate during this reporting period, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0046**.

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

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

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<sup>99</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/03/25/syrian-russian-alliance-forces-shelled-al-rawda-mosque-hamoriya-town-damascus-suburbs-march-25/>

<sup>100</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aFeGKcmjefs>

<sup>101</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/04/30/39430/>

<sup>102</sup> [http://sn4hr.org/wp-content/pdf/english/At least 1114 targeting centers in 2015 en.pdf](http://sn4hr.org/wp-content/pdf/english/At%20least%201114%20targeting%20centers%20in%202015%20en.pdf)



**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

SNHR:

March 25, 2017: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/03/25/syrian-russian-alliance-forces-shelled-al-rawda-mosque-hamoriya-town-damascus-suburbs-march-25/>

March 30, 2017: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aFeGKcmjefs>

April 13, 2017: [http://sn4hr.org/wp-content/pdf/english/114 incidents of assault on civilian vital centers in March 2017 en.pdf](http://sn4hr.org/wp-content/pdf/english/114%20incidents%20of%20assault%20on%20civilian%20vital%20centers%20in%20March%202017%20en.pdf)

April 30, 2017: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/04/30/39430/>

Qasioun News:

[http://www.qasioun.net/en/news/show/64408/SNHR Release Report About Syrian Regime Masacres After Geneva Peace Talks](http://www.qasioun.net/en/news/show/64408/SNHR%20Release%20Report%20About%20Syrian%20Regime%20Masacres%20After%20Geneva%20Peace%20Talks)



Damage to al-Rawda mosque from airstrikes on March 25, 2017 (SNHR; March 25, 2017)



Damage to al-Rawda mosque from airstrikes on March 25, 2017 (SNHR; April 13, 2017)



Damage to al-Rawda mosque from airstrikes on March 25, 2017 (SNHR; April 13, 2017)

**SHI 17-0043****Report Date:** March 25 2017**Site Name:** Ahmad al Refa'ei Mosque (Abu Urwa Mosque) (مسجد أحمد الرفاعي)**Date of Incident:** March 25, 2017**Location:** Halfaya, Hama Governorate, Syria**Site Description:** Mosque**Site Date:** Unknown**Incident Summary:** Reported SARG and Russian airstrikes damage mosque.**Incident Source and Description:** On March 25, 2017 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that SARG and Russian warplanes had fired missiles at the Ahmad al Refa'ei Mosque in the city of Halfaya, Hama Governorate.<sup>103</sup> Photos accompanying the report show significant damage to an exterior wall.

For other damage to mosques in Hama Governorate during this reporting period, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0041** and **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0044**.

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

SNHR:

March 25, 2017: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/03/25/syrian-russian-alliance-forces-shelled-ahmad-al-refaei-mosque-helfaya-city-hama-governorate-march-25/>April 13, 2017: [http://sn4hr.org/wp-content/pdf/english/114\\_incidents\\_of\\_assault\\_on\\_civilian\\_vital\\_centers\\_in\\_March\\_2017\\_en.pdf](http://sn4hr.org/wp-content/pdf/english/114_incidents_of_assault_on_civilian_vital_centers_in_March_2017_en.pdf)

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<sup>103</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/03/25/syrian-russian-alliance-forces-shelled-ahmad-al-refaei-mosque-helfaya-city-hama-governorate-march-25/>





Damage to interior of Mosque (SHNR; March 25, 2017)



Damage to exterior of mosque (SNHR; April 13, 2017)

**SHI 17-0044**

**Report Date:** March 25, 2017

**Site Name:** al-Kabir Mosque

**Date of Incident:** March 25, 2017

**Location:** Halfaya, Hama Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Mosque

**Site Date:** Unknown

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

**Incident Source and Description:** On March 25, 2017 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that SARG and Russian warplanes had fired several missiles into al-Kabir Mosque in the city of Halfaya, damaging it severely and rendering it inoperable.<sup>104</sup>

DigitalGlobe satellite imagery from May 30, 2017 shows the northern portion of the mosque has collapsed. This damage occurred between late February and May 30, 2017.

For other damage to mosques in Hama Governorate during this reporting period, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0041**, and **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0043**.

The mosque was previously damaged by SARG airstrikes on December 30, 2016. For more information on previous damage to al-Kabir Mosque, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0188** in **Weekly Report 123-124**.

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

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

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

SNHR: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/03/25/syrian-russian-forces-shelled-al-kabir-mosque-halfaya-city-hama-governorate-march-25/>

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<sup>104</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/03/25/syrian-russian-forces-shelled-al-kabir-mosque-halfaya-city-hama-governorate-march-25/>





Damage to the courtyard and exterior of the mosque (SNHR; March 25, 2017)



Previous damage to the mosque's dome (DigitalGlobe; February 21, 2017)



Collapse of the northern side of the mosque, between the minarets (DigitalGlobe; May 30, 2017)



**SHI 17-0045**

**Report Date:** March 29, 2017

**Site Name:** al-Rahman Mosque

**Date of Incident:** March 29, 2017

**Location:** Jabal al Arba'ain, Idlib Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Mosque

**Site Date:** Unknown

**Incident Summary:** Suspected Russian airstrikes partially damage mosque.

**Incident Source and Description:** On March 29, 2017 SNHR reported that suspected Russian warplanes had fired missiles on al-Rahman Mosque in the area of Jabal al-Arba'ain, south of the city of Ariha. The strike caused partial damage to the mosque, severely damaging its furniture and rendering it inoperable.<sup>105</sup> Liveuamap reported on March 22, 2017 that both SARG and Russian forces targeted the area.<sup>106</sup>

For other damage to mosques due to airstrikes in Idlib Governorate during this reporting period, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0039**.

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

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

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

SNHR:

<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/03/30/suspected-russian-forces-shelled-al-rahman-mosque-jabal-al-arbaein-ariha-city-idlib-governorate-march-29/>

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<sup>105</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/03/30/suspected-russian-forces-shelled-al-rahman-mosque-jabal-al-arbaein-ariha-city-idlib-governorate-march-29/>

<sup>106</sup> <https://syria.liveuamap.com/en/2017/22-march-the-syrian-government-attacked-ariha-in-idlib-with&sa=D&ust=1497894178011000&usg=AFQjCNHfzdkEKzS1yN0kn-Li92LnsHA5Bg> ; <https://syria.liveuamap.com/en/2017/22-march-6-suspected-russian-airstrikes-with-incendiary-munition>

Liveuamap:

March 22, 2017: <https://syria.liveuamap.com/en/2017/22-march-the-syrian-government-attacked-ariha-in-idlib-with&sa=D&ust=1497894178011000&usg=AFQjCNHfzdkEKzS1yN0kn-Li92LnsHA5Bg>; <https://syria.liveuamap.com/en/2017/22-march-6-suspected-russian-airstrikes-with-incendiary-munition>



Damage to the dome of al-Rahman Mosque (SNHR; March 29, 2017)

**SHI 17-0046**

**Report Date:** March 31, 2017

**Site Name:** al-Shamali Mosque (Northern Mosque)

**Date of Incident:** March 23, 2017

**Location:** Madaya, Rif Dimashq Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Mosque

**Site Date:** Unknown

**Incident Summary:** Reported SARG artillery shelled area near mosque.

**Incident Source and Description:** On March 24, 2017 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that SARG artillery forces and militias fired shells near the al-Shamali Mosque in Madaya, causing damage. There were no photographs of the damage at the time of publication.<sup>107</sup>

On April 10, 2017 SNHR published a YouTube video showing shelling near the al Shamali Mosque. According to the video, the shelling took place on March 23, 2017. The mosque is filmed from a distance and is engulfed in a plume of smoke.<sup>108</sup>

In SNHR's Vital Facilities Report March 2017, two shelling incidents that occurred near the mosque were reported. The first took place on March 23, 2017 when SARG forces stationed in al-Tal Castle fired a number of shells about seven meters away from the mosque. No damage to the mosque was recorded. The second incident took place on March 24, 2017 when SARG forces again fired shells near the mosque, this time moderately damaging the exterior cladding of the building.<sup>109</sup>

For other damage to mosques in Rif Dimashq Governorate during this reporting period, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0042**.

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives.

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

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<sup>107</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/03/25/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-al-shamali-mosque-madaya-town-damascus-suburbs-march-24/>

<sup>108</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z\\_Rb3IQeA\\_Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z_Rb3IQeA_Y)

<sup>109</sup> [http://sn4hr.org/wp-content/pdf/english/114\\_incidents\\_of\\_assault\\_on\\_civilian\\_vital\\_centers\\_in\\_March\\_2017\\_en.pdf](http://sn4hr.org/wp-content/pdf/english/114_incidents_of_assault_on_civilian_vital_centers_in_March_2017_en.pdf)



**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

SNHR:

March 25, 2017: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/03/25/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-al-shamali-mosque-madaya-town-damascus-suburbs-march-24/>

April 10, 2017: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z\\_Rb3IQeA\\_Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z_Rb3IQeA_Y)

April 13, 2017: [http://sn4hr.org/wp-content/pdf/english/114\\_incidents\\_of\\_assault\\_on\\_civilian\\_vital\\_centers\\_in\\_March\\_2017\\_en.pdf](http://sn4hr.org/wp-content/pdf/english/114_incidents_of_assault_on_civilian_vital_centers_in_March_2017_en.pdf)



Video still showing explosion near al-Shamali Mosque on March 23, 2017 (SNHR; April 10, 2017)



Video still showing explosion near al-Shamali Mosque on March 23, 2017 (SNHR; April 10, 2017)

**SHI 17-0047**

**Report Date:** March 31, 2017

**Site Name:** Tell Sabi Abyad (تل صبي أبيض)

**Date of Incident:** Unknown

**Location:** Raqqa Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** An archaeological site in the Balikh River valley in northern Syria. The site consists of four mounds that are numbered Tell Sabi Abyad I–IV. Mounds I–III were excavated between 1986 and 2011 by Peter Akkermans. Mound IV is occupied by a local cemetery and was not part of the excavation project.<sup>110</sup>

**Site Date:** Neolithic and Halaf (approximately 7000-5500 B.C.) and Middle Assyrian/Late Bronze Age (approximately 1300-1000 B.C.)

**Incident Summary:** Video allegedly shows heavy machine damage and illegal excavation at Tell Sabi Abyad. The reported damage is not always clearly identifiable in the photos.

**Incident Source and Description:** On March 29, 2017 the Authority of Tourism and Protection of Antiquities - Tell Al Sabi Al Abyad published a video showing alleged damage to the archaeological mounds at Tell Sabi Abyad, caused by heavy machinery. The video supposedly shows a number of heavy machine cuts and pits and other evidence of bulldozing, as well as damage to the dig house.<sup>111</sup> The photos certainly also show the excavation units of the former expedition headed by Akkermans.

In April 2015 ASOR CHI noted photographs showing evidence for the looting and vandalism of the project's storehouse, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0075** in **Weekly Report 38**.

The DGAM 2013 annual report (published January 2014) noted reports from the local community of illegal digging at the site in and around the excavation areas of the Dutch project in December 2013. The DGAM was not able to access the site in order to confirm these reports and assess the damage.<sup>112</sup> No DigitalGlobe imagery was available at the time of publication to corroborate the reports.

**Pattern:** Illegal excavation; Vandalism.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will attempt to gather further information on these reports via in country sources as well as DigitalGlobe satellite imagery as it becomes available, and is continuing to monitor the condition of Tell Sabi Abyad.

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<sup>110</sup> <http://www.sabi-abyad.nl/Page.aspx?pageType=page&pageID=363>

<sup>111</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kICwME6r7oQ>

<sup>112</sup> DGAM, Annual Report 2013: 17

## Sources:

### Online Reporting:

The Authority of Tourism and Protection of Antiquities - Tell Al Sabi Al Abyad:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kICwME6r7oQ>

Project website for Tell Sabi Abyad:

<http://www.sabi-abyad.nl/Page.aspx?pageType=page&pageID=363>

### Scholarly:

Akkermans, P. M., & Schwartz, G. M. (2003). *The archaeology of Syria: from complex hunter-gatherers to early urban societies (c. 16,000-300 BC)*. Cambridge University Press.

DGAM. 2014. *Annual Report 2013* (January 2014).

[https://www.academia.edu/6029925/The annual report of DGAM Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums in Syria 2013](https://www.academia.edu/6029925/The_annual_report_of_DGAM_Directorate_General_of_Antiquities_and_Museums_in_Syria_2013)



Video still of Tell Sabi Abyad allegedly showing illicit digging on one of the mounds (The Authority of Tourism and Protection of Antiquities; March 29, 2017)





Video still of Tell Sabi Abyad, damage to one of the mounds (The Authority of Tourism and Protection of Antiquities; March 29, 2017)



Video still of Tell Sabi Abyad supposedly showing evidence of bulldozing (The Authority of Tourism and Protection of Antiquities; March 29, 2017). The photo appears to show trenches and standing balks and ancient walls/features — much eroded and disturbed over time — in one of the older scientifically excavated areas at the site.



Video still of Tell Sabi Abyad supposedly showing evidence of bulldozing (The Authority of Tourism and Protection of Antiquities; March 29, 2017). The photo appears to show the areas scientifically excavated at the site.



Video still of Tell Sabi Abyad, damage to the dig house (The Authority of Tourism and Protection of Antiquities; March 29, 2017). This identification seems problematic since an exposed archaeological section is shown in the video still.





remains have stolen as the observer alleges  
( Salem Mekhlef Al Aisa )

Video still of Tell Sabi Abyad, damage to dig house showing alleged looting/vandalism (The Authority of Tourism and Protection of Antiquities; March 29, 2017)



## Incident Reports: Iraq

### IHI 15-0034 Update

**Report Date:** March 15, 2017

**Site Name:** Mosul Museum

**Date of Incident:** March 8, 2017

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

**Site Description:** Mosul's main archaeology museum, specializing in material from Assyria and Hatra.

**Site Date:** Modern

**Incident Summary:** New photographs and video show the extent of damage to the museum.

**Incident Source and Description:** On March 8, 2017 the Associated Press (AP) released photographs of damage to the Mosul Museum. According to AP journalists, the halls were full of rubble and the basement was full of ash. Some of the rubble was reportedly from stone lamassu statues and cuneiform tablets. In addition, "a handful of history books remain in the main entryway of the museum beside a bag of placards from old exhibits."<sup>113</sup> The former curator of the museum stated that most of the pieces in the photographs provided by AP were originals.

On March 13, 2017 CNN released a video showing structural damage to the museum. This includes a large hole in the floor, empty cabinets, and twisted steel bars. This damage was reportedly the result of ISIL attempting to breach access to the vault where smaller artifacts were housed.<sup>114</sup> It is hypothesized that these artifacts were taken to sell on the black market. According to an ASOR CHI in-country source the vault was not located beneath the floor where the hole is. Instead, that hole leads to the library. This hole, which corresponds with another hole in the ceiling above it and fire damage, is more likely the result of mortar possibly associated with US-led Coalition airstrikes that targeted Mosul University in 2016. Evidence of fire damage to the outside of the museum is apparent.

For previous reports on damage to the Mosul Museum please see **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 15-0034** in **Weekly Report 30** and **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 15-0034 UPDATE** in **Weekly Report 31**.

**Pattern:** Military Activity: intentional destruction, explosives - airstrikes.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of the Mosul Museum, as well as the condition of other museums located in recently liberated regions.

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<sup>113</sup> <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/75cc4ffe99094800bc3f0b190c7402f3/rubble-and-ash-mosul-museum-retaken-islamic-state>

<sup>114</sup> <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/03/12/middleeast/mosul-museum-isis/>

## Sources:

### Online Reporting:

AP: <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/75cc4ffe99094800bc3f0b190c7402f3/rubble-and-ash-mosul-museum-retaken-islamic-state>

Artnet: <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/iraqi-troops-reclaim-mosul-museum-destruction-isis-revealed-889124>

Ben Wedeman, CNN: <https://twitter.com/bencnn/status/841028716285288449>

CNN: <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/03/12/middleeast/mosul-museum-isis/>

Mosul Eye: <https://www.facebook.com/MosulEye/posts/1179165055538328>

### Personal Twitter Account

Reuters: <http://linkis.com/www.reuters.com/news/ILjAL>

The Times: <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/world/empty-cabinets-and-rubble-all-that-remains-in-mosul-museum-rhj3bbmms>

### Yahoo:

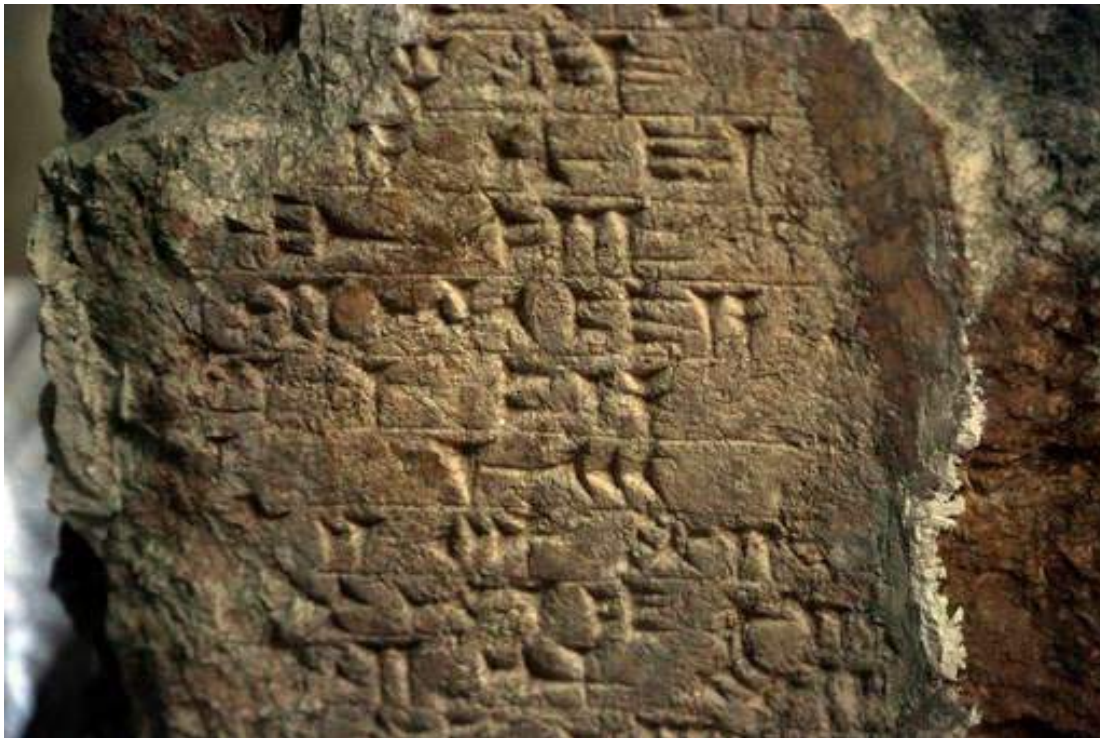
<https://www.yahoo.com/news/priceless-remains-lie-ruins-mosul-museum-114143267.html>



Damage to an artifact in the Mosul Museum (Khalid Mohammed/AP; March 8, 2017)



Damage to an artifact in the Mosul Museum (Reuters; March 13, 2017)



Fragment of a cuneiform inscription (Khalid Mohammed/AP; March 8, 2017)





Damage to an artifact in the Mosul Museum (Reuters; March 13, 2017)



Damage to an artifact in the Mosul Museum (Reuters; March 13, 2017)





Damage to an artifact in the Mosul Museum with an unidentified ISIL label on it (Reuters; March 13, 2017)



Damage to an artifact in Mosul Museum (Ben Wedeman; March 12, 2017)



Damage to an artifact in the Mosul Museum (Reuters; March 13, 2017)



Rubble from artifacts and structure (Reuters; March 13, 2017)





Old wooden chest in the Mosul Museum (CNN; March 13, 2017)



Wooden display stands on the floor (Reuters; March 13, 2017)



Damage to interior of the Mosul Museum (Personal Twitter Account; March 10, 2017)



Damage to an exhibit inside the Mosul Museum (Khalid Mohammed/AP; March 8, 2017)





Damage to an exhibit inside the Mosul Museum (Reuters; March 13, 2017)



Damage to an exhibit inside the Mosul Museum (Reuters; March 13, 2017)





Collection of display labels (CNN; March 13, 2017)



Burned remains of the Mosul Museum Library (Khalid Mohammed/AP; March 8, 2017)



Recovered books and manuscripts from the library (Reuters; March 13, 2017)



Damage to interior of the Mosul Museum (Reuters; March 13, 2017)





Damage to interior of the Mosul Museum (Personal Twitter Account; March 10, 2017)



Damage to interior of the Mosul Museum (Personal Twitter Account; March 10, 2017)





Damage to interior of the Mosul Museum (Artnet/Getty; March 13, 2017)



Damage to interior of the Mosul Museum (Reuters; March 13, 2017)



Damage to the interior of the Mosul Museum (Khalid Mohammed/AP; March 8, 2017)



Damage to the interior of the Mosul Museum (Khalid Mohammed/AP; March 8, 2017)





Damage to interior of the Mosul Museum (Personal Twitter Account; March 10, 2017)

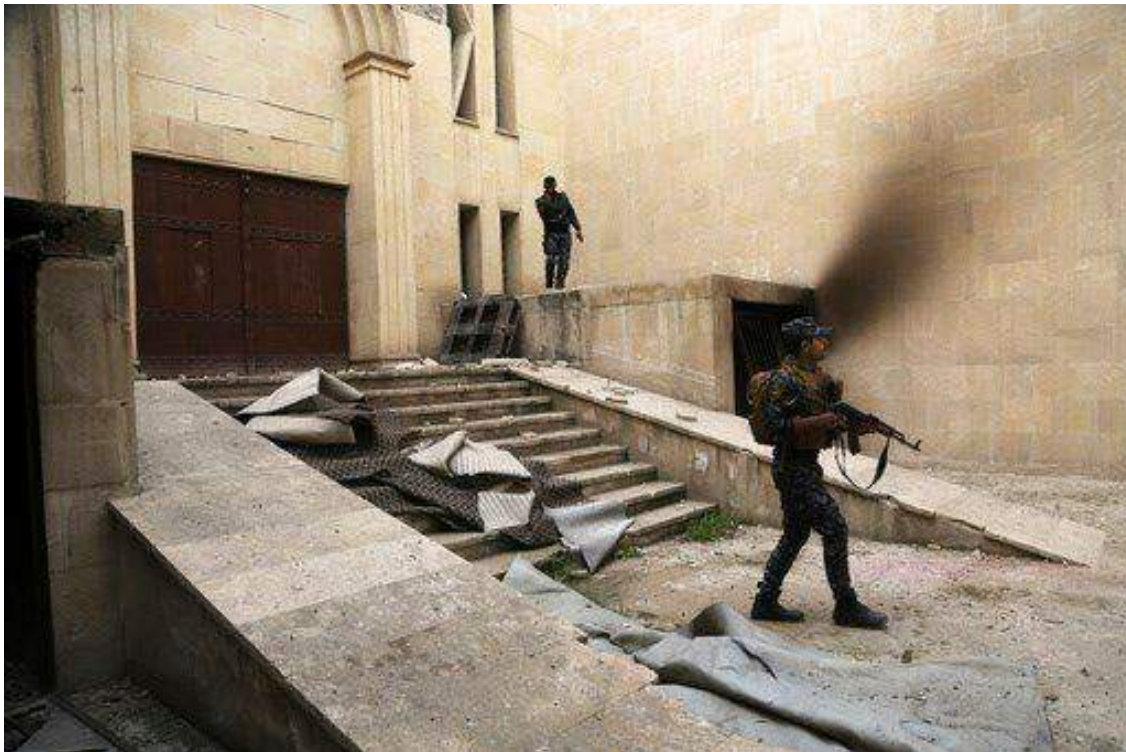


Damage to interior of the Mosul Museum (Reuters; March 13, 2017)





Damage to interior of the Mosul Museum (Reuters; March 13, 2017)



Damage to the exterior of the Mosul Museum (Khalid Mohammed/AP; March 8, 2017)





Damage to exterior of the Mosul Museum (Reuters; March 13, 2017)



Fire damage to exterior of the Mosul Museum (Reuters; March 13, 2017)

## IHI 17-0005 UPDATE

**Report Date:** March 15, 2017

**Site Name:** Nebi Yunus

**Date of Incident:** March 1, 2017

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

**Site Description:** The site is located on the mound south of the Neo-Assyrian capital of Nineveh. The mound includes a palace built by King Esarhaddon (681-669 BCE), renovated by Ashurbanipal (669-627 BCE), and destroyed in 621 BCE when Nineveh was attacked. A Nestorian-Assyrian church was later built on the mound and eventually became associated with the Prophet Jonah. In the late 14th century CE, the site was converted into a mosque and was still considered to be the location of Jonah's tomb, as the prophet is revered in both Christianity and Islam.<sup>115</sup> The mosque was subsequently the subject of a number of restorations, including modern additions. The site was an important pilgrimage destination.

**Site Date:** The original Christian remains date to approximately the 7th century CE, and the earliest Islamic remains date to the 14th century CE. The contemporary mosque is largely made of modern additions.

**Incident Summary:** More evidence of damage and new discovery at Nebi Yunus Complex.

**Incident Source and Description:** On March 1, 2017 CBS News reported that archaeologists discovered tunnels running under the destroyed Nebi Yunus Shrine. ISIL tunneled into the mound for protection from airstrikes, and possibly to loot the palace of Esarhaddon. Remaining in the tunnel are large sculptures including a winged lamassu and cuneiform inscriptions in stone, left behind, as pieces are too large to transport or break. Many of these sculptures create the sides of the tunnels, in order to stop collapse. Layla Salih, Director of Antiquities for Ninawa Province, states, "We believe they took many of the artifacts, such as pottery and smaller pieces away to sell."<sup>116</sup> A witness interviewed by Middle East Eye stated that he saw a collection of artifacts on the floor that he believed appeared to be collected for sale, seeing "lots of reliefs including two headless horses, some figures and inscriptions in Aramaic."<sup>117</sup> A cuneiform inscription of Esarhaddon dating back to 672 BCE was also found in the tunnels.

Excavations by Mustafa in 1954 uncovered parts of the Palace of Sennacherib renovated by Esarhaddon (681-669 BCE) and by Ashurbanipal (669-627) before being destroyed when Nineveh fell.<sup>118</sup> These excavations were stopped because of their encroachment on the mosque. This is the same palace that ISIL found while tunneling. According to al-Monitor, the Sunni Waqf (endowment) announced on March 18, 2017 that it is planning to rebuild the shrine and mosque, raising concerns that the palace will be covered without study. The Director of Antiquities of Mosul stated that

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<sup>115</sup> Al-Daywachi, S. 1954.

<sup>116</sup> <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/ancient-palace-reportedly-discovered-deep-under-shrine-demolished-by-isis/>

<sup>117</sup> <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/amid-sacred-rubble-jonah-s-tomb-attracts-mosul-visitors-363968030>

<sup>118</sup> Mustafa, M.A. 1954. "The Discovery of a statue of Hermes at Nineveh." *Sumer*, 10 (1): 280-289.



excavation and preservation work of the objects uncovered by the tunneling would begin once security is restored to the area.<sup>119</sup>

For more information on damage to Nebi Yunus, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 15-0028** in **WR 39**; **IHI 16-0004** in **Weekly Report 79-80**; and **IHI 17-0005** in **Weekly Report 125-128**.

**Pattern:** Military Activity: tunneling; Site Management: re-construction/clean-up.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of the tunnels under Nebi Yunus and the progress of the study of the artifacts uncovered, as well as the condition of other sites located in recently liberated regions.

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

CBS News: <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/ancient-palace-reportedly-discovered-deep-under-shrine-demolished-by-isis/>

Middle East Eye: <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/amid-sacred-rubble-jonah-s-tomb-attracts-mosul-visitors-363968030>

al-Monitor: <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/03/assyrian-palace-yunus-mosul-iraq.html>

Reuters:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-antiquities-idUSKBN16H1V5>

The Telegraph: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/02/27/previously-untouched-600bc-palace-discovered-shrine-demolished/>

Yahoo: <https://www.yahoo.com/news/jihadist-tunnels-save-assyrian-winged-bulls-mosul-005838652.html>

Scholarly:

Al-Daywachi, S. 1954. "The Mosque of Nebi Yunus." *Sumer* 10 (2): 250-266.

Mustafa, M.A. 1954. "The Discovery of a statue of Hermes at Nineveh." *Sumer*, 10 (1): 280-289.

Salman, I. 1975. "Foreward" *Sumer* 31:a-i

Scott, M.L., J. MacGinnis. 1990. "Notes on Nineveh" *Iraq*. 52: 63-73

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<sup>119</sup> <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/03/assyrian-palace-yunus-mosul-iraq.html>



Stone bas relief showing three females in a tunnel under Nebi Yunus (Yahoo News; March 7, 2017)



Tunnels formed by ISIL under Nebi Yunus (Yahoo News; March 7, 2017)





The lower half of a winged lamassu in the tunnels under Nebi Yunus (Yahoo News; March 7, 2017)



An inscription of Esarhaddon in the tunnels under Nebi Yunus (The Telegraph; February 28, 2017)





A group of four figures on a bas relief (Reuters; March 10, 2017)



The entrance to a side tunnel (Reuters; March 10, 2017)



A bas relief in the middle of a tunnel (Reuters; March 10, 2017)

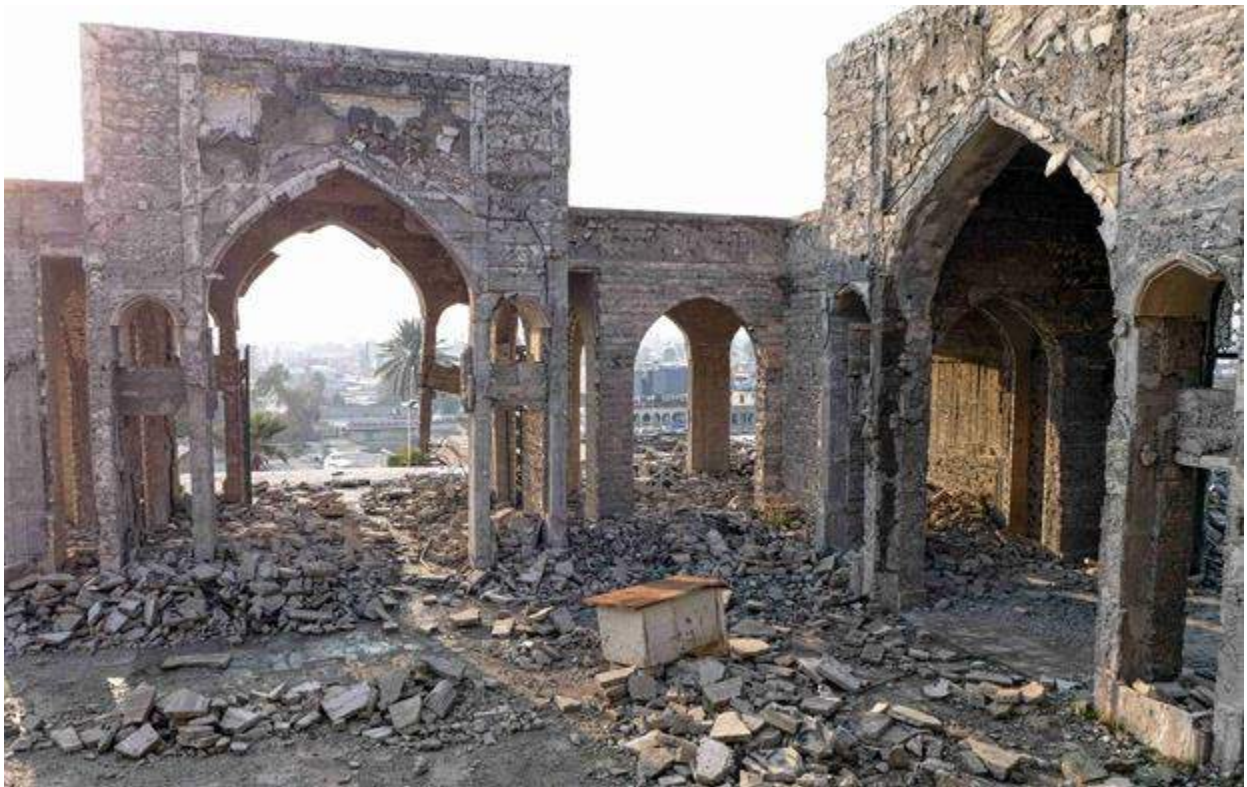


A group of small pieces of pottery found in the tunnels (Reuters; March 10, 2017)





Entrance to a tunnel created by ISIL (Middle East Eye; March 1, 2017)



The remains of Nabi Yunus (Middle East Eye; March 1, 2017)





The remains of Nebi Yunus (Middle East Eye; March 1, 2017)

**IHI 17-0018****Report Date:** March 8, 2017**Site Name:** Umm al-Mauna Church (كنيسة ام المعونة) (Our Mother of Perpetual Help)**Date of Incident:** Unknown**Location:** Al-Dawasa District, Mosul, Ninawa Governorate, Iraq**Site Description:** Chaldean Church of Babylon**Site Date:** Unknown**Incident Summary:** Photographs show that ISIL repurposed the church into a military training facility.**Incident Source and Description:** On March 8, 2017 Iraqi Day published photographs of the Umm al-Mauna Church showing that it had been turned into a military training facility by ISIL.<sup>120</sup> According to Lieutenant Colonel Abdulmir al-Mohammedawi, the church “was an important office for the authorities tasked with making sure residents had a beard, wore short robes, and followed their extremist convictions.”<sup>121</sup>

In 2015, al-Araby News reported that ISIL had bombed the church, in which it had planted many devices leading to its complete collapse, and then used bulldozers to raze it to the ground.<sup>122</sup> Previous reports from 2015 also state that explosives destroyed the Umm al-Mauna Church. However, further research showed this was actually the St. Mary’s Church.<sup>123</sup> Photographs of the church posted by Iraqi Day, and video by al-Mosuliya show that the building remains standing, with shrapnel/bullet holes, graffiti, and rubble in the courtyard. Internally there is also rubble, but the structure is intact. All symbols of Christianity have been removed, and several ISIL propaganda posters are attached to columns.

DigitalGlobe satellite imagery from March 30, 2017 shows that the church is still intact, with only minimal visible damage in the courtyard.

For previous reports of damage to Umm al-Mauna Church, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 15-0051** in **Weekly Report 32**.

**Pattern:** Military activity: occupation/militarization.**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of sites in Mosul, as well as the condition of other religious sites located in areas subject to ongoing aerial bombardment.

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<sup>120</sup> [https://twitter.com/iraqi\\_day/status/839348181330714626](https://twitter.com/iraqi_day/status/839348181330714626)

<sup>121</sup> <http://www.ndtv.com/world-news/isis-turned-church-in-iraqs-mosul-into-religious-police-base-1668188>

<sup>122</sup> <https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2015/9/23/mosul-chlorine-gas-factory-targeted-by-anti-is-coalition-airstrikes#sthash.Dh85GpZM.dpuf>

<sup>123</sup> <http://europe.newsweek.com/isis-accidentally-kills-four-children-blowing-church-330017?rx=us>

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

al-Araby:

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2015/9/23/mosul-chlorine-gas-factory-targeted-by-anti-is-coalition-airstrikes#sthash.Dh85GpZM.dpuf>

Iraqi Day: [https://twitter.com/iraqi\\_day/status/839348181330714626](https://twitter.com/iraqi_day/status/839348181330714626)

al-Mosuliya: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FmVZCBsw94Y>

NDTV: <http://www.ndtv.com/world-news/isis-turned-church-in-iraqs-mosul-into-religious-police-base-1668188>

Newsweek: <http://europe.newsweek.com/isis-accidentally-kills-four-children-blowing-church-330017?rx=us>



Video still of the outside of Umm al-Mauna Church (al-Mosuliya; March 11, 2017)





Video still of damage to the door of Umm al-Mauna Church (al-Mosuliya; March 11, 2017)



Video still of damage to the courtyard of Umm al-Mauna Church (Iraqi Day; March 8, 2017)



Video still of damage to the courtyard of Umm al-Mauna Church (Iraqi Day; March 8, 2017)



Video still of damage to the interior of Umm al-Mauna Church (Iraqi Day; March 8, 2017)





Video still of damage to the interior of Umm al-Mauna Church (Iraqi Day; March 8, 2017)



Video still of damage to the altar of Umm al-Mauna Church (al-Mosuliya; March 11, 2017)





Video still of ISIL propaganda taped to a column in Umm al-Mauna Church (al-Mosuliya; March 11, 2017)

<p>Debris visible in the courtyard prior to recent reports of damage (DigitalGlobe; February 25, 2017)</p>	<p>Visible debris in the courtyard, but rest of the buildings appear intact, as well as new damage to the surrounding area (DigitalGlobe; March 30, 2017)</p>

**IHI 17-0019****Report Date:** March 31, 2017**Site Name:** Sadiq Rashan Mosque (جامع صديق رشان)**Date of Incident:** March 31, 2017**Location:** al-Muthanna Neighborhood, Mosul, Ninawa Governorate, Iraq**Site Description:** Sunni Mosque.**Site Date:** Unknown**Incident Summary:** Reported missiles land near mosque causing unknown damage.**Incident Source and Description:** On March 31, 2017 Mosul Eye reported that 'missile rockets' struck near Sadiq Rashan Mosque in the neighborhood of al-Muthanna.<sup>124</sup> The strike injured six people and killed one. Mosul Eye did not detail damage to Sadiq Rashan Mosque. Other sources reported that ISIL targeted the mosque after Friday prayers. No photographs of the damage were available at time of publication.

DigitalGlobe imagery from April 7, 2017 shows an impact crater in front of the mosque, primarily in the street. The imagery shows no visible damage to the mosque.

For other reports on damage to mosques in Mosul during this reporting period, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 17-0020**.

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives.**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of Sadiq Rashan Mosque, as well as the condition of other religious sites located in areas subject to ongoing aerial bombardment.**Sources:**Online Reporting:Mosul Eye: <https://www.facebook.com/MosulEye/posts/1202178733236960>South Front: <https://southfront.org/mosul-intense-clashes-between-iraqi-forces-and-isis-more-civilian-casualties/>

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<sup>124</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/MosulEye/posts/1202178733236960>



Mosque prior to nearby missile strike  
(DigitalGlobe; March 30, 2017)



Mosque with impact crater in street in front of  
mosque (DigitalGlobe; April 7, 2017)



## IHI 17-0020

**Report Date:** March 31, 2017

**Site Name:** Omar al Aswed (مسجد عمر الاسود)

**Date of Incident:** March 2, 2017

**Location:** al-Farouq Neighborhood, Mosul, Ninawa Governorate, Iraq

**Site Description:** Historic mosque still actively used.

**Site Date:** Ottoman Era<sup>125</sup>

**Incident Summary:** Report states that an airstrike struck mosque causing unknown damage.

**Incident Source and Description:** On March 2, 2017 Reuters reported that an airstrike hit the Omar al Aswed Mosque in the al-Farouq district of the Old City of Mosul.<sup>126</sup> Drones belonging to the Iraqi police and US-led Coalition bombers were flying overhead at the time, but a Coalition spokesman stated that no mosques were targeted. Iraqi military media stated that troops were targeting ISIL positions whenever possible. ISIL militants were reportedly using the mosque, however Iraqi media did not confirm if the mosque had been targeted.<sup>127</sup> Iraqi archaeologist Layla Salih states that French warplanes, as part of the Coalition airstrikes, were responsible for the attack.<sup>128</sup>

No photographs of the damage were available at the time of publication. DigitalGlobe satellite imagery does not show any visible damage occurred during the month of March. However, the area around the street next to the mosque was blocked off between March 8 and March 30 with large trucks, and there is new damage to some of the neighboring areas, likely due to military activity.

For other damage to mosques in Mosul during this reporting period, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 17-0019**.

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

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of Omar al-Aswad, as well as the condition of other religious sites located in areas subject to ongoing aerial bombardment.

### Sources:

#### Online Reporting:

BBC: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-39140882>

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<sup>125</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1453447807999093>

<sup>126</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-mosul-mosque-idUSKBN1690J3>

<sup>127</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-39140882>

<sup>128</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1453447807999093>

Layla Salih: <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1453447807999093>

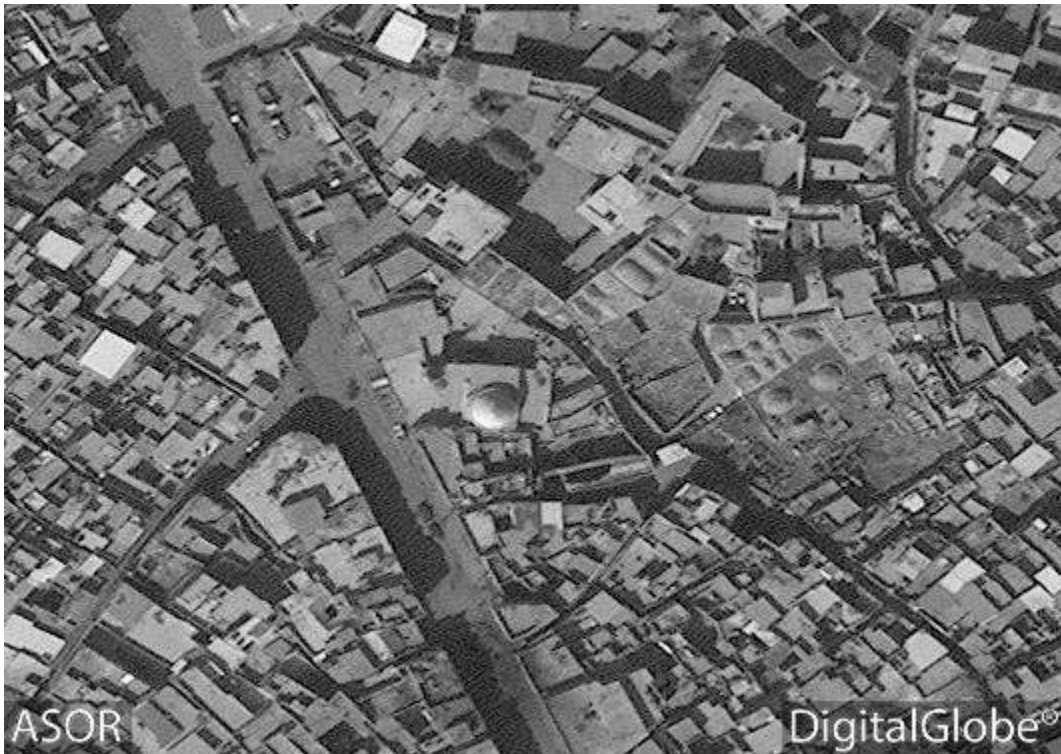
Reuters: <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-mosul-mosque-idUSKBN1690J3>



Minaret of the Omar al-Aswad Mosque before airstrike (Layla Salih; March 1, 2017)

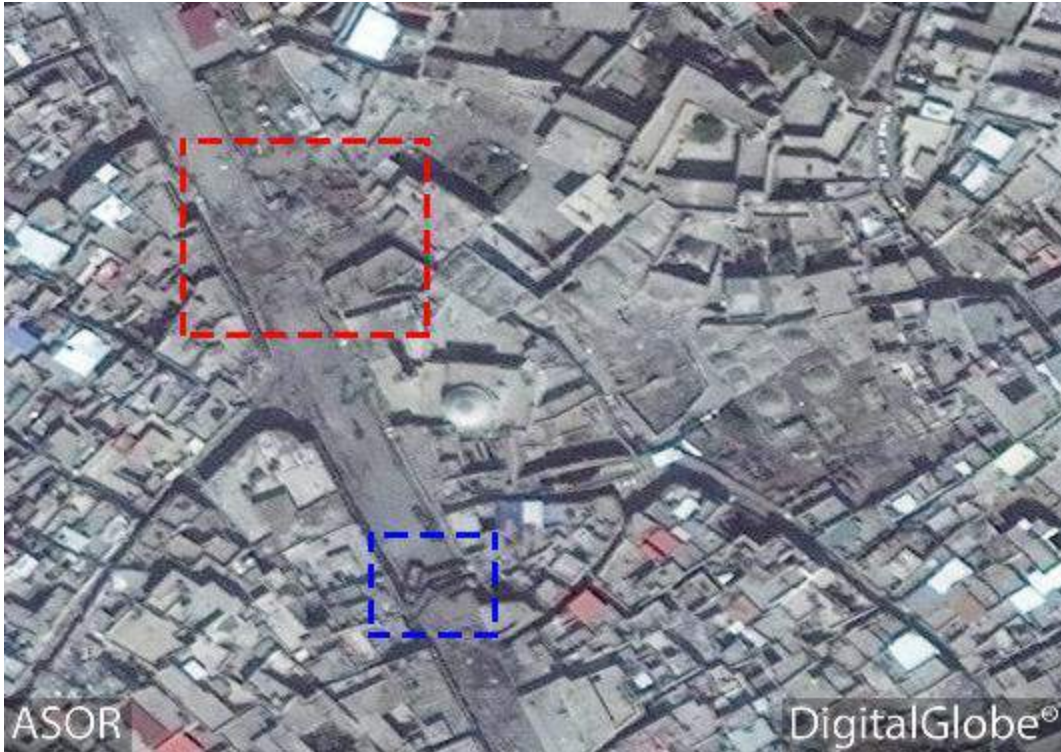


The mosque in the center of the image with no visible damage (DigitalGlobe; February 25, 2017)



The mosque after the alleged airstrike, with no visible damage to it or the neighboring area (DigitalGlobe; March 8, 2017)





Trucks blocking the street (outlined in blue) and new damage to the neighboring buildings (in red) (DigitalGlobe; March 30, 2017)

**IHI 17-0021****Report Date:** March 31, 2017**Site Name:** Maltai Reliefs**Date of Incident:** Unknown**Location:** Maltai, Dahuk Governorate, Iraq

**Site Description:** The Malthai Reliefs are a series of four Neo-Assyrian bas-reliefs carved into the cliff-side above the village of Malthai (in the suburbs of Dohuk) on the south bank of Rubar-e Dohuk River. Three reliefs are grouped close together while the fourth is about 50 meters to their right. Each relief is 6 meters long and 2 meters high, and the same composition of nine figures is repeated on each panel with small variations.<sup>129</sup> The scenes depict the king as a worshipper facing right toward a line of five deities--Assur, Ninlil, Sin, Anu (or Enlil), Shamash, Adad, and Ishtar--mounted on animals. Another figure of the king is depicted at the end of this row of deities, so that the line of divinities is flanked on either side by two identical royal images.<sup>130</sup> The king depicted is Sennacherib (reigned ca. 704-681 BCE), who had these and other rock reliefs carved at points along his northern canal system.<sup>131</sup>

All four reliefs panels have sustained damage throughout history, very little of which is recent. Sometime during the 1st to 3rd centuries CE, for example, large holes were cut in two of the panels to make tombs. Another panel was damaged in the 1920s when antiquities thieves cut out part of another of the reliefs. This stolen section was later recovered and is now in the Iraq Museum in Baghdad.<sup>132</sup> The small holes seen on all four reliefs are apparently due to the porosity of the rock, and are not bullet-holes or otherwise manmade as has recently been claimed.<sup>133</sup>

**Site Date:** Neo-Assyrian (ca. 680s BCE)**Incident Summary:** Conservators removed the spray paint from reliefs.

**Incident Source and Description:** On March 31, 2017 Shwenawarakany Kurdistan Facebook page posted photographs of conservators removing spray paint from the reliefs. The reliefs were vandalized twice in 2016 with spray paint, used to depict Kurdish flags and graffiti. It is unknown what type of material was used for the removal, but Shwenawarakany Kurdistan reported it was done with the help of unidentified European scholars, the Dohuk Directorate of Antiquities, and the University of Dohuk.<sup>134</sup> For more information about the damage to Maltai, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0005** in **Weekly Report 81-82** and **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0011** in **Weekly Report 89-90**.

**Pattern:** Site Maintenance: re-construction/clean-up.

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<sup>129</sup> [http://archmap.org/archmap\\_2/Site/Collection?resource=233&building\\_id=2689](http://archmap.org/archmap_2/Site/Collection?resource=233&building_id=2689)

<sup>130</sup> <http://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2014/assyria-to-iberia/blog/posts/rock-reliefs>

<sup>131</sup> Ur 2005: 327

<sup>132</sup> [http://archmap.org/archmap\\_2/Site/Collection?building\\_id=2689](http://archmap.org/archmap_2/Site/Collection?building_id=2689)

<sup>133</sup> <https://conflictantiquities.wordpress.com/2016/02/23/iraq-krq-dohuk-maltai-peshmerga-destruction-false-claims/>

<sup>134</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/shwenawarakanykurdistan/posts/184648962229426>

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of Malthai and remote sites vulnerable to vandalism in Syria, Iraq, and Libya.

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

Shwenawarakany Kurdistan:

<https://www.facebook.com/shwenawarakanykurdistan/posts/1846489622229426>

Scholarly:

Bahrani, Zainab. "Maltai Reliefs" The Archmap Project, Iraq. Updated May 8, 2014. Columbia University.

[http://archmap.org/archmap\\_2/Site/Collection?resource=233&building\\_id=2689](http://archmap.org/archmap_2/Site/Collection?resource=233&building_id=2689)

Malko, Helen. "Neo-Assyrian Rock Reliefs: Ideology and Landscapes of an Empire." Metmuseum.org.

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

Ur, Jason. "Sennacherib's Northern Assyrian Canals: New Insights from Satellite Imagery and Aerial Photography." Iraq 67 (2005). pp. 317-345.

[http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~jasonur/pdf/Ur\\_Iraq67\\_2005.pdf](http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~jasonur/pdf/Ur_Iraq67_2005.pdf)



Conservators cleaning the second panel of the relief (Shwenawarakany Kurdistan; March 31, 2017)





Conservators cleaning the third panel of the relief (Shwenawarakany Kurdistan; March 31, 2017)



Condition of the fourth panel before cleaning (Schwenawarakany Kurdistan; March 31, 2017)

## Heritage Timeline

March 31, 2017

*The Art Newspaper* published an article titled “**British artist makes work out of Isis bullet holes**” (by Gabriella Angeleti). A new exhibit hosted by the Thomas Jaeckel Gallery in New York aims to address “the effects of violence on cultural heritage sites in the Middle East” and worldwide.

<http://theartnewspaper.com/news/news/british-artist-makes-work-out-of-isis-bullet-holes-in-iraq/>

- *Reuters* published an article titled “**Italy wins G7 backing for U.N. peacekeeping force for culture.**” G7 nations signed an accord, committing to the creation of a UN peacekeeping force responsible to protect world heritage sites during times of conflict.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-italy-g7-culture-idUSKBN1722OG>

March 30, 2017

**Idleb Antiquities Center** posted an update to Facebook about ongoing mitigation and conservation efforts at **Ebla**.

[https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=1500044386680485&id=1070868956264699](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1500044386680485&id=1070868956264699)

- *The New York Times* published an article titled “**G7 Culture Ministers Discuss Threat of Cultural Trafficking.**” During the inaugural meeting of cultural ministers from the “Group of Seven’ industrialized nations” met in Florence, Italy to condemn the looting and trafficking of cultural artifacts by terror groups.

<https://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2017/03/30/world/europe/ap-eu-italy-g7-culture.html>

- **DGAM** published an article titled “**The Directorate of Excavation and Archaeological Studies Is Digitizes its Documents.**” The DGAM has digitized 3,227 documents including scientific reports of excavation work and topographic maps.

<http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2254>

- *The Smithsonian* published a press release titled “**Smithsonian and U.S. Department of State Partner on Emergency Cultural Heritage Work in Iraq.**” The Smithsonian and the US Department of State announced a \$400,000 project enabling Iraq’s State Board of Antiquities and Heritage and others to mitigate damage at Nimrud.

<http://newsdesk.si.edu/releases/smithsonian-and-us-department-state-partner-emergency-cultural-heritage-work-iraq>

- *Al-Monitor* published an article titled “**Calls for support as destroyed Mosul Museum seeks to rebuild**” (by Adnan Abu Zeed). Many of the antiquities in the Mosul Museum have been destroyed or stolen. **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 15-0034 UPDATE**.  
<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/03/mosul-museum-iraq-culture-nineveh-assyrian.html>
  - **DGAM** published an article titled “**The Directorate of Excavation and Archaeological Studies Is Digitizes Its Document.**”  
<http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2254>
  - **Carnegie Mellon University** held an event titled “**Art Under Attack.**” Erin Thompson (John Jay College, CUNY), “America’s only full-time professor of art crime” spoke on current and potential efforts to combat looting.  
<https://www.cmu.edu/cas/events/art-under-attack.html>
- March 28, 2017
- Live Science* published an article titled “**Ancient Assyrian Tomb with 10 Skeletons Discovered in Iraq**” (by Owen Jarus). A Neo-Assyrian period tomb was discovered near Erbil during construction work.  
<http://www.livescience.com/58433-ancient-assyrian-tomb-discovered-in-iraq.html>
- *National Geographic* published an article titled “**See Vintage Pictures of Syria’s Ancient History**” (by Nina Storchlic). A gallery of photos from previous National Geographic issues of sites in Syria, including those that have been damaged in the conflict, is shared.  
<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2017/03/syria-aleppo-national-geographic-archive/>
- March 27, 2017
- Al-Fanar Media* published an article titled “**Archaeologists Plan Post-Islamic-State Future in Iraq**” (by Edward Fox). Iraqi and international researchers are planning an ‘agenda’ for future archaeological work in parts of Iraq liberated by ISIL.  
<http://www.al-fanarmedia.org/2017/03/archeologists-plan-post-islamic-state-future-iraq/>
- March 26, 2017
- DGAM** published an article titled “**UN Security Council adopts historic resolution for the protection of heritage.**”  
<http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2252>
- March 24, 2017
- BBC News* published an article titled “**Islamic State leaves trail of destruction in Syria's Palmyra**” (by Lyse Doucet). Survey of damage to Ancient Palmyra by ISIL occupation. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0030; SHI 17-0032; SHI 17-0033**  
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-39377084>



- **UNESCO** published an article titled “**UN Security Council adopts historic resolution for the protection of heritage.**” The UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2347 for the protection of heritage. <http://en.unesco.org/news/security-council-adopts-historic-resolution-protection-heritage>
  - *Syria Deeply* published an article titled “**Preserving the Past in Damascus Builds Hope for the Future**” (by Alessandra Masi). Sami Moubayed, founder of ‘The Damascus History Foundation’, discusses his group’s efforts to preserve archives in the capital of Damascus. <https://www.newsdeeply.com/syria/community/2017/03/24/preserving-the-past-in-damascus-builds-hope-for-the-future>
  - *Philly Voice* published an article titled “**New Penn Museum exhibit focuses on what’s at stake when cultural heritage is destroyed**” (by Sinead Cummings). A new exhibit opening on April 8, 2017 will focus on the destruction of cultural heritage in ‘war-torn areas’. <http://www.phillyvoice.com/cultures-crossfire-stories-syria-and-iraq/>
- March 22, 2017
- Sputnik* published an article titled “**Turkey-Based Organization for Development Hopes to Engage in Palmyra Restoration.**” BINAA, a Turkish NGO hopes to assist in restoring Palmyra. <https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201703221051830183-binaa-palmyra-estoration/>
- March 21, 2017
- The Guardian* published an article titled “**Winged bull and giant dollop of cream to adorn Trafalgar Square’s fourth plinth**” (by Hannah Ellis-Petersen). A new piece titled “The Invisible Enemy Should Not Exist” will be installed in London’s Trafalgar Square as of 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2017/mar/21/winged-bull-and-giant-dollop-of-cream-to-adorn-traffic-square-fourth-plinth>
- **The SmartWater Foundation** has provided new technology that uses ‘smart water’ or ‘data water,’ a liquid visible under a special light that includes data for an inventory, to defend against the illegal trafficking of antiquities. Dr. Amr al-Azm, founder of The Day After Heritage Protection Initiative, oversaw this new initiative. <http://www.smartwaterfoundation.org/protecting-syrian-heritage/>
- <http://www.npr.org/2017/03/21/520922468/archaeologists-in-syria-use-data-water-to-confound-antiquities-smugglers>
- <https://news.vice.com/story/how-syrian-archaeologists-are-using-science-to-stop-isis-from-looting-ancient-sites>
- <http://www.newsweek.com/isis-looting-antiquities-smartwater-liquid-571839>

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/society/2017/3/21/invisible-solution-crucial-in-fight-for-syrias-cultural-heritage>

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-39331342>

<http://www.shawnee.edu/news/2017-03-21-smartwater.aspx>

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/british-firm-saves-syrias-treasure-from-looters-2pdnsw206>

March 20, 2017 *The Art Newspaper* published an article titled “**Global fund to protect cultural heritage launches with \$75m and board led by US billionaire Thomas Kaplan**” (by Vincent Noce). A new global fund has raised \$75 million to protect cultural heritage in war zones.

<http://theartnewspaper.com/news/global-fund-to-protect-cultural-heritage-launches-with-75m-and-board-led-by-us-billionaire-thomas-ka/>

- *Rudaw* published an article and video titled “**3,000 year old tombs unearthed at Erbil construction site.**” A theorized 3,000-year-old archaeological site has been uncovered during the construction of a commercial site in downtown Erbil, revealing possible Assyrian-era tombs.  
<http://www.rudaw.net/english/kurdistan/200320177>

March 17, 2017

*The Irish Times* published an article titled “**Hope among the ruins of Aleppo’s cultural heritage**” (by Michael Jansen). A description of damages to sites within the Old City of Aleppo including the Umayyad Mosque and Ancient Citadel.

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/middle-east/hope-among-the-ruins-of-aleppo-s-cultural-heritage-1.3014805>

- *Al Jazeera* published an article titled “**Art Trafficking**” and accompanying documentary (Film by Tania Rakhmanova). The film investigates the world of art and antiquities looting.  
<http://ht.ly/12tC30a997r>

March 11, 2017

*Market Mass Destruction* published an article titled “**Licensed for Sale?**” (by Neil Brodie). The Phoenix Ancient Art Gallery is offering, for sale, two unpublished Palmyrene funerary reliefs, with documentation “ex-private collection, Lebanon, collected 1960s” but with no further documentation.

<http://www.marketmassdestruction.com/phoenix-palmyra/>

March 10, 2017

**DGAM** published an article titled “**Expand the Horizons of Cooperation with the Aga Khan Foundation.**”

<http://dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=2247>

- March 9, 2017 **UNESCO** published an article titled “**UNESCO hosts First International Coordination Meeting for the recovery of Aleppo’s heritage.**” UNESCO held a meeting March 2-3, 2017 with Syrian stakeholders and international experts to evaluate damage to historic monuments in Aleppo and to strategize about Aleppo’s recovery. <http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1639>
- March 8, 2017 *Aeon* published an article titled “**Palmyra’s ruins can rebuild our relationship with history**” (by Erich Hatala Matthes). An opinion piece on how the focus on destruction at Palmyra can increase the general population's awareness of important world heritage sites as well as history in general. <https://aeon.co/ideas/palmyras-ruins-can-rebuild-our-relationship-with-history>
- **Heritage for Peace** published an article titled “**New Report: Cultural Heritage Groups Respond to the Syrian Crisis-Towards a protection of the Syrian Cultural Heritage: A summary of the National and International Responses Vol IV.**” This report covers actions taken to preserve and protect Syria’s Cultural Heritage from October 2015 to December 2016. <http://www.heritageforpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Press-Release-Int-Act-Report-V4-March-2017.pdf>
- March 7, 2017 **DGAM** published an article titled “**Bakirha in Djebel Barisha, Rural Idleb, Exposed to vandalism.**” New photographs show damage to Bakirha. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0035.** <http://dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2245>
- **DGAM** published an article titled “**The technical coordination meeting of Ancient City of Aleppo concluded.**” <http://dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2243>
  - Iraqi forces recaptured the Mosul Museum from ISIL. **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 15-0034 UPDATE**  
<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-mosul-idUSKBN16E0DG>  
[http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/mosul-museum-a-prime-target-for-jihadists-117030701149\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/mosul-museum-a-prime-target-for-jihadists-117030701149_1.html)  
<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/iraqi-troops-recapture-mosul-museum-883631>  
<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/75cc4ffe99094800bc3f0b190c7402f3/rubble-and-ash-mosul-museum-retaken-islamic-state>



- March 6, 2017
- DGAM published an article titled “**Latest News from Palmyra.**” **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0030; SHI 17-0032; SHI 17-0033**  
<http://dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2242>
- DGAM published an article titled “**In photos: The Tomb of three Brothers in liberated Palmyra.**” The tomb of three brothers was liberated in Palmyra. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0034.**  
<http://dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2239>
  - *Le Monde* published an article titled “**Un appel aux dons mondial pour reconstruire les bibliothèques saccagées de Mossoul**” (“**Global call for donations to rebuild sacked libraries in Mosul**”). Local organization Mosul Eye is soliciting book contributions to rebuild the Mosul Library that was destroyed by ISIL.  
[http://www.lemonde.fr/big-browser/article/2017/03/06/un-appel-aux-dons-mondial-pour-reconstruire-les-bibliotheques-de-mossoul\\_5089830\\_4832693.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/big-browser/article/2017/03/06/un-appel-aux-dons-mondial-pour-reconstruire-les-bibliotheques-de-mossoul_5089830_4832693.html)
  - *Libya Herald* published an article titled “**Conference on Protecting and promoting Libya’s Archaeological Treasures**” (by Jamie Prentis). The French Archaeological Mission to Libya on March 11 and 12th is organizing a conference.  
<https://www.libyaherald.com/2017/03/06/conference-on-protecting-libyas-archaeological-treasures/>
- March 5, 2017
- Voice of America* published an article titled “**Iraqi Archaeologists Discover Ancient Palace Under Site Destroyed by IS**” (by Rikar Hussein). An Assyrian Palace was uncovered under Nebi Yunus from tunnels built by ISIL members. **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 17-0005 UPDATE.**  
<http://www.voanews.com/a/iraqi-archeologists-discover-ancient-palace/3750574.html>
- DGAM published an article titled “**In Photos: Damage of Al\_Madrasah Al\_Asadia and Tarsousi Mosque in old Aleppo.**” Newly released photographs show damage to the Al-Madrasah al-Asadia and the Tarsousi Mosque in Aleppo.  
<http://dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2234>
- March 4, 2017
- DGAM published an article titled “**Drone footage on 3 March 2017\_shows the Damage of liberated Palmyra.**”  
<http://dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2232>
- March 2, 2017
- The Art Newspaper* published an article titled “**US mini-satellite could help to monitor destruction in Palmyra**” (by Javier Pes and Jori Finkel). An interview with ASOR CHI’s Scott Branting discusses the benefits of mini cubesat satellite imagery in documenting heritage destruction in Palmyra.  
<http://theartnewspaper.com/news/conservation/us-mini-satellite-could-help-to-monitor-destruction-in-palmyra/>

- SARG and pro-regime forces continue to advance towards the ancient site of Palmyra, recapturing the site from ISIL. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0030; SHI 17-0032; SHI 17-0033**  
<http://www.latimes.com/world/la-fg-syria-palmyra-20170302-story.html>

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2017/03/02/syrian-forces-re-enter-historic-town-palmyra/98625168/>

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/03/isil-pulls-syria-palmyra-170302072902496.html>

<http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=61973>

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-islamic-state-idUSKBN1691GI>

<https://www.rt.com/news/379073-syrian-palmyra-citadel-isis/>

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201703021051199540-palmyra-russia-syria-liberation/>

<http://bigstory.ap.org/c84f7ce8788942a38a4bc079318812e5>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/isis-palmyra-syria-driven-out-second-time-islamic-state-ancient-roman-ruins-assad-executions-a7607351.html>

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/syrian-troops-retake-palmyra-from-islamic-state-1488473680>
  - Heritage for Peace** published “**Damage to Syria’s Heritage - March 2, 2017.**” The newsletter links to reports of damage to reports on damage to the Old City of Aleppo and Idlib Governorate.  
<http://www.heritageforpeace.org/syria-culture-and-heritage/damage-to-cultural-heritage/previous-damage-newsletters/damage-to-syrias-heritage-2-march-2017/>
  - AFP* published an article titled “**Damaged Palmyra busts back in Syria after Italy restoration.**”  
<https://www.yahoo.com/news/damaged-palmyra-busts-back-syria-italy-restoration-151937629.html>
- March 1, 2017
- CBS* published an article titled “**Ancient palace reportedly discovered under shrine destroyed by ISIS**” (by Shanika Gunaratna). An Assyrian Palace was uncovered under Nebi Yunus from tunnels built by ISIL members. **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 17-0005 UPDATE.** <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/ancient-palace-reportedly-discovered-deep-under-shrine-demolished-by-isis/>

- *Middle East Eye* published an article titled “**Jonah’s ancient tomb in Mosul: ‘When IS blew it up, I cried for three days’**” (by Tom Westcott). The article discusses the destruction to Nebi Yunus.  
<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/amid-sacred-rubble-jonah-s-tomb-attracts-mosul-visitors-363968030>
- **DGAM** published an article titled “**Again, Palmyra has a date with liberation from ISIS.**”  
<http://dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2227>
- *Hyperallergic* published an article titled “**The Getty’s Online Palmyra Exhibition Falls into Orientalist Traps**” (by Michael Press). A critique of the narrative of the new online exhibition titled ‘The Legacy of Ancient Palmyra’ hosted by the Getty Research Institute (GRI).  
<http://hyperallergic.com/360675/the-gettys-online-palmyra-exhibition-falls-into-orientalist-traps/>