

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

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Executive Summary

The long-awaited operation to retake Mosul from ISIL officially started October 17, 2016. Led by Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), Kurdish Peshmerga forces, and Popular Mobilization Units (Al-Hashd Al-Sha'abi) with support from the US-led Combined Joint Task Force – Operation Inherent Resolve (CJT-OIR) advanced on outlying villages and the city's easternmost and southernmost outskirts. In retaliation, ISIL launched diversionary counterattacks and terrorist strikes on Sinjar, Kirkuk, and Rutbah. ISIL propaganda outlets simultaneously publicized that Iraqi and US airstrikes had allegedly struck mosques in Kirkuk and Ninawa Governorates in an apparent attempt to undermine support for the liberation effort among Sunni Arab populations. As the Mosul Operation clears ISIL from remote areas, many of which are predominantly occupied by ethnic or religious minority populations, the vanguard of military units, aid works, and journalists will uncover new evidence of vandalism and destruction of cultural heritage sites and other crimes of cultural cleansing committed by ISIL occupiers. Many of these communities have been cut off from contact with the outside world for the last two years. The first such evidence of ISIL incurred damage has been found in the Christian town of Bartella. ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the Mosul Operation and document and analyze this evidence as it emerges in an attempt to bracket the date of each incident and to identify the perpetrators involved. Given that this is an active combat situation, we must carefully distinguish between recent collateral damage, other types of damage incurred during the Mosul Operation, and ISIL intentional acts of cultural cleansing.

In Syria, airstrikes continue to inflict severe damage to densely populated urban areas, damaging religious cultural heritage in Deir Ez-Zor, Idlib, Rif Dimashq, and Aleppo Governorates. Although relief efforts and humanitarian ceasefires continue to be proposed by all sides in Aleppo, no concrete action has been taken, exacerbating an already dire situation. Russia, meanwhile, continues to bolster its military presence in Syria with the likely goal of capitalizing on recent SARG and pro-regime advances throughout the country, particularly in opposition-held areas of Aleppo. In northern Aleppo Governorate, Turkish-backed Syrian opposition forces recaptured the town of Dabiq, a symbolically significant location extensively mentioned in ISIL propaganda.

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.

Key Points

- ISIL-affiliated Amaq News Agency claimed that an Iraqi government airstrike allegedly damaged a mosque in Hawija, Kirkuk Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0034**).
- New video footage and photographs show damage to three churches, a cultural center, and a cemetery in Bartella, Ninawa Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0035**).
- An airstrike allegedly damaged a mosque in Daquq, Kirkuk Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0036**).
- ISIL-affiliated Amaq News Agency claimed that an alleged US-led coalition airstrike destroyed a mosque in Hammam al-Aleel, Ninawa Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0037**).
- An alleged SARG airstrike damaged a mosque in al-Sabha, Deir Ez Zor Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0157**).
- Alleged SARG and Russian airstrikes damaged four mosques in Idlib Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0158**).
- An alleged Russian airstrike damaged a mosque in Qebtan, Aleppo Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0159**).
- The DGAM reported ongoing looting, vandalism, and theft of building materials from archaeological sites throughout Aleppo Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0160**).
- An alleged SARG airstrike damaged a *musalla* in Douma, Rif Dimashq Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0169**).

Heritage Timeline

October 31, 2016

The Times of India published an article entitled “**Mosul: Iraqi heritage sites again at risk in Mosul operation**” (by AFP). Iraqi officials say ISIL has deployed fighters at or near archaeological sites, possibly in order to ensure their destruction as Iraqi forces advance in the area.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/middle-east/Iraqi-heritage-sites-again-at-risk-in-Mosul-operation/articleshow/55155172.cms>

- DGAM published an article titled “**Illegal digging continues at various archaeological sites in Rural of Aleppo.**” The DGAM reports ongoing illegal excavations at sites throughout Aleppo Governorate, including in the Dead Cities area, Jebel Semaan, and at archaeological mounds near the Tishrin Dam on the Euphrates River. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0160.**
<http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2091>

October 27, 2016

Dwarozh published an article titled “**Artifacts dating to 2500 years ago found in Khorsabad.**” Kurdish Peshmerga forces uncovered neo-Assyrian artifacts while digging a trench to support the military operations in recapturing Mosul.

<http://www.dwarozh.net/details.aspx?jimare=33901>

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=712497808918431&id=239551286213088

- *i24 News* published an article titled “**Syria complains to UNESCO over alleged Israeli excavations in Golan Heights.**” Syria has submitted a complaint to UNESCO alleging Israel is carrying out archaeological excavations at Bir Ajam on the Syrian side of the disputed Golan Heights region.
<http://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel/128700-161027-syria-complains-to-unesco-over-alleged-israeli-excavations-in-golan-heights>
- *UN News Centre* published an article titled “**Destruction of cultural heritage is an attack on people and their fundamental rights – UN expert.**” Karima Bennouna, UN Special Rapporteur on cultural rights, stressed that when cultural heritage is under attack it is also the people and their fundamental human rights that are under attack in a recent briefing to the UN General Assembly.
<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=55412#.WDWZamSLTow>

October 26, 2016

Swiss Info published an article titled “**Archaeologists in Switzerland prepare for post-war Syria**” (by Thomas Stephens). Archaeologists discuss the role Switzerland might play in future reconstruction of Syria’s cultural heritage.

http://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/cultural-heritage_archaeologists-in-switzerland-prepare-for-post-war-syria/42500792

- **SNHR** published a post titled “**Government forces targeted Abu Bakr Mosque in Khan Sheikhoun city in Idlib governorate, October 26.**” A mosque was damaged in an airstrike. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0158.**
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/10/26/government-forces-targeted-abu-bakr-mosque-khan-sheikhoun-city-idlib-governorate-october-26/>
- **SNHR** published a post titled “**Suspected Russian forces targeted Qebtan Mosque in Qebtan town in Aleppo governorate, October 25.**” A mosque was damaged in an airstrike. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0159.**
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/10/26/suspected-russian-forces-targeted-qebtan-mosque-qebtan-town-aleppo-governorate-october-25/>

October 25, 2016

The Wall Street Journal published an article titled “**There Are No More Panes of Glass Left in Aleppo**” (by Raja Abdulrahman). The article details the extent of destruction in the city of Aleppo, as well as the re-use of Shaar Cemetery for new burials over old ones.

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/there-are-no-more-panes-of-glass-left-in-aleppo-1477409238>

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NRT published an article titled “**Protecting the Past: Towards a Better Future with Cultural Heritage.**” The Protecting the Past event is the second in an international series of events aiming to bring together local, national, and international experts, students, and officials to discuss and be trained in new methodologies for cultural heritage management. It will take place at the American University of Iraq in Suleimani from October 30-31, 2016.

<http://www.nrttv.com/en/birura-details.aspx?Jimare=4104>

October 20, 2016

SNHR published a post titled “**Government forces targeted Tarmala Grand Mosque in Tarmala town in Idlib governorate in October 20.**” A mosque was damaged in an airstrike. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0158.**

<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/10/20/government-forces-targeted-tarmala-grand-mosque-tarmala-town-idlib-governorate-october-20/>

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SNHR published a post titled “**Government forces targeted Al Sheikh Mustafa Mosque in Al Sheikh Mustafa village in Idlib governorate in October 20.**” A mosque was damaged in an airstrike. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0158.**

<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/10/20/government-forces-targeted-al-sheikh-mustafa-mosque-al-sheikh-mustafa-village-idlib-governorate-october-20/>

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SNHR published a post titled “**Government forces targeted Othman Bin Affan Mosque in Ma’aret Harma town in Idlib governorate in October 20.**” A mosque was damaged in an airstrike. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0158.**

<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/10/20/government-forces-targeted-othman-bin-affan-mosque-maaret-harma-town-idlib-governorate-october-20/>

October 19, 2016

SNHR published a post titled “**Government forces targeted Omar Bin Al Khattab Mosque in Al Sabha Mosque in Deir Ez-Zour governorate, October 18.**” A mosque was damaged in an airstrike. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0157.**

<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/10/19/government-forces-targeted-omar-bin-al-khattab-mosque-al-sabha-mosque-deir-ez-zour-governorate-october-18/>

October 18, 2016

The Conversation published an article titled “**The ICC’s Al-Mahdi ruling protects cultural heritage, but didn’t go far enough.**” While the recent conviction of Ahmad Al Faqi Al-Mahdi for crimes against heritage in Timbuktu should be welcomed, the court’s ruling did not go far enough in that it did not emphasize the idea that protecting cultural heritage sites is equally important and connected to the protection of civilian populations.

<http://theconversation.com/the-iccs-al-mahdi-ruling-protects-cultural-heritage-but-didnt-go-far-enough-67071>

- **SNHR** published a post titled “**Government forces targeted Zain praying place in Douma city in Damascus suburbs, October 17.**” A *musalla* (an Islamic space for prayer) was damaged in an airstrike. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0169.**
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/10/18/government-forces-targeted-zain-praying-place-douma-city-damascus-suburbs-october-17/>
- *Syria Direct* published an article titled “**Some looted Idlib National Museum artifacts resurface, fate of others a mystery amidst ‘thriving black market trade’**” (by Noura Hourani & Maria Nelson). Ayman Nabu, director of the Idlib Antiquities Center, discusses artifacts stolen from the Idlib National Museum in 2015 that recently resurfaced in a building captured from Jund al-Aqsa in rural Idlib.
<http://syriadirect.org/news/some-looted-idlib-national-museum-artifacts-resurface-fate-of-others-a-mystery-amidst-%E2%80%98thriving-black-market-trade%E2%80%99/>

October 16, 2016

The Globe and Mail published an article titled “**Fate of Aleppo weighs heavily on Syrian archeologist**” (by James Adams). The work of the DGAM and Maamoun Abdulkarim to protect Syrian cultural heritage is explored.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/toronto/fate-of-aleppo-weighs-heavily-on-syrian-archeologist/article32385219/>

Military and Political Context

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

1. Aleppo Governorate:
 - On October 16, Turkish-backed Syrian opposition forces captured the ISIL-held town of Dabiq and the village of Soran.²
 - On October 17-22, Russia announced several short-term humanitarian pauses in the city of Aleppo. According to the announcement, Russian forces and SARG forces, would “halt hostilities” for eight hours in the eastern-held opposition areas of Aleppo city in order to allow for opposition fighters and civilians to exit the city.³

² <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37670998>

³ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/ap/article-3843124/Syrias-Assad-seeks-Egypt-s-help-fighting-terrorism.html> ; <http://mobile.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSKBN12Z203> ; <http://reliefweb.int/repor>

- On October 20-22, the Syrian Arab Army released statements condemning operations by Turkish-backed Syrian opposition forces, calling the group an “occupation force.”⁴
 - On October 22-27, Turkish-backed Syrian opposition forces participating in “Operation Euphrates Shield” clashed with SDF fighters near the towns of Azzaz and Tel Rifaat. Turkish-backed forces captured at least 10 ISIL-held villages as they advanced toward the key town of al-Bab.⁵
 - On October 23, military activity resumed in Aleppo city as pro-regime forces shelled several opposition-held neighborhoods.⁶
 - On October 25, SANA news agency reported that Syrian government forces had captured the opposition-held town of Talet Bazo. SARG helicopters also targeted Turkish-backed opposition forces in the village of Tal Jijan.⁷
 - On October 26-31, Islamist opposition groups Harakat Nour al-Din al-Zenki and Jabhat Fatah al-Sham clashed with US-backed opposition group ‘Tajamu Fastaqim Kama Umirt’ in the eastern area of Aleppo City.⁸
 - On October 28-31, opposition forces inside Aleppo launched a major assault aimed at breaking the siege over the city.⁹
 - On October 29, SARG forces, backed by airstrikes, began a counteroffensive in an attempt to recover areas lost to the opposition in the city of Aleppo.¹⁰
2. Idlib Governorate:
- On October 18-21, Russian airstrikes struck “core opposition terrain” in Idlib Governorate.¹¹
 - On October 25, alleged SARG and Russian airstrikes struck several towns in the northern and southern areas of Idlib Governorate.¹²
 - On October 26, an airstrike struck a school complex and other buildings in the rebel-held village of al-Haas, killing least 20 people including several children.¹³

[t/syrian-arab-republic/syria-crisis-bi-weekly-situation-report-no16-31-october-2016](http://syrian-arab-republic/syria-crisis-bi-weekly-situation-report-no16-31-october-2016) ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/10/russian-airstrikes-in-syria-september-27.html>

⁴ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/10/syria-situation-report-october-20-27.html>

⁵ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/10/syria-situation-report-october-20-27.html>

⁶ <http://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/syria-crisis-bi-weekly-situation-report-no16-31-october-2016> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/10/syria-situation-report-october-20-27.html>

⁷ <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/10/syria-russia-denies-striking-aleppo-week-161025095159116.html> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/10/syria-situation-report-october-20-27.html>

⁸ <http://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounders/syria-situation-report-october-27-november-4-2016>

⁹ <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/10/syria-rebel-assault-break-aleppo-siege-slows-161031130219379.html> ; <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/syrian-rebels-launch-aleppo-offensive-43127043> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37798924> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-offensive-idUSKCN12S0QP> ; <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/afp/2016/10/syria-conflict-aleppo-rebels.html> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/10/syrian-opposition-launches-second.html> ; <http://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounders/syria-situation-report-october-27-november-4-2016>

¹⁰ <http://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/syria-conducts-airstrikes-aleppo-amid-intense-clashes-n675206>

¹¹ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/10/russian-airstrikes-in-syria-september-27.html>

¹² <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/10/syria-russia-denies-striking-aleppo-week-161025095159116.html>

¹³ <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/10/syria-russia-denies-striking-aleppo-week-161025095159116.html>

3. Rif Dimashq Governorate:
 - On October 19, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent facilitated the evacuation of 1,626 “fighters and accompanying family members” from the area of Moadamiyat al-Sham. The evacuees were relocated to opposition-held Idlib Governorate.¹⁴
 - On October 25, SARG forces launched an offensive against residential areas in Douma.¹⁵
 - On October 29, pro-regime forces captured the towns of Tel Sawwan and Tel Kurdi in the suburbs of Eastern Ghouta.¹⁶
4. Latakia Governorate:
 - On October 28, opposition forces fired “grad missiles” that struck Russian-utilized Hmeimeem Military Airbase.¹⁷
5. Tartus Governorate:
 - On October 30, prisoners inside Tartus Central Prison seized the facility prompting SARG forces to cordon off the area.¹⁸
6. Hama Governorate:
 - On October 27, pro-regime forces seized the opposition-held town of Souran in northern Hama Governorate.¹⁹

Other Key Points:

- During the reporting period, the US-led coalition conducted airstrikes in the areas of Abu Kamal, Ayn Issa, Deir ez Zor, Idlib, Manbij, Mara, Palmyra, Raqqa, Shaddadi, and Washiyah.²⁰
- During the reporting period the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) reported that Russian forces had conducted heavy airstrikes over Aleppo and Idlib Governorates, and had continued airstrikes over Hama, Homs, and Damascus Governorates.²¹
- On October 17, ISW released a report stating that Russia had continued to advance its Integrated Air Defense System in Syria.²²
- On October 22, UN investigators from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) found the Assad regime responsible for a third chemical weapons attack that occurred last year in the opposition-held village of Qmenas, Idlib Governorate.²³
- On October 27, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced that Turkey’s military operations in Syria would target the cities of Raqqa and Manbij.²⁴

¹³ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-3777646> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/10/turkish-backed-opposition-forces-seize-16.html> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/10/syria-situation-report-october-20-27.html>

¹⁴ <http://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/syria-crisis-bi-weekly-situation-report-no16-31-october-2016>

¹⁵ <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/10/syria-russia-denies-striking-aleppo-week-161025095159116.html>

¹⁶ <http://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/syria-situation-report-october-27-november-4-2016>

¹⁷ <http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=53391>

¹⁸ <http://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/syria-situation-report-october-27-november-4-2016>

¹⁹ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/10/syria-situation-report-october-20-27.html>

²⁰ See: “US DOD News Release Military Strikes Hit ISIL in Syria, Iraq”. *Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve*. News Release No: [975524](#), [976925](#), [978435](#), [980077](#), [981972](#), [982952](#), [983374](#), [985165](#), [986825](#), [988346](#), [989188](#), [990413](#), [990665](#), [992054](#)

²¹ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/10/russian-airstrikes-in-syria-september-27.html>

²² <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/10/turkish-backed-opposition-forces-seize-16.html>

²³ <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/syrian-regime-assad-chemical-weapons-un-investigation-jim-opcw-idlib-qmenas-sarmin-2015-barrel-bombs-a7375226.html> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/10/syria-situation-report-october-20-27.html>

²⁴ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-turkey-erdogan-idUSKCN12R16U>

- On October 31, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad asserted, during a conference with foreign journalists in Damascus, that he would remain in power through at least 2021 and ruled out any “major political reforms” before the end of the war. Syria’s Foreign Minister stated that regime would defeat any group unwilling to “return to regime control.”²⁵

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

1. Ninawa Governorate:
 - On October 16, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi rejected any Turkish intervention in Mosul and stated that Shia Popular Mobilization Front (PMF) would only be allowed to advance into the city limits.²⁶
 - On October 17, Iraqi forces officially launched operations to liberate the city of Mosul. On the same day, the Baathist Sunni insurgent group known as Jaysh Rijal al-Tariqa al-Naqshabandiya released a statement calling for attacks against ISIL in Mosul and Ninawa Governorate, including that the attacks should occur “without holding territory.”²⁷
 - On October 19, ARA News reported that hundreds of ISIL fighters, as well as civilians, had fled the Mosul countryside for Syria using the unofficial Ba’aj road.²⁸
 - On October 20, ISIL militants set fire to a sulfur plant located near the junction of the Zab and Tigris rivers as they withdrew from the area. The fire has created a hazard for civilians and Iraqi forces.²⁹
 - On October 20, Iraqi forces recaptured the majority-Christian town of Bartella from ISIL militants.³⁰
 - On October 20-21, an Iraqi intelligence source reported to CNN that ISIL militants had “executed 284 men and boys” in areas around Mosul. The men and boys were reportedly being used as human shields for ISIL fighters as they fled cities under attack by Iraqi and coalition forces. According to the source, the bodies of the victims were placed in a mass grave near the College of Agriculture in Hammam al-Alil. Additional reports have surfaced of ISIL atrocities against civilians as the offensive for Mosul continues.³¹

²⁵ <http://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/syria-situation-report-october-27-november-4-2016>

²⁶ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/10/iraq-situation-report-october-12-17-2016.html>

²⁷ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/10/iraq-situation-report-october-18-25-2016.html> ; <http://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/975239/iraqi-security-forces-begin-battle-for-mosul> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/10/iraq-launches-campaign-for-mosul.html> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/10/iraq-situation-report-october-12-17-2016.html>

²⁸ <http://aranews.net/2016/10/isis-fighters-flee-unofficial-mosul-raqqa-road-towards-syria/>

²⁹ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/10/the-campaign-for-mosul-october-25-28.html>

³⁰ <http://www.france24.com/en/20161023-video-iraqi-troops-liberate-christian-town-bartella> ; https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/new-kurdish-offensive-opens-on-mosuls-north-as-iraqi-forces-push-from-the-east/2016/10/20/19092040-9645-11e6-9cae-2a3574e296a6_story.html ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/10/the-campaign-for-mosul-october-29-31.html>

³¹ <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/isis-executes-nearly-284-men-boys-mosul-dump-them-mass-graves-iraqi-forces-advance-report-1587741> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37750544> ; <http://aranews.net/2016/10/isis-endangering-civilians-mosul-operation-hrw/> ; <http://www.voanews.com/a/iraqis-gain-ground-around-mosul-as-islamic-state-fight-intensifies/3564437.html> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37761088>

- On October 22, Iraqi army forces recaptured the district of Hamdaniya, southeast of Mosul, after four days of clashes. Iraqi security forces (ISF) also seized the mainly Christian town of Bakhdida, 13 miles southeast of Mosul.³²
- On October 23-24, Kurdish forces began an offensive against the town of Bashiqa. Iraqi forces continued to advance around the town of Bartella, “storming” at least three other villages including Khazna, Khazna Tabba, and Tob Zawa.³³
- On October 24, Iraqi counterterrorism and Peshmerga forces attacked the ISIL-held town of Bashiqa, northeast of Mosul.³⁴
- On October 24, Peshmerga and ISF forces reached the city limits of Mosul.³⁵
- On October 25, Kurdish Peshmerga forces entered the ISIL-held town of Batnaya as Iraqi security forces recaptured the town of Karamles.³⁶
- On October 25, ISIL militants reportedly executed civilians in the village of Tulul al-Nassir.³⁷
- On October 26, ARA News reported that ISIL militants had arrested dozens of men in the city of Mosul under the accusation that the men had attacked the main Hisba headquarters in the district of Wadi Hajar.³⁸
- On October 27, Peshmerga forces recaptured the village of Faziliya after a ten-day battle.³⁹
- On October 28, UN human rights investigators reported that ISIL militants had executed “scores of people” and had “forcibly relocated close to 7,900 families [approximately 48,000 people] into the city [of Mosul]” for use as human shields. ISIL is reported to have ordered all male children over 9 years old in the area of Hammam al-Alil to be handed over to the militants for conscription.⁴⁰
- On October 29, Shia militias began an operation aimed at reaching the ISIL-held town of Tal Afar located to the west of Mosul.⁴¹

³² <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-mosul-idUSKCN12M032> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/10/the-campaign-for-mosul-october-24-2016.html>

³³ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37750544>

³⁴ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/10/iraq-situation-report-october-18-25-2016.html>

³⁵ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/10/iraq-situation-report-october-18-25-2016.html>

³⁶ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/10/the-campaign-for-mosul-october-25-28.html> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/10/isis-capable-defense-of-mosul.html>

³⁷ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/10/isis-capable-defense-of-mosul.html> ; <http://www.ara.shafaq.com/101897>

³⁸ <http://aranews.net/2016/10/isis-arrests-dozens-people-accused-burning-headquarters-mosul/>

³⁹ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-mosul-civilians-idUSKCN12R2HO> ; <http://www.wsj.com/articles/iraq-offensive-unleashes-ales-of-islamic-state-brutality-1477936847>

⁴⁰ <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/29/world/middleeast/isis-battle-mosul-human-shields.html> ; <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-iraq-islamic-state-idUKKCN12Q2VU> ; <http://www.wsj.com/articles/isis-herds-civilians-to-mosul-as-human-shields-1477675640> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/11/iraq-situation-report-october-26.html> ; https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/islamic-state-militants-are-kidnapping-thousands-of-people-to-use-as-human-shields/2016/10/27/797c6ee0-9c4a-11e6-b552-b1f85e484086_story.html ; https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/iraqi-forces-advance-into-six-new-neighborhoods-in-east-mosul/2016/11/04/931206a0-a26f-11e6-a44d-cc2898cfab06_story.html ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-mosul-un-idUSKBN12Z1BR>

⁴¹ <http://www.rferl.org/a/erdogan-warns-iraqi-shiite-militias-tal-afar/28083644.html> ; <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/30/world/middleeast/tal-afar-iraq->

- On October 29, Iraqi army and police forces cleared the area of Shora, south of Mosul, as well as southeastern ISIL-held villages along the Zab River.⁴²
 - On October 30, Kurdish Peshmerga forces continued clearing operations in the areas north and northeast of Mosul, and continued their encirclement of the town of Bashiqa, recapturing the villages of Kanona and Rozbayan.⁴³
 - On October 31, ISIL militants reportedly executed 50 deserters at the Ghazlani military base in Mosul. The following day, ISIL executed 180 former Iraqi government employees.⁴⁴
 - On October 31-November 2, Iraqi counterterrorism forces entered the eastern Mosul city limits for the first time in two years, moving into the neighborhood of Gogjali. The forces also captured the Mosul TV Station in eastern Mosul. Iraqi army forces recaptured several villages to the southeast of Mosul, and entered the southeastern neighborhood of Judaya al-Mufti.⁴⁵
2. Kirkuk Governorate:
- On October 21, ISIL militants, using sleeper cells, launched an attack against Kirkuk that began by targeting an “under-construction power station” in the district of Dibis, killing 16 workers. The militants also attacked at least two police stations, a police directorate, two government buildings, and a prison.⁴⁶
 - On October 22, Iraqi and Kurdish forces regained control of Kirkuk’s city center. Clashes between ISIL and security forces killed at least 98 people, mainly civilians, and wounded 80 more.⁴⁷
3. Al Anbar Governorate:
- On October 16, the Iraqi Ministry of Defense announced that Iraqi security forces, with the backing of the US-led Coalition and Iraqi air support, had “cleared the road between Haditha and Baiji.”⁴⁸

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-advance-idUSKBN12V0H5> ; <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-iraq-talafar-idUKKCN12S0PQ> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/11/iraq-situation-report-october-26.html>

⁴² <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/11/iraq-situation-report-october-26.html> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/10/the-campaign-for-mosul-october-29-31.html> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/10/the-campaign-for-mosul-october-25-28.html>

⁴³ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/11/iraq-situation-report-october-26.html> ; <http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/peshmerga-forces-recapture-2-villages-near-bashiqa/>

⁴⁴ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-mosul-un-idUSKBN12Z1BR>

⁴⁵ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/10/the-campaign-for-mosul-october-29-31.html> ; <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/02/world/middleeast/iraq-mosul-isis.html> ; <http://www.latimes.com/world/middleeast/la-fg-iraq-mosul-20161031-story.html> ; <https://www.yahoo.com/news/iraqi-forces-begin-assault-mosul-district-artillery-051028268.html> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-idUSKBN12W3NV> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/11/iraq-situation-report-october-26.html> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/11/the-campaign-for-mosul-november-1-3.html> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/10/the-campaign-for-mosul-october-29-31.html>

⁴⁶ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/10/the-campaign-for-mosul-isis.html> ; <http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/10/21/498830040/in-iraq-isis-attacks-city-of-kirkuk-as-battle-for-mosul-rages> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37761254>

⁴⁷ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-mosul-idUSKCN12M032> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37761254> ; <http://aranews.net/2016/10/isis-attacks-kirkuk-in-attempt-to-delay-hawija-operation-distract-mosul-campaign/>

⁴⁸ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/10/iraq-situation-report-october-12-17-2016.html>

- On October 23, ISIL militants seized control of the town of Rutba, overtaking the mayor's office, neighborhoods, and capturing and executing at least five people.⁴⁹
- 4. Baghdad Governorate:
 - On October 29, an ISIL suicide bomber targeted a Shia procession in the area of al-Mansour in western Baghdad, killing seven people and wounding ten more.⁵⁰
 - On October 30, a car bombing detonated in the northwestern area of Hurriyah in Baghdad, killing three people and wounding 10 more. A second suicide attacker was caught by Iraqi security forces in the northwestern area of al-Utaifiyah.⁵¹
- 5. Salah ad Din Governorate:
 - On October 21, two ISIL militants carried out a suicide bombing at the home of a Popular Mobilization Front leader in al-Mutasim, southeast of Samarra. The attack killed three people, including the PMF leader, and wounded 15 more.⁵²

Other Key Points:

- During the reporting period, the US-led coalition conducted airstrikes in the areas of Baghdadi, Bashir, Haditha, Huwayjah, Kisik, Mosul, Qaim, Qayyarah, Rawah, Rutbah, Sinjar, Sultan Abdullah, and Tal Afar.⁵³
- On October 18, Amnesty International released a report detailing the abuse suffered by Sunni Arab men at the hands of militias and Iraqi security forces.⁵⁴
- On October 20, anonymous sources reported that major leaders of the PMF plan to submit a bill to Iraq's Council of Representatives that would establish the group as a separate and official ISF Group.⁵⁵
- On October 20, the Pentagon announced the death of a US Navy member who was killed in an IED explosion near Mosul.⁵⁶

⁴⁹ <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/10/isil-captures-iraq-town-ratba-mosul-battle-rages-161024191517704.html> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/10/the-campaign-for-mosul-october-24-2016.html> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/10/iraq-situation-report-october-18-25-2016.html>

⁵⁰ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/11/iraq-situation-report-october-26.html>

⁵¹ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/11/iraq-situation-report-october-26.html>

⁵² <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/10/iraq-situation-report-october-18-25-2016.html>

⁵³ See: "US DOD News Release Military Strikes Hit ISIL in Syria, Iraq". *Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve*. News Release No: [975524](#), [976925](#), [978435](#), [980077](#), [981972](#), [982952](#), [983374](#), [985165](#), [986825](#), [988346](#), [989188](#), [990293](#), [990413](#), [990665](#), [992054](#)

⁵⁴ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde14/4962/2016/en/>

⁵⁵ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/10/iraq-situation-report-october-18-25-2016.html>

⁵⁶ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/10/iraq-situation-report-october-18-25-2016.html>

Incident Reports: Syria

SHI 16-0157

Report Date: October 19, 2016

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

Date of Incident: October 18, 2016

Location: al-Sabha, Deir Ez Zor Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: Reported SARG missiles damage mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On October 19, 2016 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that SARG forces “fired missiles” on Omar Bin al-Khattab Mosque in the town of Al Sahba, causing partial damage to the site.⁵⁷ No photographs of damage to the site were available at the time of publication.

For previous incidents involving damage to mosques as a result of ongoing aerial bombardment, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0005** in **Weekly Report 75-76**, **SHI 16-0012** in **Weekly Report 77-78**, **SHI 16-0061** in **Weekly Report 91-92**, **SHI 16-0079** in **Weekly Report 95-96**, **SHI 16-0096** in **Weekly Report 99-100**, and **SHI 16-0106** in **Weekly Report 101-102**.

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor damage to Omar bin al-Khattab Mosque, as well as other heritage sites located in areas subject to aerial bombardment.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

SNHR: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/10/19/government-forces-targeted-omar-bin-al-khattab-mosque-al-sabha-mosque-deir-ez-zour-governorate-october-18/>

⁵⁷ <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/10/19/government-forces-targeted-omar-bin-al-khattab-mosque-al-sabha-mosque-deir-ez-zour-governorate-october-18/>

SHI 16-0158

Report Date: October 20 2016; October 26, 2016

Site Name:

- Othman bin Affan Mosque (مسجد عثمان بن عفان)
- al-Sheikh Mustafa Mosque (مسجد الشيخ مصطفى)
- Grand Tarmala Mosque (مسجد ترملا الكبير)
- Abu Bakr al-Sadiq Mosque (مسجد أبو بكر الصديق)

Date of Incident: October 20, 2016; October 26, 2016

Location:

- Othman bin Affan Mosque - Ma'aret Harma, Idlib Governorate, Syria
- al-Sheikh Mustafa Mosque - al-Sheikh Mustafa, Idlib Governorate, Syria
- Grand Tarmala Mosque - Tarmala, Idlib Governorate, Syria
- Abu Bakr al-Sadiq Mosque - Khan Sheikhoun, Idlib Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosques in Idlib Governorate.

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: Reported SARG airstrikes damage four mosques in Idlib Governorate.

Incident Source and Description:

- Othman bin Affan Mosque (مسجد عثمان بن عفان) - On October 20, 2016 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that SARG airstrikes fired near Othman bin Affan Mosque in the town of Ma'aret Harma, causing damage.⁵⁸ No photographs of the damage were available at the time of publication.
- al-Sheikh Mustafa Mosque (مسجد الشيخ مصطفى) - On October 20, 2016 SNHR reported that SARG forces targeted al-Sheikh Mustafa Mosque in al-Sheikh Mustafa Village, causing damage to the mosque.⁵⁹ No photographs of the damage were available at the time of publication.
- Grand Tarmala Mosque (مسجد ترملا الكبير) - On October 20, 2016 SNHR reported that SARG forces fired missiles on Grand Tarmala Mosque, causing partial damage and rendering the mosque inoperable.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/10/20/government-forces-targeted-othman-bin-affan-mosque-maaret-harma-town-idlib-governorate-october-20/>

⁵⁹ <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/10/20/government-forces-targeted-al-sheikh-mustafa-mosque-al-sheikh-mustafa-village-idlib-governorate-october-20/>

⁶⁰ <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/10/20/government-forces-targeted-tarmala-grand-mosque-tarmala-town-idlib-governorate-october-20/>

- Abu Bakr al-Sadiq Mosque (مسجد أبو بكر الصديق) - On October 26, 2016 SNHR reported that SARG airstrikes fired on Abu Bakr al-Sadiq Mosque in Khan Sheikhoun City, causing damage to the southern front of the mosque and rendering it inoperable.⁶¹

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.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

SNHR:

October 20, 2016: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/10/20/government-forces-targeted-othman-bin-affan-mosque-maaret-harma-town-idlib-governorate-october-20/> ; <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/10/20/government-forces-targeted-al-sheikh-mustafa-mosque-al-sheikh-mustafa-village-idlib-governorate-october-20/> ; <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/10/20/government-forces-targeted-tarmala-grand-mosque-tarmala-town-idlib-governorate-october-20/>
 October 24, 2016: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/10/26/government-forces-targeted-abu-bakr-mosque-khan-sheikhoun-city-idlib-governorate-october-26/>

The White Helmets:

October 20, 2016: <https://www.facebook.com/SyrianCivilDefenceIdlibWhiteHelmets/posts/1082924291806626>
 October 28, 2016: <https://www.facebook.com/SyrianCivilDefenceIdlibWhiteHelmets/photos/pb.1091034280995627/1091033847662337/>

⁶¹ <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/10/26/government-forces-targeted-abu-bakr-mosque-khan-sheikhoun-city-idlib-governorate-october-26/>

Grand Tarmala Mosque (مسجد ترملا الكبير)



Damage to the Grand Tarmala Mosque (SNHR; October 20, 2016)



Damage to the interior of the Grand Tarmala Mosque (The White Helmets; October 20, 2016)



Damage to the interior of the Grand Tarmala Mosque (The White Helmets; October 20, 2016)



Damage to the exterior of the Grand Tarmala Mosque (The White Helmets; October 20, 2016)

Abu Bakr al-Sadiq Mosque (مسجد أبو بكر الصديق)



Damage to Abu Bakr al-Sadiq Mosque (SNHR; October 26, 2016)



Damage to Abu Bakr al-Sadiq Mosque (The White Helmets; October 28, 2016)

SHI 16-0159

Report Date: October 26, 2016

Site Name: Qebtan Mosque (مسجد قبتان)

Date of Incident: October 25, 2016

Location: Qebtan al-Jabal, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: Suspected Russian missiles severely damage mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On October 25, 2016 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that “suspected Russian warplanes” fired on and struck Qebtan Mosque.⁶² The strike caused severe damage and rendered the mosque inoperable.

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

SNHR: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/10/26/suspected-russian-forces-targeted-qebtan-mosque-qebtan-town-aleppo-governorate-october-25/>

⁶² <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/10/26/suspected-russian-forces-targeted-qebtan-mosque-qebtan-town-aleppo-governorate-october-25/>



Damage to the interior of Qebtan Mosque (SNHR; October 25, 2016)

SHI 16-0160

Report Date: October 31, 2016

Site Name:

- Church of Saint Simeon Stylites (كنيسة مار سمعان العمودي)
- Sitt al-Rum (ست الروم)
- Refade (رفاده)
- Teqla (تقلا)
- Batuta (بطوطة)
- Zarzita (زرزيتا)
- Baziher (بازيهر)
- al-Mashhad (مشهد; Kharab il-Meshhed; Meshat; Mashad al-Ruhin)
- Sinhar (سنخار; Sinkhar)
- Sheikh Suleiman (شيخ سليمان)
- Kafr Nabo (كفرنابو)
- Kharab al-Jabal (خراب الجبل)
- Khirbet Sheikh Barakat (خربة الشيخ بركات; Qasr al-Hadid)
- Tell Abu Qalqal (أبو ققل; Abu Abrus)
- Dor Dada (دور دادا)
- al-Qitar (قطار; Tishrin Dam)
- Jebel Kherbet Khalid (جبل خربة خالد; Jebel Khalid)
- Tell Rimalah (تل الرميلة; Rumalah; Rmale)

Date of Incident: Ongoing

Location: Aleppo Governorate, Syria

Site Description:

- Church of Saint Simeon Stylites - This basilica, built in several phases from 388-459 CE, is one of the oldest surviving Byzantine churches in the Near East. The architectural complex atop the hill consists of a basilica (built ca. 476-492 CE), baptistery, monastery (ca. 490 CE), two hostelries (ca. 490 CE and later), and a monumental arch. According to Ross Burns:

“Unlike the later cathedrals of medieval Europe, the great church [basilica] was conceived and executed more or less as a single project over a short space of time. The cruciform church comprising four separate basilica buildings was probably constructed shortly after the death of the ascete, St. Simeon....[who] took up residence on a platform atop a column around the remains of which the great building is centered. Construction of the complex began a few years after St. Simeon’s death (probably spanning AD 476 to 491)....[T]he column and the site of [St. Simeon’s] ascetic deeds was commemorated under imperial patronage, thus encouraging the continuation of the cult of St. Simeon through pilgrimage.”⁶³

⁶³ Burns 2009: 272–273.

The site was fortified when the Byzantines retook the area from the Arabs in the 10th century. It was retaken and sacked by the Hamdanids in 985 CE and subsequently largely abandoned as a monastic-religious center. In 2011, the site of Deir Semaan (including Qalaat Semaan, the Church of St. Simeon Stylites) was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List as one of the "Ancient Villages of Northern Syria."⁶⁴

- Sitt al-Rum - Sitt al-Rum is a small site consisting of a convent and church. The church, Our Lady of the Greeks, dates to the 4th-century CE.⁶⁵ It is almost devoid of decoration and characterized by a single nave design. Sitt al-Rum probably served as the church for the larger site of Refade nearby, which has no church of its own.
- Refade - Refade contains the ruins of many private homes, but no public buildings (e.g. shops, municipal buildings, or churches). Most of the houses are well-preserved, and mostly date to the 6th-century CE.⁶⁶ The ruins of an earlier building contain an inscription dated to 73-74 CE. This is the oldest dated part of a building in northern Syria. A watchtower near the site retains portions of its original walls up to the fourth level.
- Teqla - Teqla is located one kilometer to the southeast of Deir Semaan. It contains the ruins of several houses and two-story villas, as well as a basilica-style church dating to the 5th-century. The remains of a box used to house relics of martyrs are still visible within the church.⁶⁷
- Batuta - Batuta consists of the remains of several houses and churches, include a church dating to the 4th-century. Nearby, there is a villa with an inscription over its entrance dating to 363 CE. To the south, there is a 6th-century church and many private homes from the second and third centuries.⁶⁸
- Zarzita - Zarzita occupies a large area filled with modern houses. The most important structure is a church with a square altar pointing east, instead of the usual apse shape found in many Dead Cities' churches. A recluse's tower stands 2 stories tall 35 m south of the church, and is dated to 500 CE. Elsewhere on the site are the remains of several 6th-century villas and a marketplace.⁶⁹
- Baziher - Baziher (from Beit Zahra, meaning "house of light") consists of the remains of several 6th-century CE villas, a ground press for olive oil, and a square baptismal font in a church dating to the late 4th-century.⁷⁰
- al-Mashhad - Unknown
- Sinhar - Sinhar has remains dating to the 4th to 6th-centuries CE. A single nave chapel decorated with stylized garlands was added in the 6th-century.⁷¹

⁶⁴ <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1348/>

⁶⁵ Burns 2009: 261.

⁶⁶ Ibid: 142.

⁶⁷ Hajjār 1991: 94.

⁶⁸ Ibid: 116.

⁶⁹ Ibid: 161-2.

⁷⁰ Ibid: 116.

⁷¹ Ibid.

- Sheikh Suleiman - Sheikh Suleiman contains the remains of three churches (two of which are relatively well-preserved) and a large tower at the northern end of the settlement. The Church of the Virgin was constructed in the late 5th-century and has a richly decorated apse on its eastern side and a colonnaded porch entrance on its western side with carved stonework. Another church (602 CE) has a basilica plan, with remains of domestic and religious buildings surrounding it.⁷²
- Kafr Nabo - Occupied in pre-Roman times, Kafr Nabo was once sacred to the Near Eastern god Nabo. In the 4th-century CE, a large church was constructed on the site. Elements from the earlier temple to Nabo were incorporated into the church. Scattered around the site are the remains of a stone ciborium, a Latin inscription, two Roman statues (one male, one female), and a Greek inscription on a door lintel.⁷³
- Kharab al Jabal - Details were unavailable at the time of publication.
- Khirbet Sheikh Barakat (Qasr al Hadid) - Sheikh Barakat contains numerous pagan monuments dating to the 1st and 2nd-centuries CE. These include the remains of the foundations of a temple dedicated to Zeus, one of the most important temples in the region. Between 60 and 120 CE, a wall and gate were added to the site.⁷⁴
- Tell Abu Qalqal - This site contains a Sufi Meqam and other Islamic tombs.⁷⁵ Tell Abu Qalqal is a significant archaeological mound with deposits from multiple periods.
- Dor Dada - Unknown
- al-Qitar – Al-Qitar is a significant cliff-top archaeological mound with important Middle and Late Bronze Age deposits (Culican and McClellan 1984; McClellan 1984–85,1986)
- Jebel Kherbet Khalid - This fortress dates to the Hellenistic period and is a rare example of a Greek military outpost in this region. It was established in the 3rd-century BCE and abandoned ca. 70 BCE.⁷⁶
- Tell Rimalah - This site consists of a mound with a lower mound surrounding it, rising 10m above the plain.

Site Date:

- Deir Semaan - Byzantine
- Sitt al-Rum - Roman, Byzantine
- Refade - Roman, Byzantine
- Teqla - Byzantine
- Batuta - Roman, Byzantine
- Zarzita - Byzantine
- Baziher - Byzantine
- al-Mashhad - Unknown

⁷² <http://www.syriaphotoguide.com/home/sheikh-suleiman-شيخ-سليمان/>

⁷³ Loosley 2012: 30, 153.

⁷⁴ <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/damages/eplace.php?placeid=55#>

⁷⁵ <http://www.apsa2011.com/index.php/fr/provinces/alep/monuments/960-aleppo-manbij-2.html>

⁷⁶ Burns 2009: 177.

- Sinhar - Byzantine
- Sheikh Suleiman - Byzantine
- Kafar Nabo - Byzantine
- Kharab al Jabal - Unknown
- Qasr al Hadid - Byzantine
- Tell Abu Qalqal – Islamic, multi-period archaeological mound
- Dor Dada - Unknown
- al-Qitar – Bronze Age
- Jebel Kherbet Khalid - Seleucid
- Tell Rimalah - Unknown

Incident Summary: The DGAM reports ongoing illegal excavation at archaeological sites throughout Aleppo Governorate.

Incident Source and Description: On October 31, 2016, the DGAM reported illegal excavation occurring at archaeological sites across Aleppo Governorate. DGAM representatives reported new damage at Qalaat Semaan, including the collapse of several stones the top of the facade of the southern entrance to the basilica, and a hole in the ground near a column on the western side of the basilica. The DGAM also reported illegal excavation, vandalism, and the reuse of stones for modern buildings at the sites of Sitt al-Rum, Refade, Teqla, Batuta, Zarzita, Baziher, al-Mashhad, Sinhar, Sheikh Suleiman, Kafr Nabo, Kharab al-Jabal, and Khirbet Sheikh Barakat. In the Abu Qalqal area near Manbij, illegal excavation is ongoing at Tell Abu Qalqal and Dor Dada. In the Shemseddin area, illegal excavation with a bulldozer is ongoing at al-Qitar, Jebel Kherbet Khalid, and Tell Rimalah.

Pattern: Illegal Excavation; Reuse of ancient/historic building materials (non-combatants); 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 these sites.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

DGAM: <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2091>

APSA: <http://www.apsa2011.com/index.php/fr/provinces/alep/monuments/960-aleppo-manbij-2.html>

Scholarly:

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

Culican, W. and McClellan, T.L. (1984) "El-Qitar: First Season of Excavations, 1982-83." *Abr-Nahrain*, 22, pp. 29-63.

Hajjār, A. (1991) *The Church of St. Simeon and the Stylite and other archaeological sites in the mountains of Simeon and Halaqa*. Damascus: Sidawi Printing House.

Loosley, E. (2012) *The Architecture and Liturgy of the Bema in Fourth- to-Sixth-Century Syrian Churches*, TSEC 1, Leiden: Brill.

McClellan, T. L. (1984–85). "El-Qitar: Second Season of Excavations 1983–84." *Abr Nahrain* 23 (184–85), pp. 39–72.

_____. (1986) "A Syrian Fortress of the Bronze Age, El-Qitar." *National Geographic Research* 2 (4) (1986), pp. 418–40.

UNESCO: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1348/>

SHI 16-0169

Report Date: October 18, 2016

Site Name: Zeen Musalla (مصلى زين; Zeen prayer area)

Date of Incident: October 17, 2016

Location: Douma, Rif Dimashq Governorate, Syria

Site Description: A *musalla* is a space used by Muslims for prayer, often within or adjacent to a mosque.

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: An alleged SARG airstrike damages a *musalla*.

Incident Source and Description: On October 17, 2016 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that a SARG airstrike damaged Zeen *musalla* in Douma.⁷⁷ Photographs provided by Douma Revolution on Facebook indicate the building is heavily damaged.⁷⁸

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

SNHR: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/10/18/government-forces-targeted-zain-praying-place-douma-city-damascus-suburbs-october-17/>

Douma Revolution:

October 17, 2016: <https://www.facebook.com/Douma.Revolution.2011/photos/pcb.1163662707047976/1163662283714685/>

October 19, 2016: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vL9CgaxToyE>

⁷⁷ <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/10/18/government-forces-targeted-zain-praying-place-douma-city-damascus-suburbs-october-17/>

⁷⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/Douma.Revolution.2011/photos/pcb.1163662707047976/1163662283714685/>



Damage to Zeen Musalla in Douma (Douma Revolution; October 17, 2016)



Damage to Zeen Musalla in Douma (Douma Revolution; October 17, 2016)



Damage to Zeen Musalla in Douma (Douma Revolution; October 17, 2016)



Damage to Zeen Musalla in Douma (Douma Revolution; October 17, 2016)



Damage to Zeen Musalla in Douma (Douma Revolution; October 17, 2016)



Video still of damage to al-Shaheeda Mosque (Amaq News Agency; October 16, 2016)



Video still of damage to the exterior of al-Shaheeda Mosque (Amaq News Agency; October 16, 2016)



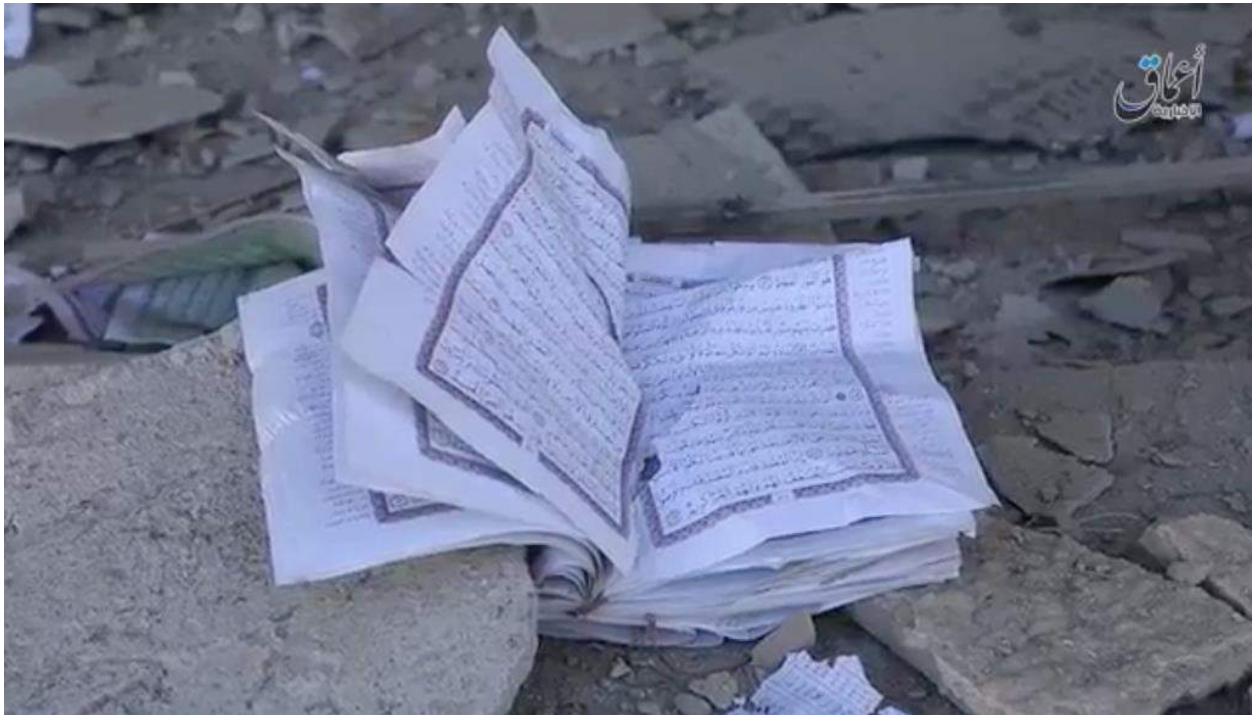
Video still of damage to the interior of al-Shaheeda Mosque (Amaq News Agency; October 16, 2016)



Video still of damage to the interior of al-Shaheeda Mosque (Amaq News Agency; October 16, 2016)



Video still of damage to religious material inside al-Shaheeda Mosque (Amaq News Agency; October 16, 2016)



Video still of damage to religious material inside al-Shaheeda Mosque (Amaq News Agency; October 16, 2016)

IHI 16-0035

Report Date: October 21, 2016

Site Name:

- Mar Gewargis Church (كنيسة مار كوركييس)
- Maryam al-Azra Church (Mar Miriam Church) (كنيسة مريم العذراء)
- Mart Shmone Church (كنيسة مارت شموني)
Syriac Orthodox Cultural Center (Mar Mata Syriac Orthodox Center) (المركز الثقافي للسريان (الأرثوذكس)
- Christian Cemetery

Date of Incident: Between August 2014 - October 2016

Location: Bartella, Ninawa Governorate, Iraq

Site Description: The village of Bartella is one of the oldest Christian villages in the world.⁸¹ It is known to have at least four churches.⁸²

- Mart Shmone Church - According to the LA Times, Mart Shmone Church was once, “an elegant place of worship, with octagonal marble columns and delicate stone filigree. Its courtyard was presided over by a statue of Patriarch Yacoub the Third, an important figure in the Syriac Orthodox Church who hailed from Bartella.”⁸³
- Christian Cemetery - The Christian cemetery is described as being adjacent to Mart Shmone Church.
- Syriac Orthodox Cultural Center - The cultural center is described as being adjacent to Mart Shmone Church.

Site Date:

- Mar Gewargis Church - built circa 1939 CE⁸⁴
- Maryam al-Azra Church - built circa 1890 CE⁸⁵
- Mart Shmone Church - Original building date unknown. Renovated were completed in 1807 CE, rebuilt in 1869 CE, and again renovated in 1971 CE.⁸⁶
- Syriac Orthodox Cultural Center - Unknown
- Christian Cemetery - Unknown

Incident Summary: Video footage and photographs show damage to three churches, a cultural center, and a cemetery in Bartella.

⁸¹ <http://news.nationalpost.com/news/world/freed-from-isil-after-two-years-church-bells-ring-out-again-in-one-of-worlds-oldest-christian-towns> ; <http://www.ishtartv.com/en/viewarticle,35569.html>

⁸² <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2014/06/22/the-tragic-exodus-of-iraq-s-christians.html>

⁸³ <http://www.latimes.com/world/la-fg-iraq-bartella-20161022-snap-story.html>

⁸⁴ <http://www.chaldeansonline.org/village/bartilla.html>

⁸⁵ <http://www.chaldeansonline.org/village/bartilla.html>

⁸⁶ <http://www.chaldeansonline.org/village/bartilla.html>

Incident Source and Description: On October 21, 2014 a coalition of Iraqi and Kurdish forces, backed by the US-led coalition recaptured the majority-Christian village of Bartella from ISIL. In August 2014, the majority of Bartella residents including thousands of Assyrian Christians left the town.⁸⁷ During ISIL's hold over the village through the ensuing battle at least three churches, the local cultural center, and the Christian cemetery were damaged. Other religious symbols in the village have also been damaged.

- Mar Gewargis Church (كنيسة مار كوركيس) - Photographs shared by a local group show extensive fire damage to Mar Gewargis Church.⁸⁸ The structure of the building appears to be intact; however, crosses atop the church are missing.
- Maryam al-Azra Church (كنيسة مريم العذراء) - Video footage from Channel 4 News showed the return of the priest of Maryam al-Azra Church.⁸⁹ The outside of the church has experienced some damage, possibly as a result of explosives. The interior appears to have been ransacked, with widespread material damage. The structure of the building appears to be largely intact.
- Mart Shmone Church (كنيسة مارت شموني) - According to a Reuters report, it appeared that at Mart Shmone Church ISIL militants had “removed crosses from atop the steeple and bell tower ... and defaced the statue of a religious figure...The stone sanctuary is in disarray: the floor is covered in filth, wooden pews are toppled and hymnals are strewn about.”⁹⁰ According to a Telegraph report, ISIL militants removed crosses from the church and burned church scriptures.⁹¹ Photographs of the site show damage to the exterior of the building.
- Syriac Orthodox Cultural Center (المركز الثقافي للسريان الأرثوذكس) - According to Reuters, an adjacent “administration building” (the Syriac Orthodox Cultural Center) had been partially damaged, possibly as a result of the ongoing armed clashes.⁹² Graffiti left by ISIL in the building reads, in Arabic, “Our God is higher than the cross” and “Islamic State is remaining and expanding.”⁹³ Some rooms of the building appeared to have been used as a training center for fighters.⁹⁴
- Christian Cemetery - According to Reuters, in a cemetery adjacent to the Mart Shmone church ISIL militants had “set up a rocket” aimed at advancing Iraqi forces.⁹⁵ In addition, a Sky News reporter states that he was told that all Christian graves had been broken into and the contents of each grave stolen.⁹⁶

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

⁸⁷ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-bartella-idUSKCN12L2HU>

⁸⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/BartellaCafe-120366974674984/>

⁸⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PezrgvJVKPs>

⁹⁰ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-bartella-idUSKCN12L2HU>

⁹¹ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/10/22/near-mosul-church-bells-ring-out-in-a-christian-town-freed-from/>

⁹² <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-bartella-idUSKCN12L2HU>

⁹³ <http://www.latimes.com/world/la-fg-iraq-bartella-20161022-snap-story.html> ; <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/more-iraqi-christian-towns-liberated-islamic-state-control-1587828#>

⁹⁴ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-bartella-idUSKCN12L2HU>

⁹⁵ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-bartella-idUSKCN12L2HU>

⁹⁶ <http://news.sky.com/video/inside-a-town-liberated-from-islamic-state-fighters-10629509>

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

AFP/Twitter: <https://twitter.com/AFP/status/790792764187226112>

Al Hurra: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ggs1zRZUjF0>

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Aramaic: <https://www.facebook.com/Aramaic2016/posts/1171410269614196>

Barely Net: <http://barely.net/index.php?topic=61853.0>

Bartella Cafe: https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1311120988932904

Bas News: <http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/iraq/306500>

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Christian Post: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/mosul-offensive-archbishop-of-erbil-at-least-2-christian-villages-now-liberated-interview-171027/>

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<http://www.christiantoday.com/article/inside.bartella.the.historic.christian.town.liberated.from.isis/98792.htm>

CNN: <http://www.cnn.com/2014/06/18/world/meast/iraq-christians/>

The Daily Beast: <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2014/06/22/the-tragic-exodus-of-iraq-s-christians.html>

Daily Mail:
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3866364/Church-bells-ring-time-TWO-year-Iraqi-army-fighters-liberate-town-ISIS-jihadis-launch-diversionary-suicide-attacks-slow-advance-Mosul.html>

Financial Times: <https://www.ft.com/content/87c2fe78-98e0-11e6-8f9b-70e3cabccfae>

France 24: <http://www.france24.com/en/20161023-video-iraqi-troops-liberate-christian-town-bartella>

International Business Times: <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/more-iraqi-christian-towns-liberated-islamic-state-control-1587828#>

Iraqi Christian Relief Council: <https://twitter.com/iraqichristian/status/790246527025360896>

Ishtar TV: <http://www.ishartv.com/en/viewarticle,38056.html>

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<https://twitter.com/jrug/status/790247599769022468>

LA Times: <http://www.latimes.com/world/la-fg-iraq-bartella-20161022-snap-story.html>

Mosul Eye:

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National Post: <http://news.nationalpost.com/news/world/freed-from-isil-after-two-years-church-bells-ring-out-again-in-one-of-worlds-oldest-christian-towns>

NPU: <https://twitter.com/NinevehPU/status/789459886815969280>

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Rudaw: <http://rudaw.net/english/middleeast/iraq/231020161>

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

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October 28, 2016:

<https://www.facebook.com/shlamafoundation/videos/1017775901666835/>

SOS Chrétiens Orient: <https://twitter.com/SOSCdOrient/status/789971248734408704>

Suroyo TV: <https://twitter.com/SuroyoTV/status/789838404678721536>

Telegraph: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/10/22/near-mosul-church-bells-ring-out-in-a-christian-town-freed-from/>

Washington Post: https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/new-kurdish-offensive-opens-on-mosuls-north-as-iraqi-forces-push-from-the-east/2016/10/20/19092040-9645-11e6-9cae-2a3574e296a6_story.html

Mar Gewargis Church (كنيسة مار كوركيس)



Fire damage and the removal of crosses at Mar Gewargis Church (Bartella Cafe; October 25, 2016)



An
Exterior wall of Mar Gewargis Church following the recapture of Bartella (Bartella Cafe; October 25, 2016)



Iraqi soldiers stand outside Mar Gewargis Church (Bartella Cafe; October 24, 2016)



A statue of the Virgin Mary outside of Mar Gewargis Church (Ishtar TV; October 29, 2011)



The area outside Mar Gewargis Church, with the statue of the Virgin Mary now not visible (Bartella Cafe; October 25, 2016)



The gate as it stands today, a makeshift cross and a flag visible atop Mar Gewargis Church (Bartella Cafe; October 25, 2016)



Iraqi soldiers stand atop the roof of Mar Gewargis Church (Bartella Cafe; October 25, 2016)



Some rubble is seen to the right of the gate of Mar Gewargis Church, the statue of the Virgin Mary is also missing (Bartella Cafe; October 25, 2016)



Another view of the grounds of Mar Gewargis Church showing rubble to the right of the gate (Bartella Cafe; October 25, 2016)



The burned altar inside Mar Gewargis Church (Bartella Cafe; October 25, 2016)



Men place a makeshift cross above Mar Gewargis Church (Bartella Cafe; October 25, 2016)



An Iraqi soldier stands with a flag atop Mar Gewargis Church (Bartella Cafe; October 24, 2016)

Maryam al-Azra Church (كنيسة مار مريم العذراء)



Video still of extensive damage to the exterior of Maryam al-Azra Church (Channel 4; October 23, 2016)



Video still of bullet holes and fire damage outside Maryam al-Azra Church (Channel 4; October 23, 2016)



The interior of Maryam al-Azra Church as it stands today (Bartella Cafe; October 25, 2016)



Video still of interior damage at Maryam al-Azra Church (Channel 4; October 23, 2016)



Damage to the interior of Maryam al-Azra Church (Bartella Cafe; October 25, 2016)



Damage to the altar at Maryam al-Azra Church (Jonathan Rugman/Twitter; October 23, 2016)



Video still of the priest of Maryam al-Azra Church removing religious texts (Channel 4; October 23, 2016)



Video still of the priest of Maryam al-Azra Church removing religious texts (Channel 4; October 23, 2016)



Video still of the priest of Maryam al-Azra Church removing religious texts (Channel 4; October 23, 2016)

Mart Shmone Church (كنيسة مارت شموني)



Mart Shmone Church following the recapturing of Bartella (Daily Mail/Reuters; October 24, 2016)



Mart Shmone Church following the recapturing of Bartella (Bartella Cafe; October 25, 2016)



Another view of Mart Shmone Church following the recapture of Bartella (BBC; October 24, 2016)



A close photo of the bell tower of Mart Shmone Church, showing that the cross is missing (Daily Mail/Reuters; October 24, 2016)



Iraqi forces stand on Mart Shmone Church (Bartella Cafe; October 25, 2016)



A damaged altar inside Mart Shmone Church (Baretly.net; October 22, 2016)



The same damaged altar inside Mart Shmone Church, extensive fire damage is clear (Twitter; October 23, 2016)



A damaged altar inside Mart Shmone Church (Baretly.net; October 22, 2016)



Mart Shmone Church as it appears today (Daily Mail/EPA; October 24, 2016)



Damage to the interior of Mart Shmone (Christians of Iraq/Twitter/Al Sumaria News; October 21, 2016)



A soldier inspects the damage inside Mart Shmone Church (BBC/Reuters; October 23, 2016)



Church leaders and Iraqi forces inside Mart Shmone Church (Christian Today/ADFA; October 24, 2016)



A soldier stands inside Mart Shmone Church (Bartella Cafe; October 22, 2016)



Severe damage to Mart Shmone Church (Barely.net; October 22, 2016)



A member of the Iraqi Special Forces inspects a Christian religious text inside Mart Shmone Church (Reuters; October 21, 2016)



Damage to the interior of Mart Shmone Church (Telegraph; October 21, 2016)



Religious material litters the floor of Mart Shmone Church (Josie Ensor/Twitter; October 23, 2016)



The damaged interior of Mart Shmone Church (The Telegraph; October 24, 2016)



A soldier flashes a victory side inside the damaged Mart Shmone Church (Reuters; October 22, 2016)



Interior damage and what appears to be an entrance to a tunnel inside Mart Shmone Church (Baretly.net; October 22, 2016)



Severe damage to Mart Shmone Church (Baretly.net; October 22, 2016)



A priest inspects damaged religious material at Mart Shmone Church (Baretly.net; October 22, 2016)



A priest inspects damaged religious material at Mart Shmone Church (Baretly.net; October 22, 2016)



A priest inspects damaged religious material at Mart Shmone Church (Baretly.net; October 22, 2016)



A priest inspects damaged religious material at Mart Shmone Church (Baretly.net; October 22, 2016)



Severe damage to religious materials inside Mart Shmone Church (Barely.net; October 22, 2016)



The removing of religious materials at Mart Shmone Church (Christian Today/ADFA; October 24, 2016)



Religious materials are moved at Mart Shmone Church (Baretly.net; October 22, 2016)



Religious materials are removed from Mart Shmone Church (Baretly.net; October 22, 2016)



Religious materials are removed from Mart Shmone Church (Barely.net; October 22, 2016)



Religious materials are carried out of Mart Shmone Church (Christians of Iraq/Twitter/Al Sumaria News; October 23, 2016)



Religious materials are removed from Mart Shmone Church (Baretly.net; October 22, 2016)



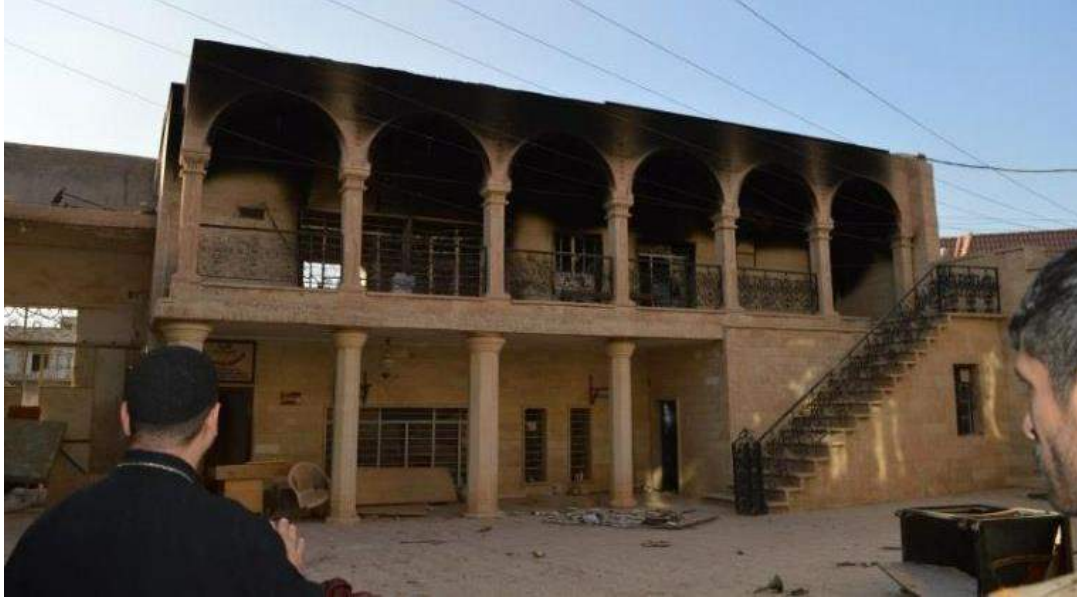
Religious materials are removed from Mart Shmone Church (Baretly.net; October 22, 2016)



Religious materials are removed from Mart Shmone Church (Barely.net; October 22, 2016)



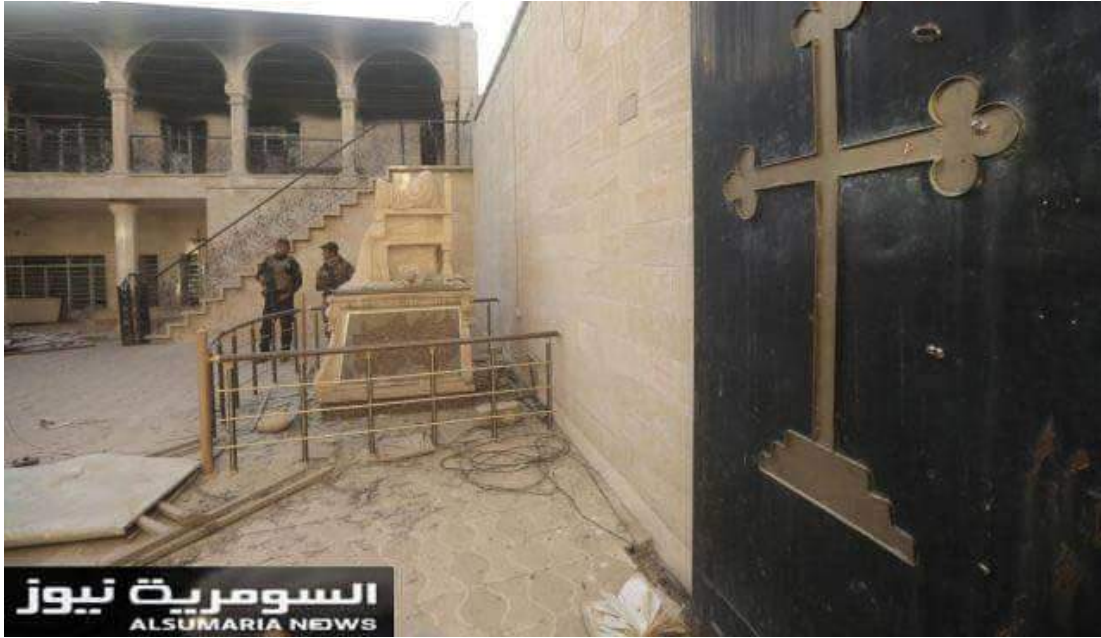
Damage to the complex of Mart Shmone Church (Josie Ensor/Twitter; October 23, 2016)



Damage to the complex of Mart Shmone Church (Christian Today/ADFA; October 24, 2016)



Damage to the complex of Mart Shmone Church (Barely.net; October 22, 2016)



Damage to the complex of Mart Shmone Church (AlSumaria News/Aramaic السريان; October 21, 2016)



A soldier next to a defaced religious statue outside of Mart Shmone Church (Daily Mail/Getty Images; October 24, 2016)



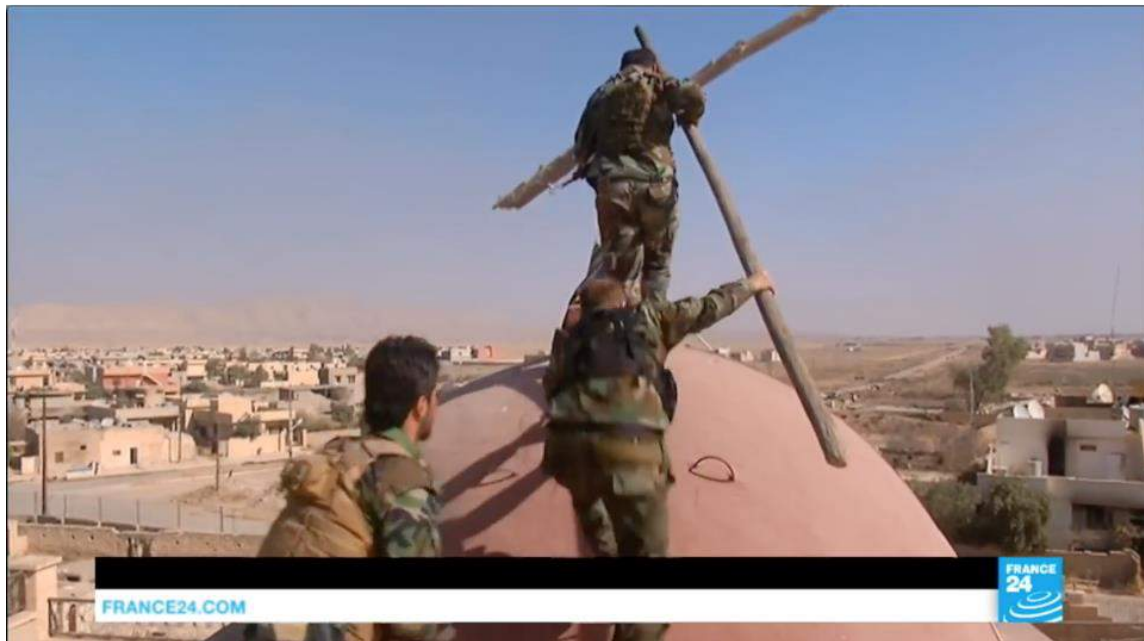
The defaced statue at Mart Shmone Church compound (Baretly.net; October 22, 2016)



Detail of the defaced statue at Mart Shmone Church (Suroyo TV; October 22, 2016)



A soldier attempts to repair the defaced statue at Mart Shmone Church (Christians of Iraq/Twitter/Al Sumaria News; October 21, 2016)



Video still of members of the Christian Nineveh Plain Forces raising a makeshift cross atop Mart Shmone Church (France 24; October 23, 2016)



An Iraqi flag flies above Mart Shmone Church (ALSumaria News/Aramaic السريان; October 21, 2016)



A cross and flag atop Mart Shmone Church (Barely.net; October 22, 2016)

Syriac Orthodox Cultural Center (المركز الثقافي للسريان الأرثوذكس)



Damage to the Syriac Orthodox Cultural Center (October 24, 2016)



A view of the damaged Syriac Orthodox Cultural Center (Telegraph; October 22, 2016)



Damage to the Syriac Orthodox Cultural Center (Baretly.net; October 22, 2016)



© Getty Images

ISIL graffiti on the wall inside Syriac Orthodox Cultural Center (Daily Mail/Getty Images; October 24, 2016)



ISIL graffiti inside the Syriac Orthodox Cultural Center (Mosul Eye; October 24, 2016)



Burned and damaged religious books in Bartella (Daily Mail/EPA; October 24, 2016)



© Getty Images

A broken statue of the Virgin Mary in the town of Bartella (Daily Mail/Getty Images; October 24, 2016)



The same statue on the ground in Bartella, it's head replaced (The Telegraph; October 24, 2016)

Christian Cemetery



An Iraqi fighter stands at a damaged Christian cemetery in Bartella (Reuters; October 21, 2016)



A priest examines the damage to a Christian cemetery in Bartella (Bartella Cafe; October 25, 2016)



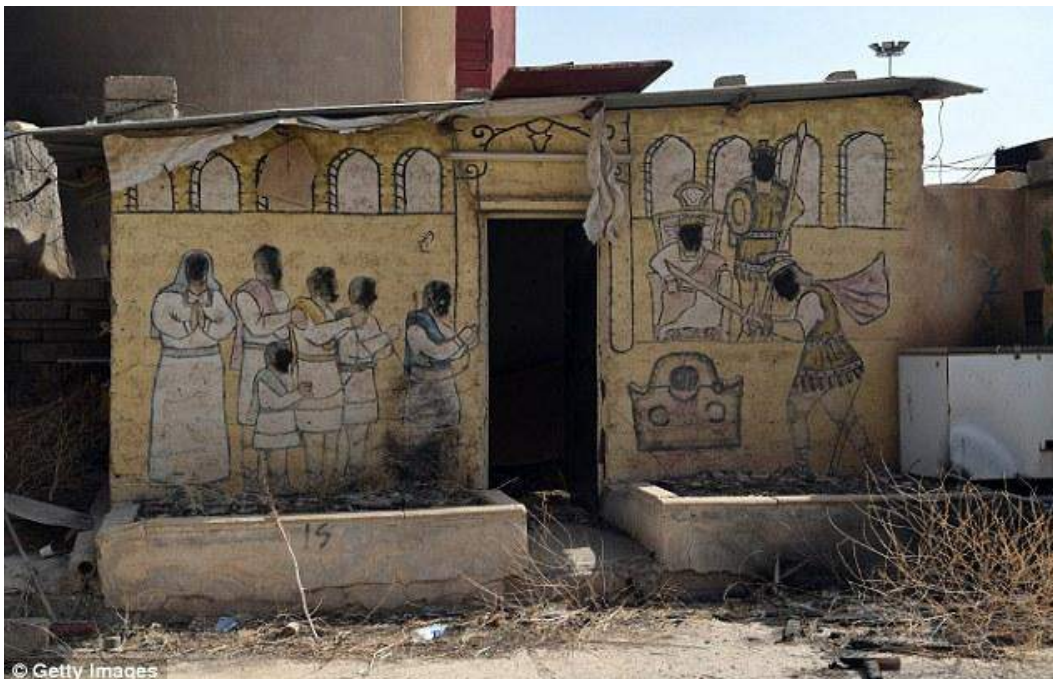
Religious men and soldiers examine the damage to Christian cemetery in Bartella (Bartella Cafe; October 25, 2016)



A rocket positioned inside the Christian cemetery in Bartella (Rudaw Arabic; October 24, 2016)



A rocket positioned inside the Christian cemetery in Bartella (Bartella Cafe; October 25, 2016)



The defacement of a religious mural near Mart Shmone Church (Daily Mail/Getty Images; October 24, 2016)



© Getty Images

Detail of a defaced religious mural near Mart Shmone Church (Daily Mail/Getty Images; October 24, 2016)



Defacement of a religious image near Mart Shmone Church (Benjamin Hall/Twitter; October 26, 2016)



Defacement of a religious image in Bartella (Jonathan Rugman/Twitter; October 23, 2016)

IHI 16-0036

Report Date: October 24, 2016

Site Name: al-Khanli Mosque (مسجد الخانلي; al-Khanli Shrine; حسينية الخانلي)

Date of Incident: October 21, 2016

Location: Daquq, Kirkuk Governorate, Iraq

Site Description: Shia mosque located in a residential area of the village.

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: An airstrike damages women's section of mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On October 21, 2016 an airstrike struck and damaged the women's section of al-Khanli Mosque in the village of Daquq. The airstrike reportedly occurred during a funeral and killed at least 13 women and children, and injured another 45 people.⁹⁷ Other reports labeled the strike as hitting a "funeral procession," without mentioning any damage to a mosque.⁹⁸ According to Azad Jabari, the Head of the Security Committee at the Kirkuk Provincial Council, the airstrike was carried out by the Iraqi Air Force and the strike on the mosque was due to a miscommunication about ISIL positions. Mr. Jabari included that Kurdish Peshmerga positions were also struck as a result of the airstrike.⁹⁹

On October 23, 2016 Human Rights Watch called on the United States to investigate the airstrike on the mosque. The same day the US-led coalition stated that it "definitively determined" that it was not responsible for the attack.¹⁰⁰ The US-led coalition website did not report any airstrikes in the area on the date of the airstrike.¹⁰¹

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor damage to al-Khanli Mosque as well as other heritage sites located in areas subject to aerial bombardment.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

⁹⁷ <http://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2016/10/21/490070/Iraq-USled-strike-funeral-Kirkuk-civilians-killed-injured> ; <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/10/24/iraq-investigate-mosque-strike-killed-civilians> ; <http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/isis-terror/iraq-violence-u-s-denies-attacking-mosque-daquq-near-kirkuk-n671601>

⁹⁸ <http://www.newstalk.com/Russia-accuses-USled-coalition-of-war-crimes-in-Iraq>

⁹⁹ <http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/39322d36-4d8e-4a67-a40c-d2aa35ea5cc2/Unidentified-warplane-targets-civilians--HRW-calls-for-investigation>

¹⁰⁰ <http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/isis-terror/iraq-violence-u-s-denies-attacking-mosque-daquq-near-kirkuk-n671601>

¹⁰¹ <http://www.inherentresolve.mil/Portals/1/20161021%20Strike%20Release%20Final.pdf>

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Press TV: <http://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2016/10/21/490070/Iraq-USled-strike-funeral-Kirkuk-civilians-killed-injured>

USA Today: <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2016/10/24/us-led-coalition-denies-bombing-iraqi-funeral-procession/92665030/>

Voice of Iraq (Sot al-Iraq):

<http://www.sotaliraq.com/latestarticles.php?id=217895#axzz4NwNcJiNe>



Damage inside al-Khanli Mosque following the airstrike (Iraqi al-Ghadeer/Press TV; October 21, 2016)

IHI 16-0037

Report Date: October 29, 2016

Site Name: Unnamed Mosque

Date of Incident: October 29, 2016

Location: Hammam al-Aleel, Ninawa Governorate, Iraq

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: Reported US-led coalition destroys mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On October 29, 2016 ISIL-affiliated Amaq News Agency released a video that reportedly showed a heavily damaged mosque in the city of Hammam al-Aleel. According to Amaq, the mosque was destroyed by a US-led coalition airstrike. Religious material is seen in the rubble.

The Iraqi Air Force and the US-led coalition has previously carried out airstrikes against mosques in Iraq in attempts to target ISIL militants. ISIL militants have also been known to hide weapon caches inside mosques, as well as reuse the buildings for military purposes. For previous instances of damage caused to mosques by targeted airstrikes see **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0008 in Weekly Report 83-84, IHI 16-0009 in Weekly Report 85-86, IHI 16-0014 in Weekly Report 93-94, IHI 16-0016 in Weekly Report 95-96, IHI 16-0024 in Weekly Report 103-104.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Amaq News Agency: <https://jkikki.de/2016/10/29/رکام-مسجد-قصفه-الطيران-الأمريكي-في-بلد/>



Video still of damage to religious materials (Amaq News Agency; October 29, 2016)



Video still of an ISIL member gesturing to the destroyed mosque (Amaq News Agency; October 29, 2016)



Video still of the remains of a mosque, possibly the minaret and/or the mosque's speaker system (Amaq News Agency; October 29, 2016)



Mosque prior to damage (DigitalGlobe; October 21, 2016)



Severe damage to the Mosque (DigitalGlobe; October 30, 2016)