

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

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Weekly Report — October 1 - 15, 2016

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Executive Summary

Opposition held areas of Aleppo continue to come under heavy aerial bombardment, including many civilian-occupied neighborhoods and the historic old city, leading to condemnation and accusations of war crimes from the international community. Media reports and independent monitoring groups claim that alleged SARG and Russian aerial bombardment over Aleppo and Idlib Governorates damaged at least five mosques and one Byzantine-era site in Hama Governorate.

In Iraq, US and Iraqi forces continue to mobilize in preparation for operations to recapture the ISIL-held city of Mosul. The offensive is expected to begin in the coming weeks. The US-led coalition continues to target ISIL militants inside Mosul, with at least one airstrike targeting a mosque inside the city. In response, ISIL released a news report via Amaq publicizing the damage. ISIL has emphasized these airstrikes on mosques in its recent propaganda, portraying these incidents as proof that these armies are intending to hurt and kill Muslims, in order to rally its followers, to encourage new recruits to join, and to turn local populations against Coalition and Iraqi military forces. New reports emerged of looting and vandalism of archaeological sites in Kirkuk Governorate in areas under ISIL control.

Key Points

- ISIL militants have been looting archaeological sites and vandalizing graves in Kirkuk Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0031**).
- ISIL-affiliated Amaq News Agency alleged a US-led coalition airstrike damaged a mosque in Mosul, Ninawa Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0032**).
- Alleged SARG airstrikes damaged three mosques in Idlib Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0154**).
- Alleged Russian airstrikes damaged two mosques in the city of Aleppo (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0155**).
- SARG forces looted a makeshift library in Daraya, Rif Dimashq Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0156**).
- Alleged SARG airstrikes damaged a Byzantine-era site in Hama Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0175**).

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

- A fire destroyed a historic house in the Saroujah District of Damascus (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0176**).

Heritage Timeline

October 15, 2016

The Art Newspaper published an article titled “**With the war in mind, Aga Khan Museum looks to the history of Syria**” (by David D’Arcy). The Aga Khan Museum in Toronto will host an exhibition titled “Syria: a Living History,” which includes around 50 objects ranging from Mesopotamian artifacts to paintings by contemporary artists, which together reflect the continuity of artistic traditions. <http://theartnewspaper.com/shows/with-the-war-in-mind-aga-khan-museum-looks-to-the-history-of-syria/>

- **SNHR** published a post titled “**Government forces targeted Archaeological Palace in Qasr Ibn Wardan village in Hama governorate in October 15.**” A SARG airstrike reportedly damaged the 6th-century CE Byzantine site of Qasr ibn Wardan. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0175.**

<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/10/15/government-forces-targeted-archaeological-palace-qasr-ibn-wardan-village-hama-governorate-october-15/>

- **SNHR** published a post titled “**Government forces targeted Owais Al Qarni Mosque in Ma’aret Al Nu’man city in Idlib governorate in October 15.**” A SARG airstrike reportedly damaged a mosque. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0154.**

<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/10/15/government-forces-targeted-owais-al-qarni-mosque-maaret-al-numan-city-idlib-governorate-october-15/>

October 14, 2016

New York University published a press release titled “**Protecting Cultural Heritage in an Uncertain Time’ Features Florence Mayor Nardella & Others—Oct. 26 at NYU’s D.C. Center.**” NYU will host Dario Nardella, the mayor of Florence, Armando Varricchio, Italy’s ambassador to the U.S., and others for “Protecting Cultural Heritage in an Uncertain Time,” a symposium on October 26, 2016 at NYU’s Academic Center in Washington, DC.

<http://www.nyu.edu/about/news-publications/news/2016/october/protecting-cultural-heritage-in-an-uncertain-time-features-flor.html>

- **SNHR** published a report titled “**96 Incidents of Attack on Vital Civil Facilities in September 2016.**” The report includes information on damage to 18 mosques during September 2016.

http://sn4hr.org/wp-content/pdf/english/the_vital_centers_of_civilian_in_September_2016_en.pdf

- *3DPrint* published an article titled “**Curious Travellers: Your Travel Photos Could Help Recreate Heritage Risks Around the World in 3D Print**” (by Bridget Butler Millsaps). The Curious Travellers organization aims to protect heritage at risk, offering data mining and infrastructure created through crowdsourcing as they provide ‘digital documentation’ of archaeological sites, monuments, and any other areas that fit the ‘heritage at risk’ label.
<https://3dprint.com/152454/recreate-heritage-risks-3d-print/>
- October 13, 2016 *The Conversation* published an article titled “**Friday essay: war crimes and the many threats to cultural heritage**” (by Ian Tilley). The author discusses current threats to cultural heritage sites across the globe.
<http://theconversation.com/friday-essay-war-crimes-and-the-many-threats-to-cultural-heritage-65957>
- **SNHR** published a post titled “**Suspected Russian forces targeted Al Sabhan Mosque in Aleppo governorate in October 12.**” A mosque was damaged in an airstrike. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0155.**
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/10/13/suspected-russian-forces-targeted-al-sabhan-mosque-aleppo-governorate-october-12/>
- **Heritage for Peace** published its bi-weekly newsletter titled “**Damage to Syria’s Heritage.**”
<http://www.heritageforpeace.org/syria-culture-and-heritage/damage-to-cultural-heritage/previous-damage-newsletters/damage-to-syrias-heritage-13-october-2016/>
- October 12, 2016 **SNHR** published a post titled “**Government forces targeted Al Kabeir mosque in Mashmashan town in Jisr Al Shoghour city in Idlib governorate, October 12.**” A mosque was reportedly damaged in an airstrike. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0154.**
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/10/12/government-forces-targeted-al-kabeir-mosque-mashmashan-town-jisr-al-shoghour-city-idlib-governorate-october-12/>
- October 11, 2016 *Apollo Magazine* published an article titled “**Rethinking Iraq’s past – and its future – at the Basrah Museum**” (by Eleanor Robson). The Basra Museum, which recently opened in one of Saddam Hussein’s former palaces, showcases artifacts from Basra and the surrounding area from pre-historic to modern times.
<http://www.apollo-magazine.com/rethinking-iraqs-past-and-its-future-at-the-basrah-museum/>

- October 10, 2016
- NPR* published an article titled “**Replicas Of Artifacts Destroyed By ISIS 'Rising From Destruction' In Rome.**” A new exhibit in Rome’s Colosseum showcases 3D models of artifacts destroyed by ISIL militants.
<http://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2016/10/10/497350345/monuments-and-artifacts-destroyed-by-isis-rising-from-destruction-in-rome>
- *SANA* published an article titled “**Syria, Czech to enhance culture and economic ties.**” Syrian Culture Minister Mohammad al-Ahmad met with Czech Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Martin Tlapa to discuss more cooperation between Syria and the Czech Republic in the culture domain, particularly in the preservation of cultural heritage.
<http://sana.sy/en/?p=90113>
- October 9, 2016
- The Economic Times* published an article titled “**Why monuments would be worse off without the World Heritage status**” (by G. Seetharaman). The author discusses the potential benefits to a site following its inclusion on the UNESCO World Heritage List.
<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/why-monuments-would-be-worse-off-without-the-world-heritage-status/articleshow/54757355.cms>
- *SNHR* published a post titled “**Suspected Russian forces targeted Al Meqdad Bin Amro Mosque in Al Saleheen neighborhood in Aleppo city in October 9.**” A mosque was reportedly damaged in an airstrike. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0155.**
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/10/09/suspected-russian-forces-targeted-al-meqdad-bin-amro-mosque-al-saleheen-neighborhood-aleppo-city-october-9/>
 - *BBC News* published an article titled “**Basra Museum: How Saddam's palace was given to the people**” (by Theopi Skarlatos). The Basra Museum recently opened in a former palace belonging to Saddam Hussein.
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/in-pictures-37550027>
- October 7, 2016
- Forbes* published an article titled “**Friday Digital Archaeology Digest: 3D Modeling, Digital Pompeii And Libyan Heritage**” (by Sarah Bond). New projects in digital archaeology are highlighted in a new weekly column. This week’s column includes a new exhibit in Rome showcasing 3D models of destroyed artifacts from Iraq and Syria.
<http://www.forbes.com/sites/drsarahbond/2016/10/07/friday-digital-archaeology-digest-3d-modeling-digital-pompeii-and-libyan-heritage/#5ce7eca921d7>

October 6, 2016

The Guardian published an article titled “**Bull of Nimrud destroyed by Isis to be recreated in Rome**” (by Stephanie Kirchgaessner). A new exhibit held at the Colosseum in Rome titled “Rising From the Ashes: Ebla, Nimrud, Palmyra” will feature the replicas of three ancient works from Iraq and Syria reconstructed in Italy using 3D printers and robots.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/oct/06/bull-nimrud-destroyed-isis-recreated-rome-colosseum>

- *The Irish Times* published an article titled “**Homs market restored in effort to save locals from humanitarian crisis**” (by Michael Jansen). The first two-month phase of a UN Development Programme project to reconstruct the ancient souq in the Old City area of Homs has been nearly completed and work has begun on the second phase.

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/middle-east/homs-market-restored-in-effort-to-save-locals-from-humanitarian-crisis-1.2819625>

- DGAM published an article titled “**In Photos: A fire broke out at a traditional house in Sarouja area.**” A fire broke out in the Saroujah neighborhood of Damascus, destroying a historic house. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0176.**

<http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2060>

October 5, 2016

Russia Beyond the Headlines published an article titled “**Archeologist: ‘For Russia, Syria’s cultural heritage is personal’**” (by Oleg Goborov). Timur Karmov, an archaeologist affiliated with the Russian Cultural Ministry’s Heritage Institute, will lead a research expedition to the Dead Cities area in northern Syria.

https://rbth.com/international/2016/10/05/archeologist-for-russia-syrias-cultural-heritage-is-personal_636093

October 3, 2016

DGAM published an article titled “**Training Course on Assessing risks for museum collections- preparedness- and establishment of emergency contingency plans for museums.**” Representatives from the DGAM attended a training course in Sharjah, UAE titled “Assessing risks for museum collections, preparedness, and establishment of emergency contingency plans for museums” held by ICCROM and ATHAR.

<http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2055>

- SNHR published a post titled “**Government forces targeted Kars’a mosque in Kars’a town in Idlib governorate southern suburbs, October 2.**” A SARG airstrike reportedly damaged a mosque. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0154.**

<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/10/03/government-forces-targeted-karsa-mosque-karsa-town-idlib-governorate-southern-suburbs-october-2/>

October 1, 2016

The Art Newspaper published an article titled “**Rescue archaeologists’ head to Iraq**” (by Tim Cornwell). The first six Iraqis trained in “rescue archaeology” by the British Museum have returned to Iraq to complete three more months of training, including instruction at two archaeological sites in the south and north of Iraq. They are the first of around 50 people expected to be trained under the UK’s Iraq Emergency Heritage Management scheme.

<http://theartnewspaper.com/news/conservation/rescue-archaeologists-head-to-iraq/>

Military and Political Context

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

1. Aleppo Governorate:
 - On October 2, continuous aerial bombardment over opposition-held areas of Aleppo city forced the largest hospital in the area to close. SARG airstrikes were reported over Aleppo old city where fighting continued.²
 - On October 3, ISIL militants and Turkish-backed Syrian opposition forces clashed south of the town of al-Rai, killing at least 15 opposition members. Intense clashes continued in the regions of Boztepe, Hardanah, and Turkmen Bari as the opposition forces continued to advance towards the ISIL-held town of Dabiq. Turkish airstrikes struck ISIL targets in the areas of Akhtarni, Dabiq, and Turkmen Bari while the US-led coalition targeted an ISIL training camp and security center in Dabiq.³
 - On October 4, Syrian opposition forces in Aleppo city announced that they had repelled pro-regime attacks on their positions in Sheikh Saed. Opposition forces were accused by local sources of shelling Aleppo University, killing and wounding dozens of civilians.⁴
 - On October 4, a mine explosion near the village of Turkman Bara killed the military leader of the Turkish-backed opposition group known as the Sultan Murad Brigade. Fighters from the group later captured the village of Turkman Bara from ISIL militants.⁵

² <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37528260> ; <http://news.sky.com/story/france-calls-aleppo-hospital-barrel-bombing-a-war-crime-10600862> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-idUSKCN12133Z> ; <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/syrian-military-calls-aleppo-rebels-surrender-42509238> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37542860> ; <http://www.france24.com/en/20161003-syria-raids-destroy-aleppo-hospital-qaeda-leader-killed> ; <http://www.cnn.com/2016/10/03/middleeast/syria-aleppo/index.html> ; <https://apnews.com/a313c1468ca94edd9804d0f1db603fab/Syrian-military-calls-on-Aleppo-rebels-to-surrender> ; <http://aranews.net/2016/10/us-bombs-isis-held-dabiq-town-syrian-rebels-make-new-gains-ground/>

³ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37541058> ; <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/10/syria-war-suicide-bombing-rocks-government-held-hama-161003110944431.html> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-dabiq-idUSKCN1230RI>

⁴ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-aleppo-idUSKCN1240WU> ; <http://aranews.net/2016/10/aleppo-university-rebel-attack/>

⁵ <http://aranews.net/2016/10/leader-turkey-backed-syrian-rebel-group-killed-aleppo/>

- On October 5, SARG and pro-regime forces “crossed the frontline battle” between SARG-held west and opposition-held east Aleppo for the first time in four years.⁶
 - On October 6, SARG and pro-regime forces captured approximately half of the residential neighborhood of Bustan al-Basha, Aleppo city from opposition forces. Syrian opposition forces denied the advancement.⁷
 - On October 11, Russian forces resumed heavy airstrikes over opposition-held eastern Aleppo city, focusing much of the bombing on the neighborhoods of Bustan al-Qasr and al-Fardous.⁸
 - On October 12, SARG and Russian airstrikes struck opposition-held areas in Aleppo, including a market in al-Fardous neighborhood, killing dozens of civilians.⁹
 - On October 13, continued aerial bombardment by SARG and Russian forces struck the opposition-held areas of al-Kalaseh, Bustan al-Qasr, and al-Sakhour. Airstrikes this week have reportedly killed 150 people. In SARG-held western Aleppo city, shelling near a school reportedly killed at least four children and wounded ten more.¹⁰
 - On October 14, a car bombing struck an opposition checkpoint near the northern Aleppo town of Azzaz, killing at least 17 people including members of the Free Syrian Army (FSA).¹¹
2. Hama Governorate:
- On October 2, airstrikes struck the “Cave Hospital” near opposition-held Kfar Zeita, rendering the medical facility inoperable.¹²
 - On October 3, an ISIL suicide bombing struck a Baath Party office and police station in the city of Hama, killing three people.¹³
3. Idlib Governorate:
- On October 4, US airstrikes near Idlib killed al-Qaida senior leader Abu al-Farai al-Masri (aka Ahmad Salamah Mabruk).¹⁴

⁶ <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/10/syria-government-tanks-roll-rebel-held-aleppo-161004190513206.html> ; <http://aranews.net/2016/10/aleppo-russia-steps-air-campaign-dozens-killed-fresh-strikes/>

⁷ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-aleppo-idUSKCN1260QM>

⁸ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-aleppo-idUSKCN12B14M> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37625785> ; <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/10/putin-cancels-france-trip-rift-syria-161011115943684.html>

⁹ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-aleppo-idUSKCN12C1T1>

¹⁰ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-aleppo-idUSKCN12D0Q3> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-idUSKCN12D2FY>

¹¹ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37653116> ; <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/10/syria-war-car-bomb-rocks-rebel-checkpoint-azaz-161013203538439.html>

¹² <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37541058> ; <http://www.cnn.com/2016/10/03/middleeast/syria-aleppo/> ; <http://news.sky.com/story/russian-planes-destroy-syrias-cave-hospital-10604281> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-hospital-idUSKCN1231RQ>

¹³ <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/10/syria-war-suicide-bombing-rocks-government-held-hama-161003110944431.html>

¹⁴ <http://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/963080/us-strike-in-syria-targets-key-al-qaida-leader> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37542860> ; <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/04/world/middleeast/syria-nusra-front-masri.html>

- On October 6, an ISIL bombing at an opposition-controlled checkpoint at the Atmeh border crossing killed at least 29 people.¹⁵
- 4. Rif Dimashq Governorate:
 - On October 12, heavy airstrikes were reported over the opposition-held area of Eastern Ghouta.¹⁶
 - On October 13, hundreds of opposition forces and their families evacuated the towns of Qudsiya and al-Hama, on the northern outskirts of Damascus.¹⁷
- 5. al-Hasakah Governorate:
 - On October 3, an ISIL bombing struck a Kurdish wedding in the city of Hasakah, killing at least 22 people.¹⁸
 - On October 3, Kurdish YPG forces and ISIL militants clashed between the towns of Margada and Azzawi, causing casualties on both sides. ISIL militants are reportedly digging trenches around Margada to protect the group's headquarters.¹⁹
- 6. Daraa Governorate:
 - On October 11, opposition shelling reportedly struck a school in the city of Daraa, killing at least five people.²⁰
- 7. Tartus Governorate:
 - On October 4, Russia confirmed that it had sent an S-300 air defense missile system to its naval base in the port of Tartus.²¹

Other Key Points:

- During the reporting period, the US-led coalition conducted airstrikes in the areas of Abu Kamal, Ayn Issa, Deir ez Zor, al-Hawl, Idlib, Manbij, Mar'a, Palmyra, Raqqa, and Shaddadi.²²
- On December 2, a Russian newspaper reported that the country is sending additional warplanes to Syria.²³
- On October 4, Spain and France drafted a UN resolution that sought a truce in the city of Aleppo following the breakdown of negotiations between the US and Russia.²⁴

¹⁵ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37572169> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-turkey-idUSKCN1260H4>

¹⁶ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37528260> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-aleppo-idUSKCN12C1T1>

¹⁷ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-evacuation-idUSKCN12D207>

¹⁸ <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/10/syria-war-suicide-bombing-rocks-government-held-hama-161003110944431.html> ; <http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/6ad1b1d9-7ba8-47eb-8f4b-ed3754cc0423/Suicide-attack-targets-a-Kurdish-wedding-in-Hasaka-> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-wedding-hall-idUSKCN12325X> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37550119> ; <http://aranews.net/2016/10/over-30-killed-90-injured-as-isis-attacks-kurdish-wedding-in-syrias-hasakah/>

¹⁹ <http://aranews.net/2016/10/isis-launches-new-offensive-on-kurdish-positions-northeast-syria/>

²⁰ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-aleppo-idUSKCN12B14M>

²¹ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37557138>

²² See: "US DOD News Release Military Strikes Hit ISIL in Syria, Iraq". *Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve*. News Release No: [961406](#), [961622](#), [963211](#), [964435](#), [966456](#), [969157](#), [969429](#), [970975](#), [972480](#), [973855](#), [974990](#)

²³ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-idUSKCN1201WN>

²⁴ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37552749> ; <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-syria-germany-idUKKCN1241A8>

- On October 10, French President François Hollande suggested that Russia could face war crime charges over actions in Aleppo, where Russian forces continue to conduct airstrikes. The following day Russian President Vladimir Putin canceled an anticipated trip to France to meet with President Hollande.²⁵

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

1. Ninawa Governorate:
 - During the reporting period, ISIL militants were reported to be building concrete walls in an attempt to defend the city of Mosul from any upcoming offensives. Iraqi and US officials reported that ISIL militants had placed “booby traps across the city of Mosul,” and had dug tunnels as well as recruited children to spy for the group in anticipation of an upcoming battle for the city.²⁶
 - On October 3, US-led coalition airstrikes targeted a house in Mosul, reportedly once belonging to the brother of former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. The building was reportedly housing ISIL members and their families. Other airstrikes over the city struck ISIL’s al-Bayan radio station, a major propaganda outlet for the group.²⁷
 - On October 4, Iraq launched a new radio station in order to provide up-to-date information to Mosul residents during the upcoming military offensive.²⁸
 - On October 4, Kurdish Peshmerga forces shelled an ISIL headquarters in the town of Bartella, east of the city of Mosul.²⁹
 - On October 5, an Iraqi airstrike struck and killed “at least 20 pro-government Sunni tribal fighters” who the Iraqi forces had mistaken for ISIL militants. The airstrike occurred as the tribal fighters repelled an ISIL attack on the town of Qayyarah, south of the city of Mosul.³⁰
 - On October 11, Yezidi Shingal Resistance Units announced their participation in the upcoming battle to reclaim the city of Mosul from ISIL militants.³¹
 - On October 11, the US-led coalition struck several of ISIL’s Islamic ‘al-Hisba’ police stations in Mosul.³²

²⁵ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-37611151> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-37616333>

²⁶ <http://www.preemptivelove.org/isis-digs-in-as-battle-for-mosul-looms> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-mosul-islamic-state-in-idUSKCN12B2MT>

²⁷ <http://nrn-news.com/2-فيديو-سقوط-ضحايا-مدنيين-بقصف-لطيران-ال-> ; <http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/isis-terror/isis-al-bayan-radio-station-mosul-bombed-silence-iraqi-jets-n658521> ; <http://aranews.net/2016/10/coalition-airstrike-hit-isis-media-centre-in-mosul-amaq-editor-killed/>

²⁸ <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-iraq-mosul-idUKKCN12412D>

²⁹ <http://aranews.net/2016/10/kurdish-peshmergas-clash-isis-christian-town-north-iraq/>

³⁰ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37566771> ; <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2016/Oct-06/375418-info-from-iraq-forces-led-to-deadly-friendly-fire-military.ashx> ; <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/10/air-strike-kills-pro-government-fighters-iraq-161005151208831.html>

³¹ <http://ezidipress.com/en/ybs-forces-announce-their-participation-in-mosul-offensive/>

³² <http://aranews.net/2016/10/us-led-coalition-destroys-eight-isis-security-centres-in-mosul/>

- On October 14, residents in Mosul and Iraqi security officials reported that ISIL militants had crushed a rebellion plot inside the city, executing 58 people suspected of being involved. The reports suggest that the plotters were dissident members of ISIL.³³
- On October 14, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced that Turkish forces planned to take part in the fight to reclaim Mosul from ISIL. Turkey already has troops stationed in Iraq.³⁴

Other Key Points:

- During the reporting period, the US-led coalition conducted airstrikes in the areas of Baghdad, Baiji, Bashir, Fallujah, Haditha, Hit, Huwayjah, Kisik, Mosul, al-Qaim, Qayyarah, Ramadi, Rawah, Rutbah, Sinjar, Sultan Abdullah, and Tal Afar.³⁵

Other significant political and military events during the reporting period:

- On October 12, the German Cabinet approved additional troops to conduct aerial surveillance operations of ISIL targets.³⁶

Syrian Network For Human Rights Videos

Beginning March 23, 2016 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) published back-dated 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-Kabeer Mosque damaged by suspected Russian shelling on September 8, 2016 in Anadan, Aleppo Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0144** in **Weekly Report 109-110, SHI 16-0129** in **Weekly Report 105-106**.³⁷
2. Omar bin al-Khattab Mosque damaged by alleged SARG warplanes on September 7, 2016 in Ibtā, Daraa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0143** in **Weekly Report 109-110**.³⁸
3. Baghdadi Mosque damaged by alleged SARG airstrikes on September 7, 2016 in Douma, Rif Dimashq Governorate.³⁹
4. al-Takiya Mosque damaged by alleged SARG airstrikes on September 1, 2016 in Khan Sheikhoun, Idlib Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0140** in **Weekly Report 109-110**.⁴⁰

³³ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-mosul-exclusive-idUSKBN12E0Z0> ; <http://www.newsweek.com/isis-crushes-mosul-rebellion-aimed-give-city-back-baghdad-509885>

³⁴ <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-iraq-turkey-idUKKBN12E006> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-turkey-idUSKCN12C0KF>

³⁵ See: "US DOD News Release Military Strikes Hit ISIL in Syria, Iraq". *Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve*. News Release No: [961406](#), [961622](#), [963211](#), [964435](#), [966456](#), [969157](#), [969429](#), [970975](#), [972480](#), [973855](#), [974990](#)

³⁶ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-germany-turkey-awacs-idUSKCN12C0YL>

³⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TCvO-h7Jj48>

³⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Frg19-gDCI>

³⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e3h11xic8ys>

⁴⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2w-Su0FN4Uc>

Incident Reports: Syria

SHI 16-0154

Report Date: October 3, 2016; October 12, 2016; October 15, 2016

Site Name:

- Karsaa Mosque (مسجد كرسعة)
- al-Kabir Mosque (مسجد الكبير; Mashmashan Mosque)
- Uwais al-Qarni Mosque (مسجد أويس القرني)

Date of Incident: October 2, 2016; October 12, 2016; October 15, 2016

Location:

- Karsaa Mosque - Karsaa, Idlib Governorate, Syria
- al-Kabir Mosque - Mashmashan, Idlib Governorate, Syria
- Uwais al-Qarni Mosque - Maarat al-Numan, Idlib Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosques in Idlib Governorate.

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: Reported SARG airstrikes damage three mosque in Idlib Governorate.

Incident Source and Description: On October 3, 2016, the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that a SARG airstrike struck Karsaa Mosque on October 2, 2016, “damaging its building and furniture partially.”⁴¹ A photograph accompanying the report shows severe damage to buildings across a street from the mosque.

On October 12, 2016 SNHR reported that a SARG airstrike struck al-Kabir Mosque in Mashmashan, “damaging its building and furniture partially.”⁴² A photograph accompanying the report shows broken glass in the interior of the mosque.

On October 15, 2016 SNHR reported that a SARG airstrike struck Uwais al-Qarni Mosque in Maarat al-Numan, “rendering [the mosque] inoperable.”⁴³ A photograph accompanying the report shows a great deal of debris at what appears to be an entrance to the mosque.

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor damage to mosques in Idlib Governorate as well as other heritage sites located in areas subject to aerial bombardment.

⁴¹ <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/10/03/government-forces-targeted-karsa-mosque-karsa-town-idlib-governor-ate-southern-suburbs-october-2/>

⁴² <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/10/12/government-forces-targeted-al-kabeir-mosque-mashmashan-town-ijsr-al-shoghhour-city-idlib-governorate-october-12/>

⁴³ <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/10/15/government-forces-targeted-owais-al-qarni-mosque-maaret-al-numan-city-idlib-governorate-october-15/>

Sources

Online Reporting:

SNHR:

October 3, 2016: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/10/03/government-forces-targeted-karsa-mosque-karsa-town-idlib-governorate-southern-suburbs-october-2/>

October 12, 2016: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/10/12/government-forces-targeted-al-kabeir-mosque-mashmashan-town-jisr-al-shoghour-city-idlib-governorate-october-12/>

October 15, 2016: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/10/15/government-forces-targeted-owais-al-garni-mosque-maaret-al-numan-city-idlib-governorate-october-15/>



Airstrike damage to the area near Karsaa Mosque (SNHR; October 3, 2016)



Damage to interior of al-Kabir Mosque (SNHR; October 12, 2016)



Damage to Uwais al-Qarni Mosque (SNHR; October 15, 2016)

SHI 16-0155

Report Date: October 9, 2016; October 13, 2016

Site Name: al-Miqdad ibn Amr Mosque (مسجد المقداد بن عمرو); al-Sabhan Mosque (مسجد الصبحان)

Date of Incident: October 9-12, 2016

Location:

- al-Miqdad ibn Amr Mosque - Saleheen neighborhood, Aleppo, Aleppo Governorate, Syria
- al-Sabhan Mosque - Kalaseh neighborhood, Aleppo, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosques in Aleppo City.

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: Suspected Russian airstrikes severely damage two mosques in Aleppo.

Incident Source and Description: On October 9, 2016 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that a suspected Russian airstrike had struck al-Miqdad ibn Amr Mosque in the Saleheen neighborhood of Aleppo, “damaging it severely and rendering it inoperable.”⁴⁴ No photographs of the damage were available at the time of publication.

On October 13, 2016 SNHR reported that a suspected Russian airstrike struck al-Sabhan Mosque in the Kalaseh neighborhood of Aleppo, “damaging it severely and rendering it inoperable.”⁴⁵ A photograph accompanying the report appears to show that at least part of the mosque building has collapsed. The surrounding area is largely destroyed.

Damage to cultural heritage sites in Aleppo as a result of aerial bombardment has increased significantly since mid-September 2016. For further information on damage to sites in Aleppo, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0144 in Weekly Report 109–110, ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0150 in Weekly Report 111–112.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor damage to mosques in the city of Aleppo as well as other heritage sites located in areas subject to aerial bombardment.

⁴⁴ <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/10/09/suspected-russian-forces-targeted-al-meqdad-bin-amro-mosque-al-sal-ehen-neighborhood-aleppo-city-october-9/>

⁴⁵ <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/10/13/suspected-russian-forces-targeted-al-sabhan-mosque-aleppo-governor-ate-october-12/>

Sources:

Online Reporting:

SNHR:

October 9, 2016: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/10/09/suspected-russian-forces-targeted-al-meqdad-bin-amro-mosque-al-saleheen-neighborhood-aleppo-city-october-9/>

October 13, 2016: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/10/13/suspected-russian-forces-targeted-al-sabhan-mosque-aleppo-governorate-october-12/>



Damage to the area surrounding al-Sabhan Mosque (SNHR; October 13, 2016)

SHI 16-0156

Report Date: October 11, 2016

Site Name: Daraya Library

Date of Incident: Unknown, post-August 2016 Darayya exodus

Location: Daraya, Rif Dimashq Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Makeshift library in a basement of a bombed-out building located in downtown Daraya. When civilians were forced to leave Daraya, they barricaded the library. The library had held more than 11,000 books, many of which had been saved from destroyed buildings and rubble by volunteers.⁴⁶

Site Date: Building site date unknown. Library established around 2014 CE or later.

Incident Summary: SARG forces remove books from makeshift library in Daraya.

Incident Source and Description: On October 11, 2016 CNN reported that a makeshift library in Daraya had been plundered by SARG forces who removed the books.⁴⁷ Photographs accompanying the CNN report show SARG soldiers loading books from the library onto a pickup truck. Inside the library, other books lie strewn about on the floor. The reporter described the library as it stands today as: "half empty, and many of the books lay strewn across the floor. The signs depicting the various sections of the library -- science, religion, and so on -- were still in place, but there was no electricity." The reason why SARG forces emptied the community library was not made clear.

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

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor damage to sites in Daraya, as well as other heritage sites at risk of theft and vandalism.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

BBC: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-36893303>

BBC Radio 4: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b07lhh6x>

CNN: <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/10/07/middleeast/syria-underground-library/>

⁴⁶ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-36893303>

⁴⁷ <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/10/07/middleeast/syria-underground-library/>



SARG soldiers loading Daraya library books onto pickup truck (CNN; October 11, 2016)



Books strewn about on floor of dismantled Daraya library (CNN; October 11, 2016)

SHI 16-0175

Report Date: October 15, 2016

Site Name: Qasr ibn Wardan (قصر ابن وردان)

Date of Incident: October 15, 2016

Location: Ibn Wardan, Hama Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Qasr ibn Wardan is a 6th-century CE site that consists of a palace, church, and barracks. It was part of a defensive line of forts that also included Resafa and Halabiye. The unique style of Qasr ibn Wardan is not found anywhere else in Syria. Basalt was brought from areas to the north or south of the site, and marble columns and capitals are thought to have been brought from Apamea.

The best-preserved section of the palace is the southern facade, which is characterized by alternating bands of black basalt and yellow brick. There are remains of stables in the northern part of the site and a small bath complex in the eastern part of the palace with a central courtyard. The function of each room was indicated by a carved stone.

The church was square-shaped with a central nave and two side aisles. Originally, the church was topped by a large dome. Three sides of the church (only northern and southern walls remain) once had upper floor galleries reserved for women. The fourth side is finished with a typical Byzantine semicircular and half-domed apse.⁴⁸

Site Date: 6th-century CE

Incident Summary: An alleged SARG airstrike damaged the ancient site of Qasr ibn Wardan.

Incident Source and Description: On October 15, 2016 the Syrian Network for Human Rights reported that a SARG airstrike damaged the site of Qasr ibn Wardan in Hama Governorate.⁴⁹ A photograph by the Syrian White Helmets accompanied the report and shows some collapse and multiple impact damage marks to the brick and stone exterior of the eastern side of the southern facade of the palace. The condition of the interior of the building was not known at the time of publication

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor damage to Qasr ibn Wardan, as well as other heritage sites located in areas subject to aerial bombardment.

⁴⁸ Burns 2010: 201

⁴⁹ <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/10/15/government-forces-targeted-archaeological-palace-qasr-ibn-wardan-village-hama-governorate-october-15/>

Sources:

Online Reporting:

SNHR: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/10/15/government-forces-targeted-archaeological-palace-qasr-ibn-wardan-village-hama-governorate-october-15/>

Scholarly:

Burns, Ross (2010) *Monuments of Syria*. London: I.B. Tauris.



Damage to southern facade of the palace at Qasr ibn Wardan (SNHR; October 15, 2016)

SHI 16-0176

Report Date: October 6, 2016

Site Name: Sarouja historic house

Date of Incident: October 4, 2016

Location: Sarouja neighborhood, Damascus, Damascus Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Sarouja neighborhood stretches between Bawabet al-Salihiya to the west and King Faisal Street to the east. The area was built under the Mamluk Emir Saremudin Sarouja, and was originally inhabited by Mamluk troops and army officers. During the Ottoman rule the neighborhood was called "Little Istanbul" due to the fact that Ottoman and local aristocratic families lived there.⁵⁰

Site Date: likely Ottoman-era or later

Incident Summary: A fire destroys a historic house in the Sarouja neighborhood.

Incident Source and Description: On October 6, 2016 the DGAM reported that a fire that broke out on October 3, 2016 destroyed a historic house in the Sarouja neighborhood.⁵¹ SANA reported the fire spread to several other houses.⁵² The damage to the building looked extensive, with much of the historic brick and timber structure collapsed.

The threat of fire damage is a continuous threat to heritage sites in the old city of Damascus as a result of neglect, poor electrical wiring, and a stressed fire department to combat such instances. In April 2016, an electrical fire damaged two suqs and an Ottoman-era bank in the old city. For further information on previous fire damage in the old city, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report 16-0058** in **Weekly Report 89-90**.

Pattern: Site management.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor damage to sites in Damascus, as well as other sites in Syria subject to damage due to a lack of site management.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

DGAM: <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2060>

SANA: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cFDXsRI287w>

⁵⁰ <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/damages/eplace.php?placeid=27#>

⁵¹ <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=239&id=2059>

⁵² <http://sana.sy/?p=438363>

Scholarly:

DGAM: <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/damages/eplace.php?placeid=27#>



Historic house prior to the fire (DigitalGlobe; July 19, 2016)



Historic house after the fire (DigitalGlobe; October 26, 2016)



Fire damage to the historic house in Sarouja (DGAM; October 6, 2016)



Fire damage to the historic house in Sarouja (DGAM; October 6, 2016)



Fire damage to the historic house in Sarouja (DGAM; October 6, 2016)



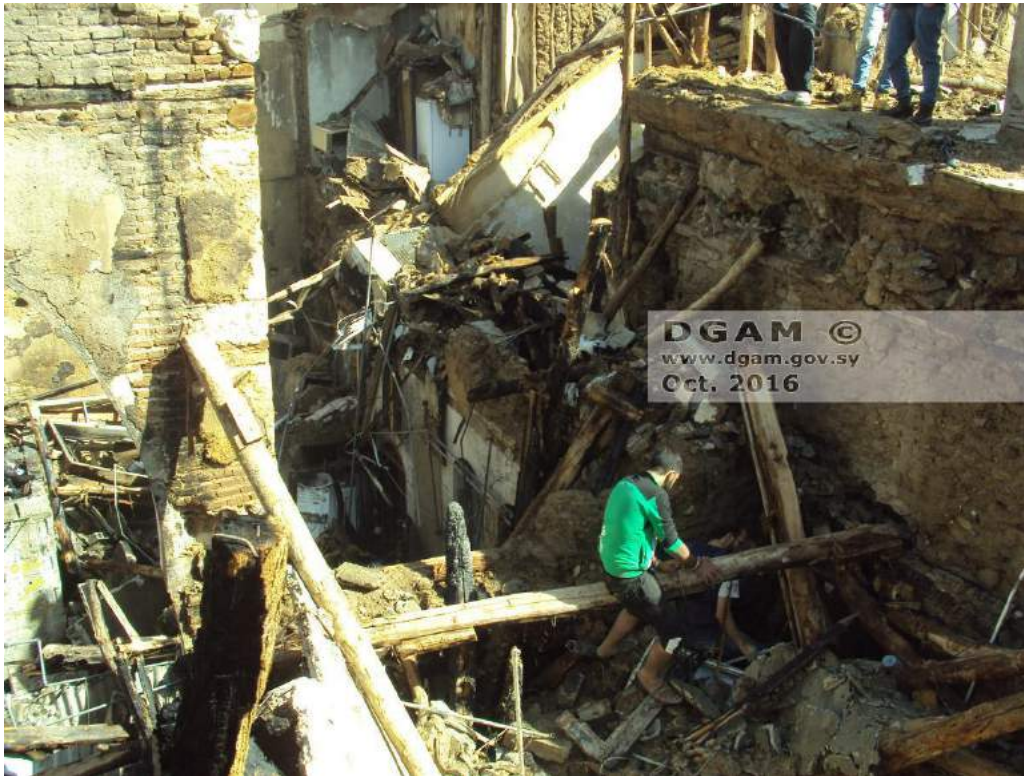
Fire damage to the historic house in Sarouja (DGAM; October 6, 2016)



Fire damage to the historic house in Sarouja (DGAM; October 6, 2016)



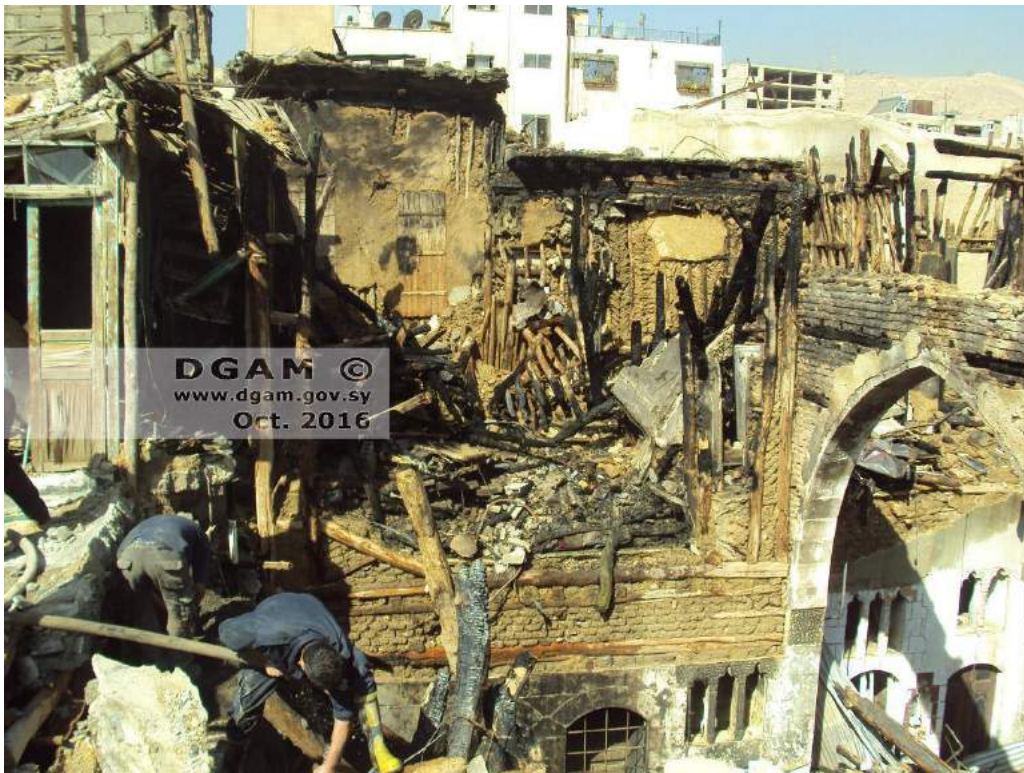
Fire damage to the historic house in Sarouja (DGAM; October 6, 2016)



Fire damage to the historic house in Sarouja (DGAM; October 6, 2016)



Fire damage to the historic house in Sarouja (DGAM; October 6, 2016)



Fire damage to the historic house in Sarouja (DGAM; October 6, 2016)



Fire damage to the historic house in Sarouja (DGAM; October 6, 2016)



Video still of fire damage to historic house in Sarouja, with al-Ward Mosque in background (SANA; October 3, 2016)

Incident Reports: Iraq

IHI 16-0031

Report Date: October 3, 2016

Site Name: Tel al-Mahwis (تل المحاوس)

Date of Incident: Ongoing

Location: Tel al-Mahwis, Kirkuk Governorate, Iraq; al-Riyadh, Kirkuk Governorate, Iraq.

Site Description: Tel al-Mahwis is an Assyrian era sites that was excavated by the Spanish between 2000 and 2003.

Site Date: Tel al-Mahwis dates to the Assyrian Period.

Incident Summary: Reports state that ISIL militants are looting sites in Kirkuk Governorate.

Incident Source and Description: On October 3, 2016 Iraq News reported that ISIL militants had blown up and “robbed graves and archaeological sites in the areas under its control” in the southwest of Kirkuk Governorate.⁵³ According to Al Sumeria News, “[ISIL] bombed nearly 100 archaeological graves in the vicinity of Hawija...using explosives materials and bulldozers.” According to the report, “groups belonging to [ISIL] exhumed a number of archaeological sites near Tel al-Mahwis as well as two locations in the al-Riyadh area...and stole antiquities found in those locations.” ISIL militants have been known to loot other sites across Iraq and Syria for financial gain. No photographs of the reported looting were available at the time of publication. ASOR CHI was unable to independently verify these claims of looting; however, ISIL militants have previously looted archaeological sites located within the territory they hold.

Pattern: Illegal excavation; theft.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor reports of looting of heritage sites in Ninawa Governorate, and will continue monitor the situation using DigitalGlobe satellite imagery.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Al Sumeria:

<http://www.alsumeria.tv/mobile/news/181315/داعش-يدمر-ويسرق-مواقع-أثرية-جنوب-غربي-كركوك/ar>

Iraq News: <http://www.iraqnews.com/iraq-war/isis-destroys-steals-archaeological-sites-near-kirkuk/>

⁵³ <http://www.alsumeria.tv/mobile/news/181315/داعش-يدمر-ويسرق-مواقع-أثرية-جنوب-غربي-كركوك/ar> ; <http://www.iraqnews.com/iraq-war/isis-destroys-steals-archaeological-sites-near-kirkuk/>

IHI 16-0032

Report Date: October 6, 2016

Site Name: al-Rawda Muhammadiyah Mosque (جامع الروضة المحمدية)

Date of Incident: October 6, 2016

Location: Muthanna Neighborhood, Mosul, Ninawa Governorate, Iraq

Site Description: Mosque within a complex in Mosul that contains several buildings, including a religious school.⁵⁴

Site Date: Unknown, likely modern

Incident Summary: Video shows alleged US-led coalition airstrike hitting a mosque complex.

Incident Source and Description: On October 6, 2016 ISIL-affiliated Amaq News Agency released video footage of an airstrike striking a mosque in the city of Mosul. The video was most likely captured by a third party, as the incident appears to have been captured via cell phone. The video was later shared by the local activist group Mosul Eye.⁵⁵ According to NRN News, the mosque is one of ISIL's strongholds in the city of Mosul.⁵⁶ The mosque complex consists of several buildings, only one of which (the entrance to the easternmost building with the gold dome) appears to have been damaged in the airstrike. According to al-Rafidain TV, the damaged building is a school affiliated with the mosque.⁵⁷

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor damage to al-Rawda Muhammadiyah Mosque, as well as other sites subject to ongoing aerial bombardment. ISIL propaganda has emphasized the damage to Muslim places of worship by Coalition and Iraqi forces to turn local populations against liberating forces, portraying these incidents as proof that these armies are intending to hurt and kill Muslims.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Masajed Iraq: <http://www.masajediraq.com/index.php?type=prevmas&idm=1977>

Mosul Eye: <https://www.facebook.com/MosulEye/videos/1026541204134048/>

Mosul Photos: <http://www.mosul-photos.com/picture.php?/1500>

NRN News: <http://nrn-news.com/بالتفديو-لحظة-قصف-جامع-الروضة-المحمدي/>

⁵⁴ <http://www.masajediraq.com/index.php?type=prevmas&idm=1977>

⁵⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/MosulEye/videos/1026541204134048/>

⁵⁶ <http://nrn-news.com/بالتفديو-لحظة-قصف-جامع-الروضة-المحمدي/>

⁵⁷ <http://alrafidain.org/2016/10/بقتص-11-واصابة-7-مدنيين-واصابة-11-بقتص/>

al-Rafidain TV: <http://alrafidain.org/2016/10/قناة-الرافدين-مقتل-7-مدنيين-وإصابة-11-بقص>



Pre-damage photograph of al-Rawda Muhammadiyah Mosque (Saeed Hadi; March 16, 2014)



Video still of al-Rawda Muhammadiyah Mosque (Amaq News Agency; October 6, 2016)



Video still of a missile striking al-Rawda Muhammadiyah Mosque (Amaq News Agency; October 6, 2016)



Video still of smoke as it continues to rise following the airstrike (Amaq News Agency; October 6, 2016)



Video still of damage surrounding al-Rawda Muhammadiyah Mosque (Amaq News Agency; October 6, 2016)



al-Rawda Muhammadiyah Mosque prior to damage (DigitalGlobe; October 1, 2016)



al-Rawda Muhammadiyah Mosque with visible damage to buildings within the complex (DigitalGlobe; October 10, 2016)