

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

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December 2017 Monthly Report

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

## Other Key Points

### Syria

- Aleppo Governorate
  - A reported SARG or Russian airstrike damages the Jub Abyad Mosque in Jub Abyad, Aleppo Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0225**
  - Reported Russian airstrikes damage Tal al-Daman Mosque in Tal al-Daman, Aleppo Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0227**
- Daraa Governorate
  - Future Horizons and Hello Trust clean up debris at Bosra al-Sham in Bosra al-Sham, Daraa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0230**
- Deir ez-Zor
  - A reported SARG airstrike damages the Fatima al-Zahra Mosque in al-Bukamal, Deir ez-Zor Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0222**
  - Reported SARG shelling damages al-Hashish Mosque in al-Sha'fa, Deir ez-Zor Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0223**
  - DigitalGlobe satellite imagery reveals damage to exposed architecture at Mari, Tell Hariri, Deir ez-Zor Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0224**
  - DigitalGlobe satellite imagery reveals damage to al-Naqawi Mosque in Subaykhan, Deir ez-Zor Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0229**
  - A newly released photograph shows the condition of the Church of the Virgin Mary in Deir ez-Zor, Deir ez-Zor Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0234**
  - An airstrike damages al-Nab'iya Mosque in Salhiya, Deir ez-Zor Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0235**
- Homs Governorate
  - An IED damages al-Kabir Mosque in Taldou, Homs Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0233**
- Idlib Governorate
  - Reported Russian shelling destroys Zarzour Village Mosque in Zarzour, Idlib Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0226**
- Raqqa Governorate
  - Newly released photographs show the condition of the Raqqa Museum and its collection in Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0098 UPDATE**
  - Newly released photographs show the condition of al-Kabir Mosque in Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0114 UPDATE**
  - Newly released photographs show the condition of Heraqla Archaeological Storage Facility in Heraqla, Raqqa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0228**
  - Repair work is being carried out at Qalaat Ja'bar, in Ja'bar, Raqqa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0231**
- Rif Dimashq Governorate
  - Reported SARG artillery damages Zamalka al-Kabir Mosque in Zamalka, Rif Dimashq Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0232**

### Iraq

- Dohuk Governorate
  - Newly released photographs show damage to Derbon Cemetery in Derbon, Dohuk Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 17-0084**
- Ninawa Governorate
  - New video footage shows clean-up and reconstruction of the Eastern Preparatory School in Mosul, Ninawa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 17-0082**

- Newly released photographs show damage to the British Cemetery in Mosul, Ninawa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 17-0083**
- Newly released photographs show the condition of Hatra, Ninawa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 17-0085**

## Libya

- Cyrenaica
  - Newly released photographs show damage to Qasr al-Manar, in Benghazi, Cyrenaica **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0036 UPDATE**
  - Newly released photographs show the stabilization of Qasr al-Birka in Benghazi, Cyrenaica. **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0038 UPDATE**
  - The Libyan Department of Antiquities (DoA) relocates items from the storeroom at Berenice in Benghazi, Cyrenaica. **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0041**
  - Al-Faakat, a Roman-era settlement in Benghazi, Cyrenaica, has been damaged by urban encroachment. **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0042**
  - A Roman-era stone sculpture is discovered in Ptolemais, Tolmeitha, Cyrenaica. **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0043**
  - Two men have been arrested for smuggling artifacts from Cyrene, in Shahat, Cyrenaica. **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0044**
  - Illegal excavation is ongoing at the Western Necropolis in Cyrene, Shahat, Cyrenaica. **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0045**

## Military and Political Context

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

1. Rif Dimashq Governorate:
  - On December 2, Syrian state television and the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported that Israeli missiles struck a military position in the town of Kiswa, near Damascus, resulting in “material losses” at the site.<sup>2</sup>
  - On December 4, Syrian state television reported that Israel fired missiles at a Syrian military facility near the village of Jamraya, north of Damascus.<sup>3</sup>
  - On December 4, reported SARG and Russian airstrikes struck “heavily crowded residential areas” in the Syrian opposition-held towns of Hamouriya, Misraba, and Arbin in the besieged area Eastern Ghouta, killing at least 17 people.<sup>4</sup>
  - On December 18, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) warned that life had become “impossible” for the 400,000 people “trapped” in Eastern Ghouta, as food has become increasingly scarce. Opposition-held areas of Eastern Ghouta remain under bombardment by SARG forces, despite being included in a regime-established truce.<sup>5</sup>
  - On December 27, medical evacuations began in Eastern Ghouta, evacuating “four critically-ill patients” with another planned 25 evacuations.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-attack/israeli-missiles-hit-military-post-near-damascus-syrian-state-tv-idUSKBN1DW081>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-israel/israeli-missiles-target-syrian-military-facility-near-damascus-syrian-state-media-idUSKBN1DY2SP>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-ghouta/syrian-russian-jets-bomb-residential-areas-in-eastern-ghouta-witnesses-monitor-idUSKBN1DY011>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-42394259>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-42489529> ; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-aid/icrc-hopes-to-resume-medical-evacuations-in-syrias-ghouta-idUSKBN1EM164>

- On December 29, Syrian opposition forces began evacuations from the town of Beit Jin following a deal with the Syrian regime.<sup>7</sup>
2. Deir ez-Zor Governorate:
    - On December 3, Syrian-Kurdish YPG fighters aligned with the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) announced that they had “fully captured” the eastern countryside of Deir ez-Zor from ISIS with assistance from both Russian and US-led Coalition airstrikes.<sup>8</sup>
    - On December 6, Russian airstrikes reportedly killed 21 people in a village on the eastern side of the Euphrates river. The aerial bombardment was reportedly in support of the SDF as they attempted to recapture areas from ISIS.<sup>9</sup>
    - On December 11, the SDF reportedly formed a “joint military center” with the Iraqi army to protect the Syria-Iraq border in Deir ez-Zor Governorate.<sup>10</sup>
  3. Hama Governorate:
    - On December 10, the Syrian army and Iranian-backed militias, backed by Russian aerial bombardment, increased military operations against Syrian opposition forces in Hama Governorate, as part a strategic plan to reach opposition-held Idlib Governorate. The Syrian army reported that they had captured the villages of Bilal, Rujum, and Um Turayka on the border with Idlib.<sup>11</sup>
    - On December 26, Syrian armed forces reported that Hayat Tahrir al-Sham had downed a Syrian military jet, killing the pilot.<sup>12</sup>
    - On December 31, a Russian helicopter en route to Hama airport crashed, killing both pilots. Russia identified the cause of the crash as a technical error.<sup>13</sup>
  4. Idlib Governorate:
    - On December 20, SOHR reported that either SARG or Russian aerial bombardment killed at least 19 people, including seven children, and wounded 25 more in the opposition-held town of Maar Shureen.<sup>14</sup>
    - On December 29, clashes between pro-regime and opposition forces in the village of Abu Dali killed dozens.<sup>15</sup>
  5. Homs Governorate:
    - On December 5, a bus bombing killed eight people and injured 16 more in the city of Homs. ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria/syrian-rebels-depart-enclave-in-south-as-army-gains-in-north-idUSKBN1EN10Z>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-ypg/syrian-kurdish-ypg-says-seized-eastern-region-from-islamic-state-idUSKBN1DX0GB> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/12/back-to-west-russia-shifts-its-air.html>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-airstrikes/russian-air-strikes-kill-21-in-eastern-syria-monitor-idUSKBN1E0216>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-sdf/u-s-backed-syrian-forces-iraqi-army-coordinate-at-border-sdf-idUSKBN1E50RQ>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-idlib/syrian-army-and-iranian-backed-militias-push-towards-idlib-province-idUSKBN1E500R>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-airplane/syria-says-military-jet-downed-in-northern-hama-pilot-killed-idUSKBN1EK16K>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-russia-helicopte/russian-military-helicopter-crashes-in-syria-killing-two-agencies-idUSKBN1ES0LI>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-idlib/strikes-kill-19-in-rebel-village-in-syrias-idlib-observatory-rescue-service-idUSKBN1EE10J> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-42429876>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria/syrian-rebels-depart-enclave-in-south-as-army-gains-in-north-idUSKBN1EN10Z>

6. Raqqa Governorate:

- On December 7, a “high-level defector” from the SDF recanted his original account regarding the number of ISIS militants allowed to leave Raqqa during the final military operations in the city. According to the defector, thousands of ISIS militants were allowed to leave Raqqa under a secret, U.S.-approved deal.<sup>17</sup>

Other Key Points:

- During the reporting period, the US-led coalition conducted airstrikes in the areas of al-Bukamal, Shaddadi, and Tanf.<sup>18</sup>
- During the reporting period, Russian aerial bombardment increased over Idlib, Aleppo, and Hama Governorates and continued over Rif Dimashq and Deir ez Zor Governorates.<sup>19</sup>
- On December 1, the Syrian government delegation quit UN-led peace talks in Geneva, and vowed not to return unless representatives of the Syrian opposition retracted a statement demanding that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad have no future role in any interim post-conflict government.<sup>20</sup>
- On December 1, Kurdish-led authorities held local elections in Kurdish-held territory in northern Syria.<sup>21</sup>
- On December 10, the Syrian government delegation returned to talks in Geneva. This is the eighth round of talks under UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura.<sup>22</sup>
- On December 11, Russian President Vladimir Putin visited Hmeimim Air Base in Latakia Governorate where he ordered a “partial withdrawal” of Russian troops from Syria. Russia will, however, maintain a naval and air base in Syria capable of striking “insurgents.”<sup>23</sup>
- On December 19, the UN Security Council approved the delivery of humanitarian aid to Syria for an additional year.<sup>24</sup>
- On December 22, the Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu stated that a total of 48,000 Russian troops took part in Russian military campaigns in Syria.<sup>25</sup>
- On December 23, Syrian opposition group Maghawir al-Thawra (MaT), partnered with US-led Coalition forces, conducted several clearance operations to drive ISIS from the Hamad Desert.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-syria-homs/bus-bomb-kills-eight-in-syrias-homs-city-state-media-idUKKBN1DZ0Y8>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-defector/defector-says-thousands-of-islamic-state-fighters-left-raqqa-in-secret-deal-idUSKBN1E12AP>

<sup>18</sup> See: “US DOD News Release Military Strikes Hit ISIS in Syria, Iraq”. *Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve*. News Release No: [1393099](https://www.dod.mil/Operations-Reports/News-Releases/2017/12/1393099), [1391889](https://www.dod.mil/Operations-Reports/News-Releases/2017/12/1391889), [1386723](https://www.dod.mil/Operations-Reports/News-Releases/2017/12/1386723), [1397622](https://www.dod.mil/Operations-Reports/News-Releases/2017/12/1397622), [1398774](https://www.dod.mil/Operations-Reports/News-Releases/2017/12/1398774), [1403192](https://www.dod.mil/Operations-Reports/News-Releases/2017/12/1403192)

<sup>19</sup> <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/12/back-to-west-russia-shifts-its-air.html>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-talks/syrian-government-negotiator-quits-geneva-talks-says-may-not-return-idUSKBN1DV4U8> ; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-envoy/after-quitting-talks-syrian-government-envoy-blames-saudis-idUSKBN1DV5FH>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-kurds/syrian-kurds-hold-local-elections-press-on-with-autonomy-plans-idUSKBN1DV4XE>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-talks/syrian-government-returns-to-geneva-talks-western-envoys-skeptical-idUSKBN1E40CW>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-42307365> ; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-russia-putin/putin-in-syria-says-mission-accomplished-orders-partial-russian-pull-out-idUSKBN1E50X1> ; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-russia-withdrawa/russia-will-keep-bases-in-syria-to-strike-at-insurgents-kremlin-idUSKBN1E610F> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/12/back-to-west-russia-shifts-its-air.html>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.stripes.com/news/middle-east/un-approves-cross-border-aid-to-rebel-areas-in-syria-1.503072>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-russia-syria-military/russia-says-48000-of-its-troops-took-part-in-syria-campaign-idUSKBN1EG1EQ>

- On December 26, 40 Syrian opposition groups released a statement rejecting Russian-proposed peace talks accusing Russia of failing to pressure Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to end the conflict.<sup>27</sup>
- On December 29, US Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis stated that he anticipated a larger US civilian presence in Syria, including diplomats and contractors.<sup>28</sup>

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

1. As Sulaymaniyah Governorate:
  - On December 18, Kurdish protesters set fire to the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), Gorran and Kurdistan Islamic Union (KIU or Komal) offices in Sulaymaniyah. The protesters called for the executive and legislative branches of the Kurdish Regional Government to step down citing years of unpaid wages in the public sector.<sup>29</sup>
  - On December 19, clashes between security forces and protesters in the town of Ranya left three dead and 80 other wounded.<sup>30</sup> NRT independent television station was raided by Kurdish secret police (*asayish*) and temporarily shut down.<sup>31</sup> Korek telecom corporation temporarily suspended cellular and internet service and allegedly Facebook and Twitter were blocked for a period of time.
2. Kirkuk Governorate:
  - During the reporting period, a Kurdish militia group calling themselves “the bearers of White Flags,” led by Sheikh Mujahid Assi (also referenced as Asi Qawali), and alleged volunteer Peshmerga, are operating in pockets around Kirkuk, firing rockets at Tuz Khurmatu and raiding trucks traveling between Kirkuk and Baghdad. Presently little is known about the group, but allegations include that the White Flags have recruited former ISIS militants and/or is being backed by Shiite Popular Mobilization Forces. The most extreme concern is that this group is positioning itself to become a Kurdish ISIS.<sup>32</sup>
  - During the reporting period, two mass graves of Yezidi civilians were discovered in Sinjar (Shingal), Ninawa Governorate by Popular Mobilization Forces.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> <https://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1404527/coalition-partner-forces-clear-isis-caves-in-southern-syria/source/GovDelivery/>

<sup>27</sup> <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/syria-rebels-opposition-reject-russia-proposed-talks-51993674>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-usa/mattis-sees-larger-u-s-civilian-presence-in-syria-idUSKBN1EN1H8>; <http://www.nrttv.com/Details.aspx?jimore=91144>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-kurds-protests/kurdish-protesters-set-fire-to-party-offices-in-northern-iraq-idUSKBN1EC1N8>; <http://www.nrttv.com/EN/Details.aspx?jimore=17967>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-kurds-protests/three-killed-80-wounded-in-protests-in-iraqi-kurdish-town-local-officials-idUSKBN1ED1W1>; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-kurds/opposition-groups-quit-iraqi-kurdish-government-idUSKBN1EE1TC>

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.nrttv.com/en/Details.aspx?jimore=17990>

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.arabnews.com/node/1208661/middle-east#.WiGjatHn6gc>; <http://baghdadtoday.news/news/27370/%D8%B8l#.WiYgogi5-Y>; <https://www.iraqoilreport.com/news/mysterious-militants-raise-new-fears-insurgency-26920/>; <http://www.france24.com/en/video/20171228-video-white-flags-militants-pose-new-threat-iraq>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.iraqnews.com/iraq-war/relics-100-yazidis-found-two-mass-graves-sinjar/>

### 3. Dhi Qar Governorate:

- On December 14, Iraq carried out a mass execution of 38 militants convicted of terrorism offenses. According to the justice ministry, all men were members of ISIS.<sup>34</sup>

#### Other Key Points:

- During the reporting period, the US-led coalition conducted airstrikes in the areas of Asad, Baaj, Baghdadi, Qaim, Qayyarah, Rutbah and Tuz.<sup>35</sup>
- On December 4, Human Rights Watch released a report accusing Iraqi and Kurdish judiciaries of violating the rights of suspected ISIS members with “flawed trials, arbitrary detentions under harsh conditions and broad prosecutions.”<sup>36</sup>
- On December 7, tunnels and over 500 rockets, formerly belonging to the Islamic State, were found in Tal Afar and Anbar by Iraqi Security Forces.<sup>37</sup>
- On December 8, the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad expanded its temporary movement restriction to include movements both inside and outside the international zone in response to the recent announcement that the United States recognizes Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.<sup>38</sup>
- On December 9, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi announced at a press conference in Baghdad that the war with ISIS in Iraq is over, as Iraqi military forces had seized control of the total border between Iraq and Syria. On December 11, Muqtada al-Sadr urged the Shiite Popular Mobilization Forces under his control to return state-issued weapons back to the government and to hand over some territory to other branches of Iraq’s security forces following the victory.<sup>39</sup> The following day, an Iraqi military parade took place in Baghdad’s Green Zone.<sup>40</sup>
- On December 20, the “leading Kurdish opposition movement,” known as Gorran, withdrew its ministers from the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and its member Yousif Mohamed resigned as parliament speaker following protests and clashes. Another opposition party, Kurdistan Islamic Group (Komal), also withdrew from the KRG.<sup>41</sup>

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

##### 1. Tripolitania:

- On December 17, unknown gunmen kidnapped and killed the mayor of Misrata as he left the airport.<sup>42</sup>
- On December 26, a Libyan crude oil pipeline was blown up. According to a spokesman of an “eastern Libyan task force,” that protects the oilfields in the area, the explosion was likely the result of a terror attack.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-42356155>

<sup>35</sup> See: “US DOD News Release Military Strikes Hit ISIS in Syria, Iraq”. *Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve*. News Release No: [1393099](#), [1391889](#), [1386723](#), [1397622](#), [1398774](#), [1403192](#)

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-report/iraq-accused-of-violating-due-process-for-islamic-state-suspects-idUSKBN1DZ0AQ>

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.iraqnews.com/iraq-war/500-islamic-state-rockets-tunnels-found-tal-afar-anbar/>

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.osac.gov/Pages/ContentReportDetails.aspx?cid=22877>

<sup>39</sup> <https://apnews.com/18dca83bcbcb4127ac0805ebc5d6be54/Iraqi-Shiite-cleric-urges-fighters-to-disarm-after-IS-defeat>

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-42291985> ; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-parade/iraq-holds-victory-parade-after-defeating-islamic-state-idUSKBN1E407Z> ; <https://apnews.com/18dca83bcbcb4127ac0805ebc5d6be54/Iraqi-Shiite-cleric-urges-fighters-to-disarm-after-IS-defeat>

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-kurds/opposition-groups-quit-iraqi-kurdish-government-idUSKBN1EE1TC>

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-42395678>

- On December 26, the UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) announced that families displaced from the town of Tawergha would be allowed to return home following the expelling of the residents in retaliation for the area's support of Moammar Ghaddafi.<sup>44</sup>

Other Key Points:

- On December 5, more than 90 mayors from Libya met in Hammamet, Tunisia to discuss "conflict-linked crises" and promote unification.<sup>45</sup>
- On December 6, Libyan electoral officials from the UN Libya Mission announced a two-month voter registration period, despite no scheduled upcoming election date.<sup>46</sup>

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

- On December 22, Australia announced that it would stop conducting airstrikes against ISIS in Syria and Iraq. Australia pledged that refueling and surveillance aircraft would remain in Iraq, at the behest of Baghdad.<sup>47</sup>
- On December 27, an explosion in a supermarket in St. Petersburg injured 13 people. Russian President Vladimir Putin declared the incident was a terror attack.<sup>48</sup>
- On December 29, an attack by a single gunman on a Coptic Orthodox Church and Christian-owned shop in Egypt's Helwan district killed at least 11 people. ISIS later took responsibility for the attack via its Amaq News Agency.<sup>49</sup>
- On December 31, Turkish police arrested 20 people, including 15 foreign nationals, in Istanbul on suspicion of having ties to ISIS.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-oil/libya-needs-a-week-to-repair-blown-up-oil-pipeline-noc-idUSKBN1ELOXO> ; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-oil/production-restarting-after-repairs-finished-on-libyan-oil-pipeline-engineer-idUSKBN1EP0A8>

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security-displaced/families-chased-from-libyan-town-in-2011-can-go-home-government-idUSKBN1EK1EH>

<sup>45</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security-mayors/libyan-mayors-meet-for-more-leverage-to-tackle-countrys-meltdown-idUSKBN1E11LP>

<sup>46</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security-election/libya-launches-voter-registration-with-election-date-unclear-idUSKBN1E02A6>

<sup>47</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-australia-42450951>

<sup>48</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-blast-putin/putin-says-st-petersburg-supermarket-bombing-was-terrorism-idUSKBN1EM0L2>

<sup>49</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-egypt-security/gunman-kills-11-in-attacks-on-coptic-church-christian-owned-shop-in-egypt-idUSKBN1EN0SX>

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-security-islamic-state/turkey-detains-20-suspected-islamic-state-members-including-15-foreigners-police-idUSKBN1EP07M>

## Incident Reports: Syria

### SHI 17-0098 UPDATE

**Report Date:** December 11, 2017

**Site Name:** Raqqa Museum

**Date of Incident:** December 5, 2017

**Location:** Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** According to the Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative (CDLI):

“The Museum of Raqqa, founded in 1981, is dedicated to the preservation and exhibition of the cultural heritage of the Ar-Raqqa province. This museum notably curates large collections gathered from the excavation researches led in the region: Tell Sabi Abyad, Tell Bi'a, Tell Chuera, Tell Munbaqa, and various artefacts dating back to Roman and Byzantine times, as well as more recent objects from the Islamic period (notably the epoch of Haroun al-Rachid) and from the time of the bedouin domination.”<sup>51</sup>

The museum is located in a structure that was constructed in 1861 CE to serve as a government building.<sup>52</sup>

**Site Date:** 19th century CE

**Incident Summary:** Newly released photographs show the condition of the museum and its collection.

**Incident Source and Description:** On December 10, 2017 the Authority of Tourism and Protection of Antiquities - Jazira Canton (ATPA) posted photographs showing confiscated artifacts that have been returned to the Raqqa Museum.<sup>53</sup> These artifacts are not currently stored in the museum itself.

On December 11, 2017 the ATPA posted photographs that show the condition of the Raqqa Museum and its contents.<sup>54</sup> The facade of the building bears scars from bullets and larger ordinance. The interior of the building shows signs of vandalism and has clearly suffered from a lack of maintenance. Portions of the museum's collection are present in the rooms on the second floor. The museum's storerooms have been ransacked and the remaining artifacts within them are largely smashed. A hole is visible in the roof above the entrance to the western storeroom.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Raqqa Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0114 UPDATE** and **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0228**.

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<sup>51</sup> [http://cdli.ucla.edu/collections/syria/raqqa\\_en.html@section=3.html](http://cdli.ucla.edu/collections/syria/raqqa_en.html@section=3.html)

<sup>52</sup> <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1517>

<sup>53</sup> <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/confiscation-in-raqqa/>

<sup>54</sup> <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/the-situation-of-raqqa-museum/>

For more information on previous damage to the Raqqa Museum see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 14-0090** in **Weekly Report 16-17**, **SHI 15-0149** in **Weekly Report 67-68**, **SHI 17-0098** in **June 2017 Monthly Report**, and **SHI 17-0098 UPDATE** in **September 2017 Monthly Report**.

**Pattern:** Theft; Vandalism; Military activity: occupation/militarization; Military activity: explosives; Site management: tourism/visitor activity.

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

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

ATPA:

December 10, 2017: <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/confiscation-in-raqqa/>

December 11, 2017: <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/the-situation-of-raqqa-museum/>

Scholarly:

CDLI: [http://cdli.ucla.edu/collections/syria/raqqa\\_en.html@section=3.html](http://cdli.ucla.edu/collections/syria/raqqa_en.html@section=3.html)



A view of artifacts returned to the Raqqa Museum (ATPA; December 10, 2017)



A view of artifacts returned to the Raqqa Museum (ATPA; December 10, 2017)



A view of artifacts returned to the Raqqa Museum (ATPA; December 10, 2017)



A view of artifacts returned to the Raqqa Museum (ATPA; December 10, 2017)



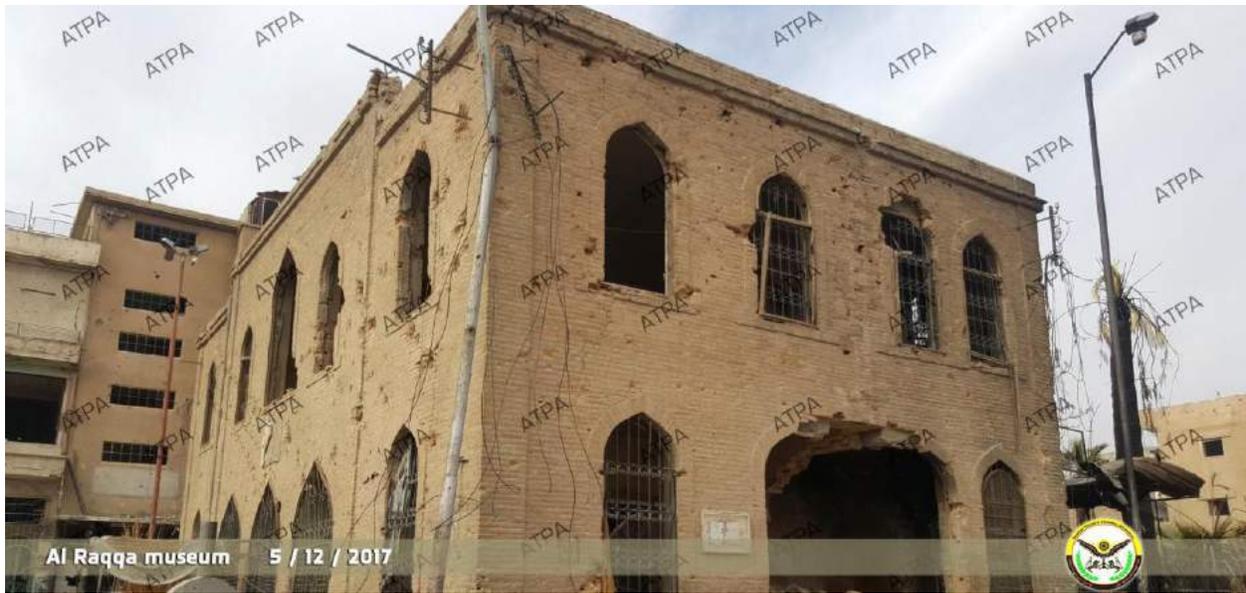
A view of artifacts returned to the Raqqa Museum (ATPA; December 10, 2017)



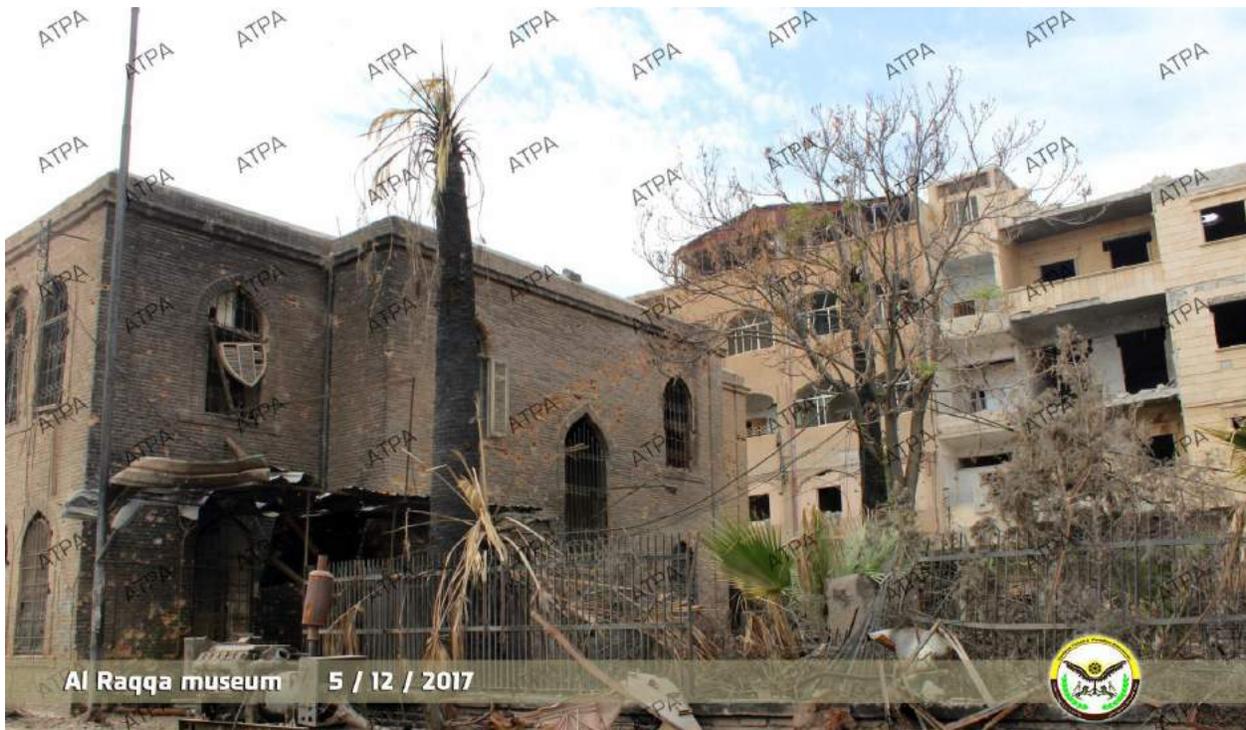
A view of artifacts returned to the Raqqa Museum (ATPA; December 10, 2017)



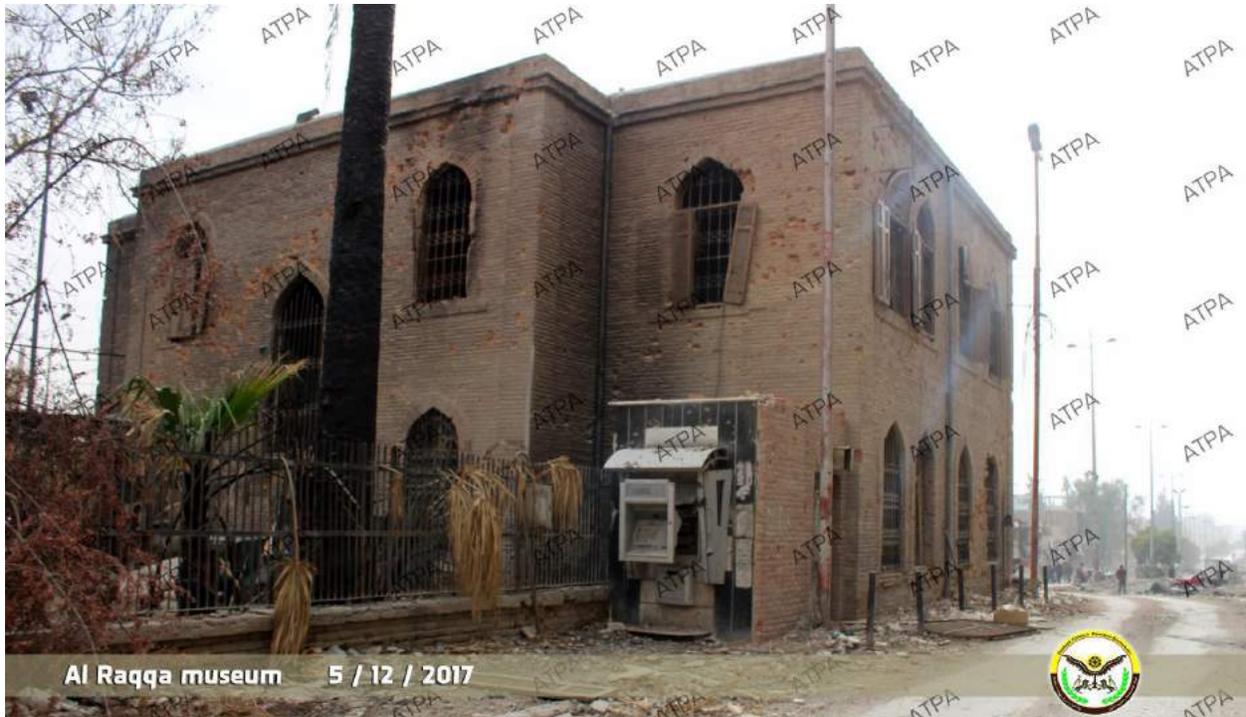
The Raqqa Museum, seen from the southeast (ATPA; December 11, 2017)



The Raqqa Museum, seen from the east (ATPA; December 11, 2017)



The Raqqa Museum, seen from the northeast (ATPA; December 11, 2017)



Al Raqqa museum 5 / 12 / 2017

The Raqqa Museum, seen from the northwest (ATPA; December 11, 2017)



Al Raqqa museum - Hall 1 5 / 12 / 2017

The main hall on the first floor, seen from the west (ATPA; December 11, 2017)



**Al Raqqa museum - Entrance**

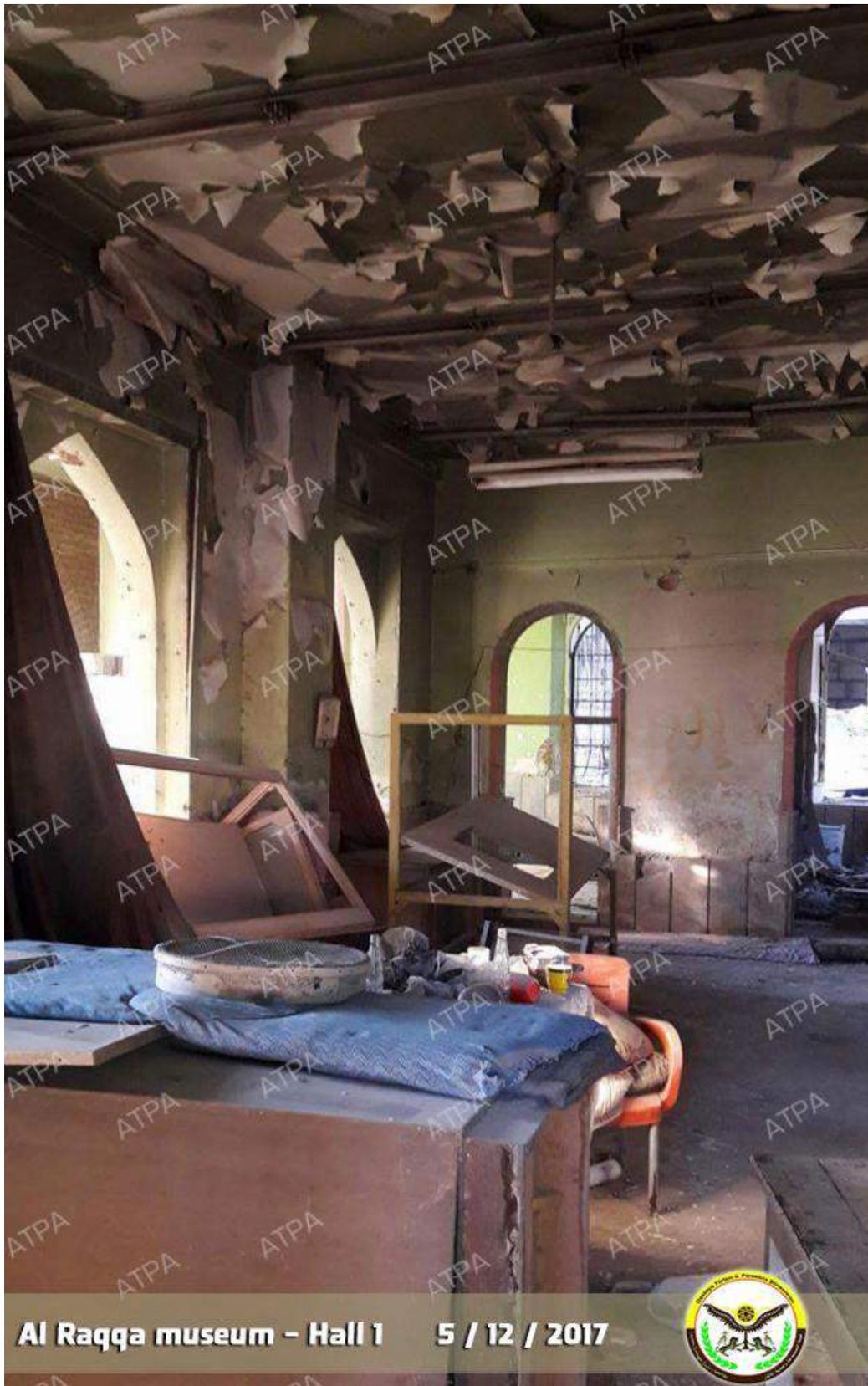
**5 / 12 / 2017**



A vandalised mosaic in the entrance to the museum, seen from the northeast (ATPA; December 11, 2017)



A vandalised mosaic in the entrance to the museum, seen from the northeast (ATPA; December 11, 2017)



**Al Raqqa museum - Hall 1 5 / 12 / 2017**



The main hall on the first floor, seen from the east (ATPA; December 11, 2017)



**Al Raqqa museum - Entrance 5 / 12 / 2017**

A vandalised mosaic in the entrance to the museum, seen from the northwest (ATPA; December 11, 2017)



**Al Raqqa museum - Management Room 5 / 12 / 2017**

A file cabinet in an office on the first floor, seen from the south (ATPA; December 11, 2017)



Al Raqqa museum - Management Room 5 / 12 / 2017

An office on the first floor, seen from the south (ATPA; December 11, 2017)



Al Raqqa museum - Hall of Tell Sabi Abyad and Hamam Turkman 5 / 12 / 2017

A view of the room at the southwestern corner of the first floor, seen from the northeast (ATPA; December 11, 2017)



A view of the exhibit hall at the southern end of the building on the second floor, seen from the northwest (ATPA; December 11, 2017)



A view of the exhibit hall at the southern end of the building on the second floor, seen from the northwest (ATPA; December 11, 2017)



Al Raqqa museum - Southern Hall 5 / 12 / 2017  
A view of the exhibit hall at the southern end of the building on the second floor, seen from the west (ATPA; December 11, 2017)



Al Raqqa museum - Hall 2 5 / 12 / 2017  
A view of the central hall on the second floor, seen from the west (ATPA; December 11, 2017)



A view of the central hall on the second floor, seen from the east (ATPA; December 11, 2017)



The hole in the roof in the northwestern corner of the central hall on the second floor, seen from the southeast (ATPA; December 11, 2017)



Al Raqqa museum - Hall 2 5 / 12 / 2017

The hole in the roof in the northwestern corner of the central hall on the second floor, seen from the east (ATPA; December 11, 2017)



Al Raqqa museum - The mosque, Rasafa and Abbasid Sarcophaguses 5 / 12 / 2017

The exhibit room in the southeastern corner of the second floor, seen from the northwest (ATPA; December 11, 2017)



The exhibit room in the southeastern corner of the second floor, seen from the southwest (ATPA; December 11, 2017)



The exhibit room in the northeastern corner of the second floor, seen from the south (ATPA; December 11, 2017)



The eastern storeroom on the second floor, seen from the west (ATPA; December 11, 2017)



The eastern storeroom on the second floor, seen from the south (ATPA; December 11, 2017)



The western storeroom on the second floor, seen from the south (ATPA; December 11, 2017)



The entrance to the western storeroom on the second floor, seen from the south (ATPA; December 11, 2017)



Al Raqqa museum - Tell al-Bayha Hall 5 / 12 / 2017

The exhibit room in the northwestern corner of the second floor, seen from the east (ATPA; December 11, 2017)



Al Raqqa museum - Tell al-Bayha Hall 5 / 12 / 2017

The exhibit room in the northwestern corner of the second floor, seen from the east (ATPA; December 11, 2017)



The exhibit room in the southwestern corner of the second floor, seen from the south (ATPA; December 11, 2017)

## SHI 17-0114 UPDATE

**Report Date:** December 11, 2017

**Site Name:** al-Kabir Mosque

**Date of Incident:** December 5, 2017

**Location:** Old City, Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Mosque

**Site Date:** Unknown

**Incident Summary:** Newly released photographs show the condition of a mosque.

**Incident Source and Description:** On December 10, 2017 the Authority of Tourism and Protection of Antiquities - al Jazira Canton (ATPA) posted photographs that show the condition of the exterior of al-Kabir Mosque.<sup>55</sup> The walls of the mosque are in poor condition. Multiple holes are visible in the facade, the plaster has come off many of the walls, and some of the walls have begun to collapse. The mosques' two minarets remain standing, but the top of the taller one is missing due to artillery bombardment. The smaller minaret is in good condition, but has suffered some damage from small-arms fire or shrapnel.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Raqqa Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0098 UPDATE** and **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0228**.

For more information on previous damage to al-Kabir Mosque, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0114** in **June 2017 Monthly Report**, **SHI 17-0114 UPDATE** in **August 2017 Monthly Report**, **SHI 17-0114 UPDATE** in **September 2017 Monthly Report**.

**Pattern:** Site management: tourism/visitor activity.

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

### Sources:

#### Online Reporting:

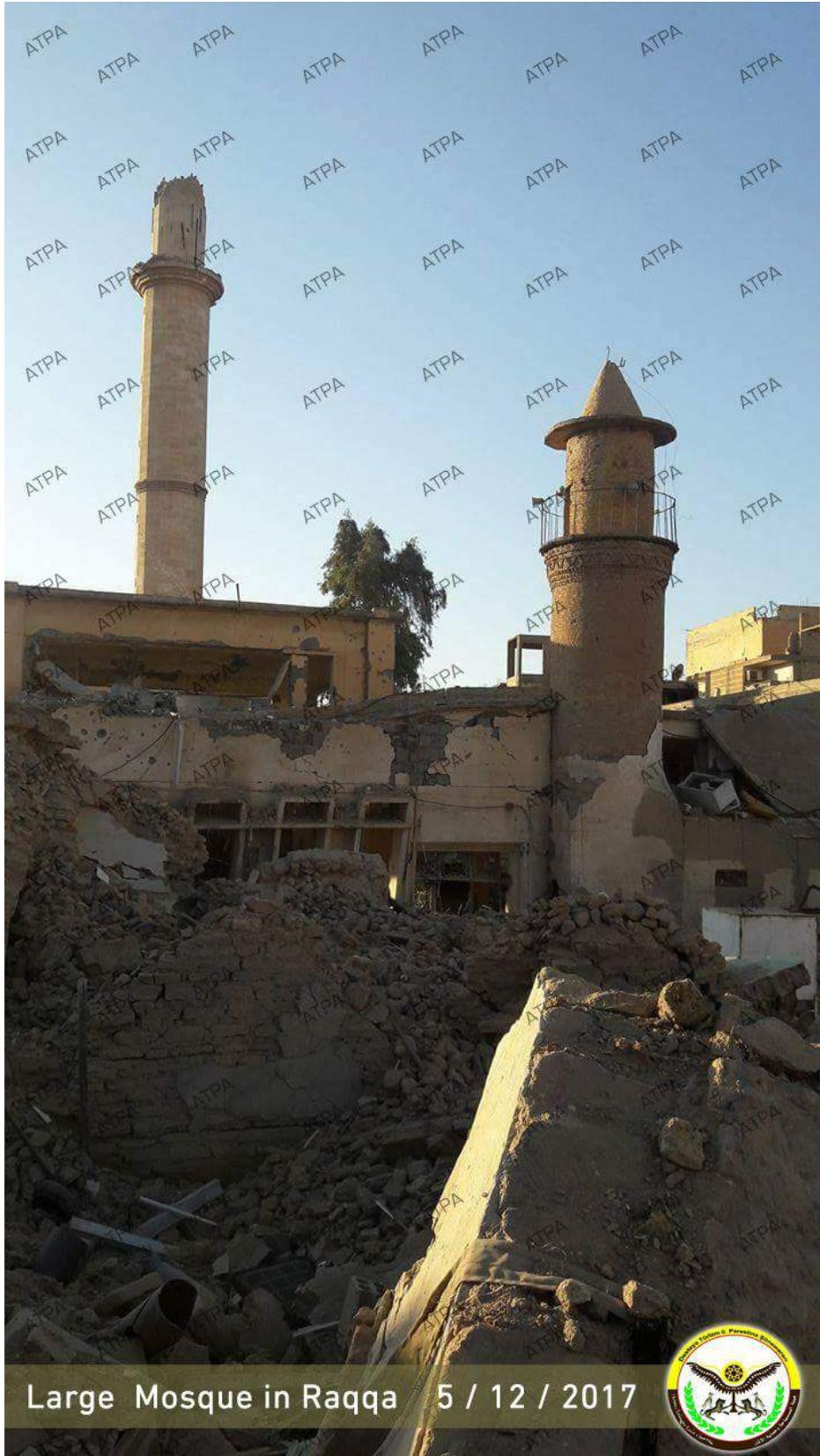
ATPA: <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/large-mosque-in-raqqa/>

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<sup>55</sup> <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/large-mosque-in-raqqa/>



A view of the mosque's facade and smaller minaret, seen from the south (ATPA; December 10, 2017)



Large Mosque in Raqqa 5 / 12 / 2017



The mosque and its two minarets, seen from the east (ATPA; December 10, 2017)



Large Mosque in Raqqa 5 / 12 / 2017



The smaller minaret, seen from the east (ATPA; December 10, 2017)



The mosque's facade, seen from the southeast (ATPA; December 10, 2017)

**SHI 17-0222**

**Report Date:** December 4, 2017

**Site Name:** Fatima al-Zahra Mosque

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

**Location:** al-Bukamal, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Mosque

**Site Date:** Unknown

**Incident Summary:** A reported SARG airstrike damages a mosque.

**Incident Source and Description:** On November 29, 2017 the Euphrates Post published a photograph that shows the condition of Fatima al-Zahra Mosque.<sup>56</sup> The building's facade has evidence of combat damage and the door to the building is partially off its hinges.

On December 9, 2017 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported in their "Attack on Vital Civilian Facilities" report for November 2017 that a SARG airstrike hit the mosque on November 18, 2017.<sup>57</sup>

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Deir ez-Zor Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0223**, **SHI 17-0229**, and **SHI 17-0235**.

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

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

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

Euphrates Post: <https://twitter.com/EuphratesPost/status/936034625696223232>

SNHR: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2018/01/08/50599/>

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<sup>56</sup> <https://twitter.com/EuphratesPost/status/936034625696223232>

<sup>57</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2018/01/08/50599/>



The condition of Fatima al-Zahra Mosque (Euphrates Post; November 29, 2017)

**SHI 17-0223**

**Report Date:** December 7, 2017

**Site Name:** al-Hashish Mosque (مسجد الحشيش)

**Date of Incident:** December 5, 2017

**Location:** al-Sha'fa, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Mosque

**Site Date:** Unknown

**Incident Summary:** Reported SARG shelling damages a mosque.

**Incident Source and Description:** On December 7, 2017 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that SARG warplanes shelled al-Hashish Mosque in the town of al-Shafa on December 5, causing unspecified damage to the mosque.<sup>58</sup> A Private Twitter Account posted video footage of the interior of the mosque. Damage includes a large hole in the mosque ceiling, which has resulted in a significant amount of debris on the floor of the mosque.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Deir ez-Zor Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0222**, **SHI 17-0229**, and **SHI 17-0235**.

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

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

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

Private Twitter Account

SNHR:

<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/12/07/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-al-hashish-mosque-al-shafa-city-deir-ez-zour-governorate-december-5/>

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<sup>58</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/12/07/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-al-hashish-mosque-al-shafa-city-deir-ez-zour-governorate-december-5/>



A video still of debris in the mosque's interior (Private Twitter Account; December 6, 2017)



A video still of damage to the mosque's ceiling (Private Twitter Account; December 6, 2017)

## SHI 17-0224

**Report Date:** December 7, 2017

**Site Name:** Mari (Tell Hariri) (ماري)

**Date of Incident:** Between November 13, 2017 and December 2, 2017

**Location:** Tell Hariri, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Mari is an ancient Mesopotamian city on the Euphrates River. Archaeological evidence from the site has been crucial for understanding Mesopotamian civilization during the Bronze Age. The city was founded in the early 3rd millennium BCE and prospered as an important stop along trade routes. The city grew throughout its history, eventually spreading over more than 14 hectares and rising 14.5 meters above the surrounding plain. By approximately 1800 BCE, Mari's political control extended from Babylon in the south to the modern Turkish border in the north. The site was abandoned after its destruction 1759 BCE by the Babylonian king Hammurabi.<sup>59</sup> Mari is also known for an archive containing 50,000 clay tablets that were excavated at the site during the French Mandate period in the 1930s.<sup>60</sup> Until the current conflict, conservation efforts at the site were ongoing. Mari was nominated to the World Heritage Tentative List in 1999 and again as part of the Euphrates Valley Landscape in 2011.<sup>61</sup>

**Site Date:** 2900–1759 BCE

**Incident Summary:** DigitalGlobe satellite imagery reveals damage to exposed architecture at an archaeological site.

**Incident Source and Description:** Between November 13, 2017 and December 2, 2017 DigitalGlobe satellite imagery revealed that the religious precinct in the southeastern part of the Royal Palace of Zimri-Lim at Mari was severely damaged. The entire central portion of this zone has been affected. In particular, the walls on the northern side of the central courtyard appear to have been mostly leveled. A darkening of the soil and visible ash and discoloration on the remaining parts of the structure suggest the damage is from an airstrike or explosives. There is also a crater visible in the soil just south of the covered area. There is no visible evidence of increased illegal excavation, although the walls of the palace are in poor condition as a result of a lack of maintenance.

The affected area consists of multiple building levels of a sacred enclosure within the larger palace complex.<sup>62</sup> These levels date from the third to early second millennia BCE and amount to several meters of stratigraphy. The area was covered by plastic or canvas at some point prior to the Syrian conflict in order to protect it from the elements.

For information on previous damage to the site of Mari, see **ASOR CHI Incident Reports SHI 14-0044 in Weekly Report 9**, **SHI 14-0078 in Weekly Report 15**, **SHI 14-0098 in Weekly Report**

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<sup>59</sup> Burns 1999: 126–129.

<sup>60</sup> <https://www.aaas.org/page/ancient-history-modern-destruction-assessing-status-syria-s-tentative-world-heritage-sites-7#Mari>

<sup>61</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/1294/>; <http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5702/>

<sup>62</sup> Margueron 2004: 198; 483–485

19, SHI 17-0140 in the **August 2017 Monthly Report**, and SHI 17-0208 in the **November 2017 Monthly Report**.

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives.

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

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

Syria Photo Guide: <http://www.syriaphotoguide.com/home/tel-al-hariri-mari-تل-الحريري-ماری>

Scholarly:

Burns, R. (2009) *The Monuments of Syria*. London: I.B. Tauris. 126–129.

Margueron, Jean-Claude (2004) *Mari. Métropole de l'Euphrate au IIIe au début du IIe millénaire av. J.-C.* Paris: Éditions A. et J. Picard.



Previously reported damage to the modern structure covering the temple area of the Royal Palace of Mari along with soil discoloration indicated by red arrows (DigitalGlobe NextView License; November 13, 2017)



Increased damage to the covering over the temple area of the Royal Palace, indicated by red arrows. Just south of the structure is a crater also indicated by an arrow (DigitalGlobe NextView License; December 2, 2017)



A view of the covered temple area (January 10, 2014; Syria Photo Guide)



A view of the covered temple area (Syria Photo Guide; January 10, 2014)



Photography by  
Daniel Demeter  
[www.syriaphotoguide.com](http://www.syriaphotoguide.com)

A view of the covered temple area (Syria Photo Guide; January 10, 2014)



Photography by  
Daniel Demeter  
[www.syriaphotoguide.com](http://www.syriaphotoguide.com)

A view of the covered temple area (Syria Photo Guide; January 10, 2014)

**SHI 17-0225**

**Report Date:** December 8, 2017

**Site Name:** Jub Abyad Mosque (مسجد جب أبيض)

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

**Location:** Jub Abyad, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Mosque

**Site Date:** Unknown

**Incident Summary:** A reported SARG or Russian airstrike damages a mosque.

**Incident Source and Description:** On December 8, 2017 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that a SARG or Russian warplane fired missiles near a mosque in the village of Jub Abyad, damaging the mosque and rendering it inoperable.<sup>63</sup> A photograph accompanying the report shows that the mosque has largely collapsed.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Aleppo Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0227**.

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

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

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

SNHR:

<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/12/08/syrian-russian-forces-shelled-jub-abyad-mosque-jub-abyad-village-aleppo-governorate-december-8/>

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<sup>63</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/12/08/syrian-russian-forces-shelled-jub-abyad-mosque-jub-abyad-village-aleppo-governorate-december-8/>



Damage to the Jub Abyad Mosque (SNHR; December 8, 2017)

**SHI 17-0226**

**Report Date:** December 9, 2017

**Site Name:** Zarzour Village Mosque (مسجد قرية الزرزور)

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

**Location:** Zarzour, Idlib Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Mosque

**Site Date:** Unknown

**Incident Summary:** Reported Russian shelling destroys a mosque.

**Incident Source and Description:** On December 9, 2017 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that Russian warplanes fired a missile at Zarzour Village Mosque on December 8, destroying the mosque.<sup>64</sup> A photograph accompanying the report shows that the mosque is largely in ruins, with at least two walls totally collapsed.

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

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

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

SNHR:

<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/12/09/suspected-russian-forces-shelled-mosque-al-zarzour-village-affiliated-al-tamana-town-idlib-governorate-december-8/>

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<sup>64</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/12/09/suspected-russian-forces-shelled-mosque-al-zarzour-village-affiliated-al-tamana-town-idlib-governorate-december-8/>



Partial destruction of mosque in the village of Zarzour (SNHR; December 9, 2017)

**SHI 17-0227**

**Report Date:** December 9, 2017

**Site Name:** Tal al-Daman Mosque (مسجد تل الضمان)

**Date of Incident:** December 9, 2017

**Location:** Tal al-Daman, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Mosque

**Site Date:** Unknown

**Incident Summary:** Reported Russian airstrikes damage a mosque.

**Incident Source and Description:** On December 9, 2017 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that Russian warplanes fired a missile at a mosque in the village of Tal al-Daman, causing unspecified damage.<sup>65</sup> Video footage published by Syrian Civil Defense shows a large crater on the eastern side of the mosque from the airstrike.<sup>66</sup> The resulting damage includes blown out windows and debris in the mosque interior.

On December 13, 2017 SNHR reported that Russian warplanes fired missiles at the Tal al-Daman Mosque again, damaging it severely and rendering it inoperable.<sup>67</sup> A photograph accompanying this report indicates that the second attack caused the mosque to partially collapse. There is significant damage to the northern side of the mosque.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Aleppo Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0225**.

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

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

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

SMART News Agency: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9daZUXND0b8c>

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<sup>65</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/12/09/suspected-russian-forces-shelled-al-daman-mosque-tal-al-daman-town-aleppo-governorate-december-9/>

<sup>66</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjpT9ihfmZM>

<sup>67</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/12/13/russian-forces-shelled-mosque-tal-al-daman-village-aleppo-governorate-december-13/>

SNHR:

December 9, 2017: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/12/09/suspected-russian-forces-shelled-al-daman-mosque-tal-al-daman-town-aleppo-governorate-december-9/>

December 13, 2017: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/12/13/russian-forces-shelled-mosque-tal-al-daman-village-aleppo-governorate-december-13/>

December 15, 2017: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k5YNkAPipGE>

White Helmets: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjpT9ihfmZM>



Video still of a crater on the eastern side of the mosque (Syrian Civil Defense; December 9, 2017)



Video still of a crater on the eastern side of the mosque (Syrian Civil Defense; December 9, 2017)



Video still of debris in the mosque's interior (Syrian Civil Defense; December 9, 2017)



Video still of debris in the mosque's interior (Syrian Civil Defense; December 9, 2017)



Significant damage to the north side of the mosque (SNHR; December 13, 2017)

**SHI 17-0228**

**Report Date:** December 11, 2017

**Site Name:** Heraqla Archaeological Storage Facility

**Date of Incident:** December 5, 2017

**Location:** Heraqla, Raqqa Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** The facility consists of a series of warehouses distributed around the archaeological site of Heraqla. Prior to the Syrian Civil War, the Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums (DGAM) used these warehouses to store artifacts and other materials that were associated with foreign and domestic excavations, as well as other activities in Raqqa Governorate.

**Site Date:** 20th Century CE

**Incident Summary:** Newly released photographs show the condition of an archaeological storage facility.

**Incident Source and Description:** On December 11, 2017 the Authority of Tourism and Protection of Antiquities - Jazira Canton (ATPA) published photographs from a recent condition assessment project that show the condition of the DGAM's storage facility at Heraqla.<sup>68</sup> The warehouses are in poor shape. Many of them no longer have roofs or doors. As a result, sediment, vegetation and trash have accumulated in many of the spaces.

Armed groups reportedly looted the storage facility early in 2013.<sup>69</sup> However, ATPA members found pieces of mosaics from multiple sites in Raqqa Governorate in some of the rooms. Some of the mosaics have their provenience and date of excavation written on the back. According to the ATPA, the sites include Tell al-Bayha, Tell Sheikh Hassan, Munbaqa, Hueshat al-Algan, and Kesra.

DigitalGlobe satellite imagery confirms that many of the warehouses no longer have roofs. In the earliest available imagery from December 13, 2011, the western roofs of the southernmost warehouse are missing. By April 16, 2016 nearly all of the warehouse roofs are missing. In the most recently available image from December 26, 2017, there is a blue covering visible on the southern warehouse, suggesting that possible rehabilitation of the warehouses is in progress.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Raqqa Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0098 UPDATE** and **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0114 UPDATE**.

**Pattern:** Theft; Reuse of ancient/historic structures (non-combatants); Site management: tourism/visitor activity.

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

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<sup>68</sup> <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/hergla-mosaic/>

<sup>69</sup> <http://www.hawarnews.com/قلعة-هرقلا-نُهبت/>

**Sources:**

**Online Reporting:**

ATPA: <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/hergla-mosaic/>

Hawar News: <http://www.hawarnews.com/قلعة-هرقله-نويث/>



The current condition of the storage facility, seen from the southwest (ATPA; December 11, 2017)



The storage facility, seen from the southwest (ATPA; December 11, 2017)



The storage facility, seen from the south (ATPA; December 11, 2017)



The storage facility, seen from the north (ATPA; December 11, 2017)



A view of the mosaics in the facility; at least one is from Tell Bi'a (ATPA; December 11, 2017)



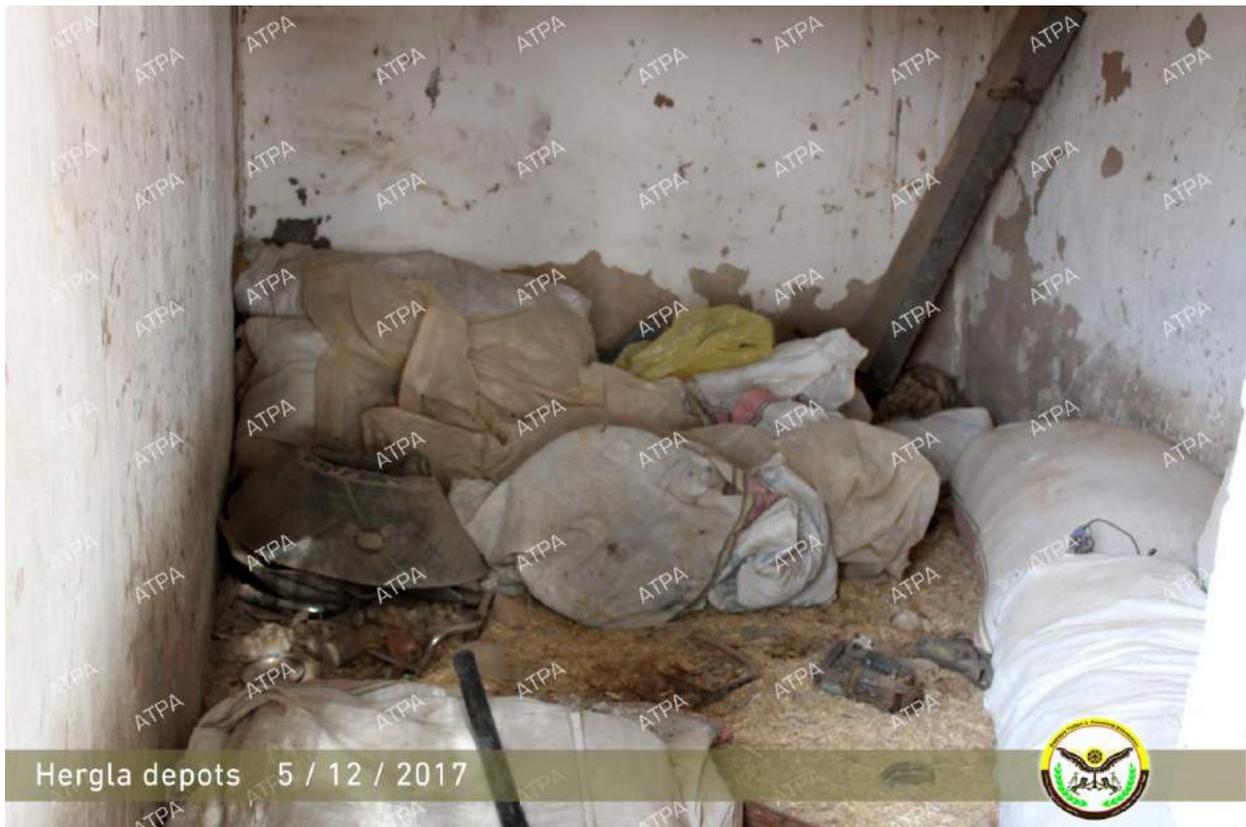
A view of the mosaics in the facility; at least one is from Tell Bi'a (ATPA; December 11, 2017)



A view of the mosaics in the facility (ATPA; December 11, 2017)



A view of the mosaics in the facility (ATPA; December 11, 2017)



Trash and bags of hay in one of the storage rooms (ATPA; December 11, 2017)



A view of the mosaics in the facility (ATPA; December 11, 2017)



A view of the mosaics in the facility (ATPA; December 11, 2017)



Hergla depots 5 / 12 / 2017

A view of the mosaics in the facility (ATPA; December 11, 2017)



The DGAM Warehouses at Heraqla in the earliest available satellite imagery. The red arrow indicates part of the roofs that are already missing (DigitalGlobe NextView License; December 13, 2011)



Red arrows indicate parts of the roofs that are missing (DigitalGlobe NextView License; April 16, 2016)



Red arrow indicates a blue covering over part of the southern warehouse. This is the first visible evidence of restoration efforts (DigitalGlobe NextView License; December 26, 2017)

**SHI 17-0229**

**Report Date:** December 12, 2017

**Site Name:** al-Naqawi Mosque (مسجد النقوى)

**Date of Incident:** Between November 10, 2017 and December 2, 2017

**Location:** Subaykhan, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Mosque

**Site Date:** Unknown

**Incident Summary:** DigitalGlobe satellite imagery reveals damage to a mosque.

**Incident Source and Description:** DigitalGlobe satellite imagery revealed severe damage to al-Naqawi Mosque as a result of airstrikes. This damage occurred between November 10, 2017 and December 2, 2017. At least four airstrike craters are visible to the west and north of the mosque. The southern half of the mosque is almost entirely in ruins, although the minaret is still standing. The mosque is located in an area that has been a focus of airstrikes during November.<sup>70</sup>

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Deir ez-Zor Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0222**, **SHI 17-0223**, and **SHI 17-0235**.

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

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

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

Syrian Observatory for Human Rights: <http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=79308>

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<sup>70</sup> <http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=79308>



Al-Naqawi Mosque prior to any damage (DigitalGlobe NextView License; November 10, 2017)



The mosque after severe destruction as a result of airstrikes, with craters and damage to mosque indicated by red arrows (DigitalGlobe NextView License; December 2, 2017)

**SHI 17-0230****Report Date:** December 12, 2017**Site Name:** Bosra al-Sham (بصرى الشام)**Date of Incident:** December 10, 2017**Location:** Bosra al-Sham, Daraa Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Founded in the mid-second millennium, Bosra became the northern capital of the Nabataean kingdom by the 2nd century BCE. In 106 CE, Bosra was incorporated into the Roman Empire and became the capital of the Roman province of Arabia Petraea.<sup>71</sup> Several major Roman monuments are still extant, including a large theater constructed between 106–117 that was later fortified during the Ayyubid era.

Bosra remained a major frontier market through the Byzantine era. It was the first Byzantine city to fall to the Arabs when they entered the region in 634. Bosra became an important center of Islam under the Ayyubids. Its strategic position made it an outer strongpoint for the defense of Damascus against the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem to the southwest.<sup>72</sup>

Bosra's remains date to multiple periods, and include Nabataean arches and gateways, many Roman-era public buildings, Byzantine churches, and early Islamic mosques and madrasas. Many of these monuments are characterized by the use of black basalt stone common to much of the architecture in the Hauran region of Syria.

**Site Date:** 1500 BCE–present**Incident Summary:** Future Horizons and Hello Trust clean up debris at Bosra.

**Incident Source and Description:** On December 12, 2017 the Bosra al-Sham Antiquities Department (D.A. Bosra al-Sham) published photographs of ongoing efforts in the archaeological area of Bosra to remove explosive material.<sup>73</sup> This work is being carried out by the organization's Future Horizons and Hello Trust.

**Pattern:** Site management: reconstruction/clean-up.**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor restoration efforts at Bosra, as well as other sites that have been subject to intense military activity.**Sources:**Online Reporting:

Bosra al-Sham Antiquities Department:

[https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=2062962487280240&id=1642112122698614](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=2062962487280240&id=1642112122698614)

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<sup>71</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/22>

<sup>72</sup> Burns 2009: 78-87.

<sup>73</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=2062962487280240&id=1642112122698614](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=2062962487280240&id=1642112122698614)

Scholarly:

Burns, Ross. 2009. The Monuments of Syria. A Guide. (I. B. Tauris). 78-87.

UNESCO: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/22>



Sandbags are placed on explosives discovered in the archaeological area of Bosra (D.A. Bosra al-Sham; December 12, 2017)



Explosives in the archaeological area of Bosra covered by sandbags for protection (D.A. Bosra al-Sham; December 12, 2017)



Sandbags are placed on explosives discovered in the archaeological area of Bosra (D.A. Bosra al-Sham; December 12, 2017)



Sandbags are placed on explosives discovered in the archaeological area of Bosra (D.A. Bosra al-Sham; December 12, 2017)



Sandbags are placed on explosives discovered in the archaeological area of Bosra (D.A. Bosra al-Sham; December 12, 2017)



Sandbags are placed on explosives discovered in the archaeological area of Bosra (D.A. Bosra al-Sham; December 12, 2017)

## SHI 17-0231

**Report Date:** December 14, 2017

**Site Name:** Qalaat Ja'bar (قلعة جعبر)

**Date of Incident:** December 13, 2017

**Location:** Ja'bar, Raqqa Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Qalaat Ja'bar is a 12th century CE fortified castle on a hilltop (now connected to the mainland by a narrow isthmus) on the northeastern side of Lake Assad. Though the site was likely occupied already in the 11th century, the present structure largely dates to the reign of Nur al-Din al-Zengi, who undertook construction works at the castle beginning in 1168.<sup>74</sup> The castle was heavily damaged by a Mongol incursion ca. 1259.<sup>75</sup> The post-Ayyubid period of Qalaat Ja'bar is not well understood, but the site apparently remained in use due to its strategic location on the Euphrates frontier.<sup>76</sup> Standing structures include the fortification walls, a minaret dating to the reign of Nur al-Din, a mosque, and several other buildings.<sup>77</sup>

At some point during the Ottoman period, Qalaat Ja'bar came to be regarded as the site where Sulayman Shah, the legendary ancestor of the Ottoman sultans, drowned in 1231.<sup>78</sup> The Ottomans built a tomb nearby and placed a Turkish guard of honor there, which was moved upstream to Qalaat Najm prior to the construction of the Taqba Dam and the creation of Lake Assad in 1974.<sup>79</sup> Extensive restoration work was carried out by the DGAM in the 1960–70s.<sup>80</sup>

**Site Date:** 1168 CE

**Incident Summary:** Repair work occurs at a historic castle.

**Incident Source and Description:** On December 13, 2017 SMART News Agency published video footage of Qalaat Ja'bar.<sup>81</sup> A man interviewed in the video reports that the structure suffered damage during the occupation of the area by ISIS (specifically the museum within the castle), but the extent of this damage is unspecified. Damage from the theft of electrical cables (reported in September 2017) has been repaired and graffiti on the external walls of the castle has been cleaned up.<sup>82</sup>

Qalaat Ja'bar was reported damaged on at least one earlier occasion. On September 23, 2017 The Authority of Tourism and Protection of Antiquities - al Jazira Canton (ATPA) reported that electrical

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<sup>74</sup> Tonghini (1998): 18-20.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 25-6.

<sup>78</sup> Burns (2009): 228.

<sup>79</sup> Tonghini (1998): 103.

<sup>80</sup> Bahnassi, A. (1978). "Le sauvatage des vestiges de la zone de submersion du barrage de Tabqa sur l'Euphrate," *Monumentum* 17 ICOMOS. 57–70.

<sup>81</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iHpKlNhHI-o>

<sup>82</sup> <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/jaaber-citadel-2192017/>

cables had been stolen from the site, damaging part of the entrance to the citadel.<sup>83</sup> See **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0175** in **September Monthly Report**.

**Pattern:** Site management: reconstruction/clean-up.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor restoration activities at Qalaat Ja'bar, as well as the condition of other heritage sites located in regions that have been subject to intense military activity.

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

ATPA: <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/jaaber-citadel-2192017/>

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

Scholarly:

Bahnassi, A. (1978). "Le sauvatage des vestiges de la zone de submersion du barrage de Tabqa sur l'Euphrate," *Monumentum* 17 ICOMOS. 57–70.

Burns, R. (2009) *Monuments of Syria*. I.B. Tauris. 228–9.

Tonghini, C. (1998) *Qal'at Ja'bar Pottery: A Study of a Syrian Fortified Site of the Late 11th–14th Centuries*. British Academy London: British Academy Monographs in Archaeology, Vol. 11. Council for British Research in the Levant.

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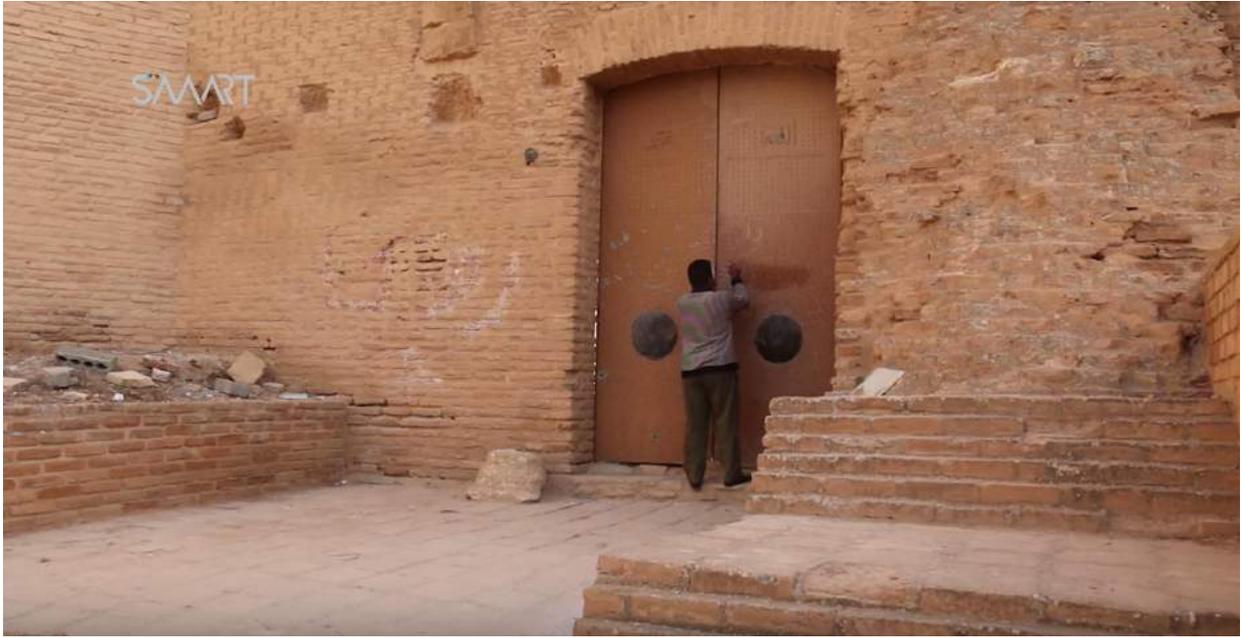
<sup>83</sup> <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/jaaber-citadel-2192017/>



Damage to the main entrance of the castle and graffiti (ATPA; September 21, 2017)



Damage to the entrance has been repaired (SMART News Agency; December 13, 2017)



Graffiti on right side of the entrance has been cleaned up and the doors have been repaired (SMART News Agency; December 13, 2017)

**SHI 17-0232**

**Report Date:** December 15, 2017

**Site Name:** Zamalka al-Kabir Mosque (مسجد زملكا الكبير)

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

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

**Site Description:** Mosque

**Site Date:** Unknown

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

**Incident Source and Description:** On December 15, 2017 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that SARG forces fired artillery at Zamalka al-Kabir Mosque on December 14, causing unspecified damage.<sup>84</sup> No photographs of the damage were available at the time of publication. DigitalGlobe satellite imagery from December 31, 2017 shows no visible damage.

Zamalka al-Kabir Mosque has been damaged on at least one prior occasion. Video footage of Eid prayers uploaded to Youtube in July 2016 showed damage to the mosque's minaret and damage to the exterior of the mosque, including broken windows.<sup>85</sup>

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives.

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

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

Coordination Center of Zamalka: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H3znQ3gdolk>

SNHR:

<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/12/15/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-zamalka-al-kabir-mosque-zamalka-town-damascus-suburbs-december-14/>

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<sup>84</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/12/15/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-zamalka-al-kabir-mosque-zamalka-town-damascus-suburbs-december-14/>

<sup>85</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H3znQ3gdolk>



mh.abosamer  
A photograph of the mosque from May 2016, likely after the mosque sustained some damage (Coordination Center of Zamalka; May 16, 2016)<sup>86</sup>

<sup>86</sup> <https://twitter.com/RevoZamalka/status/732309076798017537>

**SHI 17-0233**

**Report Date:** December 15, 2017

**Site Name:** al-Kabir Mosque (مسجد الكبير)

**Date of Incident:** December 15, 2017

**Location:** Taldou, Homs Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Mosque

**Site Date:** Unknown

**Incident Summary:** An IED reportedly damages a mosque.

**Incident Source and Description:** On December 15, 2017 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that an improvised explosive device (IED) of unknown origin exploded in al-Kabir Mosque in Taldou, damaging its building and furniture.<sup>87</sup> The perpetrator remains unknown. SNHR also published video footage of the interior of the mosque following the explosion. The extent of the damage to the mosque is unknown, as the video footage only shows debris on the floor of the mosque's interior near the minbar.<sup>88</sup>

Al-Kabir Mosque was previously damaged by reported SARG airstrikes in April 2017. For more information on previous damage to al-Kabir Mosque, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0063** in **April 2017 Monthly Report**.

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives.

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

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

SNHR:

December 15, 2017: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/12/15/unknown-source-ied-exploded-al-kabir-mosque-taldao-town-homs-governorate-december-15/>

December 17, 2017: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZmFYqGyD68>

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<sup>87</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/12/15/unknown-source-ied-exploded-al-kabir-mosque-taldao-town-homs-governorate-december-15/>

<sup>88</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZmFYqGyD68>



Video still of debris on the floor of al-Kabir Mosque, possibly from damaged ceiling tiles (SNHR; December 17, 2017)

**SHI 17-0234**

**Report Date:** December 26, 2017

**Site Name:** Church of the Virgin Mary (كنيسة السيدة العذراء)

**Date of Incident:** December 19, 2017

**Location:** al-Rashidiyah Neighborhood, Deir ez-Zor, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** This church served as the place of worship for the Syriac Orthodox community in Deir ez-Zor.<sup>89</sup> The Syriac Orthodox community accounted for more than half of the Christian population in the city at the start of the Syrian Civil War.

**Site Date:** Unknown

**Incident Summary:** A newly released photograph shows the condition of a church.

**Incident Source and Description:** On December 19, 2017 the Euphrates Post published a photograph that shows the exterior of the Church of the Virgin Mary. The building is in poor condition. The facade is heavily scarred, the windows have all been blown out, and multiple holes are visible in the church's dome.

Due to its proximity to a regime military security building, the church lay on the frontline between the regime and the opposition during 2012.<sup>90</sup> Regime artillery further damaged the building after the opposition captured the area. In October 2012, a Jabhat al-Nusra car bomb went off in front of the building, causing heavy damage.<sup>91</sup> Jabhat al-Nusra claimed that this incident was an accident.<sup>92</sup>

DigitalGlobe satellite imagery confirms that the mosque was heavily damaged in 2012 and that there have been no further changes to its condition.

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives; Site management: tourism/visitor activity.

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

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

Atlantic Council: <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/syriasource/the-churches-of-deir-ezzor>

Euphrates Post: <https://twitter.com/EuphratesPost/status/943290010626936832>

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<sup>89</sup> <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/syriasource/the-churches-of-deir-ezzor>

<sup>90</sup> <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/syriasource/the-churches-of-deir-ezzor>

<sup>91</sup> <http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=9029>

<sup>92</sup> <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/syriasource/the-churches-of-deir-ezzor>

Syrian Observatory for Human Rights: <http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=9029>



Church of the Virgin Mary, seen from the west (Euphrates Post; December 19, 2017)



The Church of the Virgin Mary prior to any visible damage (DigitalGlobe NextView License; July 7, 2012)



Red arrows indicating areas of severe damage to the church and in the surrounding area. The three arrows south of the church all indicate holes in its roof (DigitalGlobe NextView License; September 16, 2014)

**SHI 17-0235**

**Report Date:** December 29, 2017

**Site Name:** al-Nab'iyah Mosque

**Date of Incident:** November 3, 2017

**Location:** Salhiya, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Mosque

**Site Date:** Unknown

**Incident Summary:** An airstrike reportedly damages a mosque.

**Incident Source and Description:** On November 4, 2017 Euphrates Post reported that an airstrike damaged al-Nab'iyah Mosque.<sup>93</sup> The ongoing pro-regime operations to recapture the area from ISIS suggests that it was a SARG-Russian aircraft. The attack damaged the walls of the mosque and blew out its windows.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Deir ez-Zor Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0222**, **SHI 17-0223**, and **SHI 17-0229**.

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

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

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

Euphrates Post: <https://twitter.com/EuphratesPost/status/926829347666665480>

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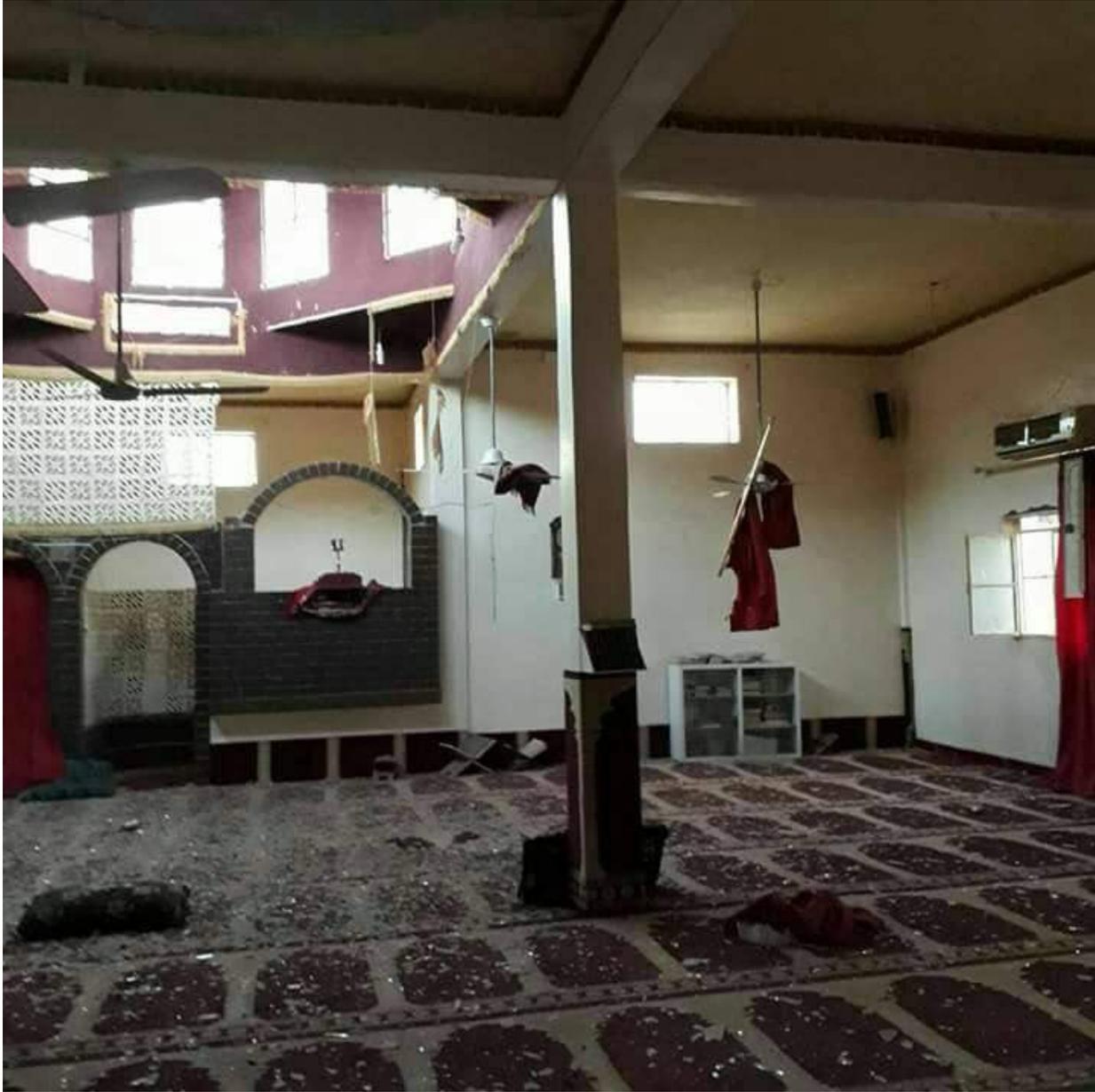
<sup>93</sup> <https://twitter.com/EuphratesPost/status/926829347666665480>



Damage to the interior of the mosque (Euphrates Post; November 4, 2017)



Damage to the interior of the mosque (Euphrates Post; November 4, 2017)



Damage to the interior of the mosque (Euphrates Post; November 4, 2017)

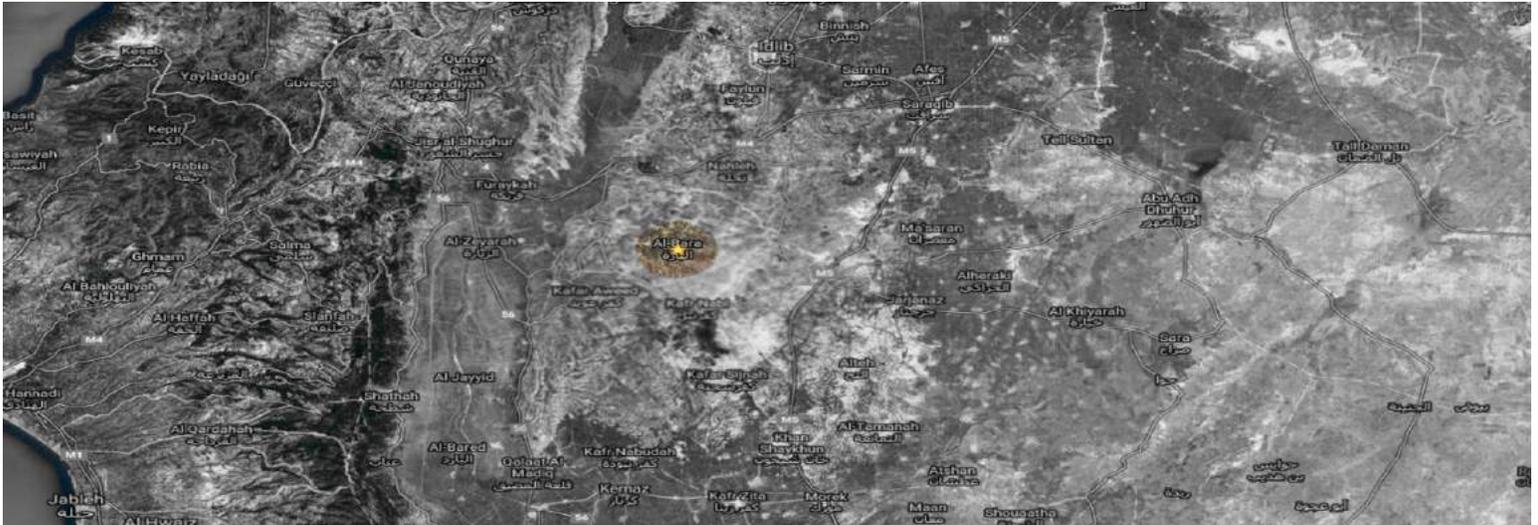


Damage to the exterior of the mosque (Euphrates Post; November 4, 2017)

## The Day After Heritage Protection Initiative

### Site Monitors Project

### Damage Report Deir Sunbul October 5, 2017



#### Introduction:

Deir Sunbul is a village in the Idlib governorate that dates back to the Byzantine era. It is an important archaeological site (part of the Dead Cities) due to the unique diversity in its architecture .

Located about 32 Km south of Idlib City, Deir Sunbul in Jabal Zawiyah is home to many relatively intact tombs, palaces, residential buildings, a basilica church, olive presses, the tower, water wells and basins, and a collection of carvings on facades and door and window.

Recently the site sustained damage due to vandalism, in particular the building known as the palace. The event was recorded and widely reported on social media.

<https://www.facebook.com/abofadi486/videos/542948079370658/>

On October 5, 2017, site monitors of the Syrian Heritage Center visited the site and carefully documented the damage.

Site before sustaining damage

As documented by Syrian Heritage Center's site monitors on April 16, 2015



Destroyed structure



Structure before the destruction (Southeast side )

**Images of the site after the destruction as a result of vandalism**



Destroyed structure



Destroyed structure



Damaged rocks



Destroyed structure





Structure completely destroyed













Reported by:  
Eng. Abdul Rahman Alyehia (Syrian Heritage Centre)

**Site Monitors Project Coordinator**  
**Dr. Amr Al-Azm**



## Incident Reports: Iraq

IHI 17-0082

**Report Date:** December 20, 2017

**Site Name:** Eastern Preparatory School (الشرقية للإعدادية)

**Date of Incident:** December 15, 2017

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

**Site Description:** A high school near the Mosul Museum constructed in 1908.<sup>94</sup>

**Site Date:** 1908 CE

**Incident Summary:** New video footage shows clean-up and reconstruction of school.

**Incident Source and Description:** On December 15, 2017 al-Mosuliya published a video showing the re-opening of the Eastern Preparatory School in Mosul.<sup>95</sup> The school was damaged during the fight to retake Mosul from ISIS in late 2016 and early 2017. The debris has been cleared, the interior courtyard railings have been fixed, and the structure has been repainted and possibly replastered. The exterior of the building is still damaged. The interiors of classrooms were not shown in this video.

For more information on previous damage to the Eastern Preparatory School, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 17-0070** in **Weekly Report 153–156**.

**Pattern:** Site management: reconstruction/clean-up.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of the Eastern Preparatory School, as well as the condition of other heritage sites located in regions subject to reconstruction.

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

al-Mosuliya: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N0wnAKL2KEA>

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<sup>94</sup> ASOR CHI In Country Source

<sup>95</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N0wnAKL2KEA>



Video still of damage to the exterior of the Eastern Preparatory School (al-Mosuliya; December 15, 2017)



Video still of damage to interior courtyard of the Eastern Preparatory School (al-Mosuliya; December 15, 2017)



Video still of damage to interior courtyard of the Eastern Preparatory School (al-Mosuliya; December 15, 2017)

**IHI 17-0083**

**Report Date:** December 20, 2017

**Site Name:** British Cemetery Mosul (Mosul War Cemetery)

**Date of Incident:** Between September 16, 2016 and March 2017.

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

**Site Description:** According to Commonwealth War Graves Commission:

“During the First World War, Mosul was the headquarters of the Turkish Sixth Army. The town was entered by Commonwealth forces on 3 November 1918 under the terms of the Armistice with Turkey and a garrison was quartered there. It also became a minor hospital centre. Mosul War Cemetery contains 191 burials from the First World War, only six of them identified, all of them Indian forces. In addition, there is a special memorial to one casualty of the United Kingdom forces buried at the time in a vault in Mosul French Dominican Church. During the Second World War, Mosul was again occupied by Commonwealth forces from June 1941 to the end of the war. Additional ground was acquired for the cemetery by the military authorities for the burial of men who died of illness or through accident while serving with PAIFORCE. After the war, graves were brought into this permanent cemetery from Mosul Civil Cemetery, Kirkuk British Military Cemetery and Kirkuk Muhammadan Cemetery, where maintenance would not have been possible. The cemetery now contains 145 Second World War burials. In addition, there are two non-war graves and 13 non-war Consular burials.”<sup>96</sup>

**Site Date:** 1918 CE

**Incident Summary:** Newly released photographs show damage to cemetery.

**Incident Source and Description:** On December 20, 2017 a freelance journalist, Campbell MacDiarmid, published photographs showing the condition of the British Cemetery in Mosul.<sup>97</sup> Local informants claimed that ISIS bulldozed the cemetery.

Between September 8, 2016 and September 10, 2016 DigitalGlobe satellite imagery shows modern structures were built in the cemetery. There is evidence of leveling or bulldozing in the form of bulldozer scars in the southern half of the cemetery. Between September 16, 2016 and September 19, 2016 a permanent structure was built in the northeast part of the cemetery. The northwest portion of the cemetery remains largely undisturbed. There is nearby evidence of airstrikes in March 2017 which do not appear to have directly affected the cemetery. Between July 19, 2017 and July 27, 2017 two covered structures in the cemetery were destroyed. There are no further visible changes.

**Pattern:** Military activity: intentional destruction; Development disturbances.

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<sup>96</sup> <https://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/69702/Mosul%20War%20Cemetery>

<sup>97</sup> <https://twitter.com/CampbellMacD/status/943384628513198081>

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of the Mosul War Cemetery, as well as the condition of other heritage sites located in regions subject to development disturbances.

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

Commonwealth War Graves Commission:

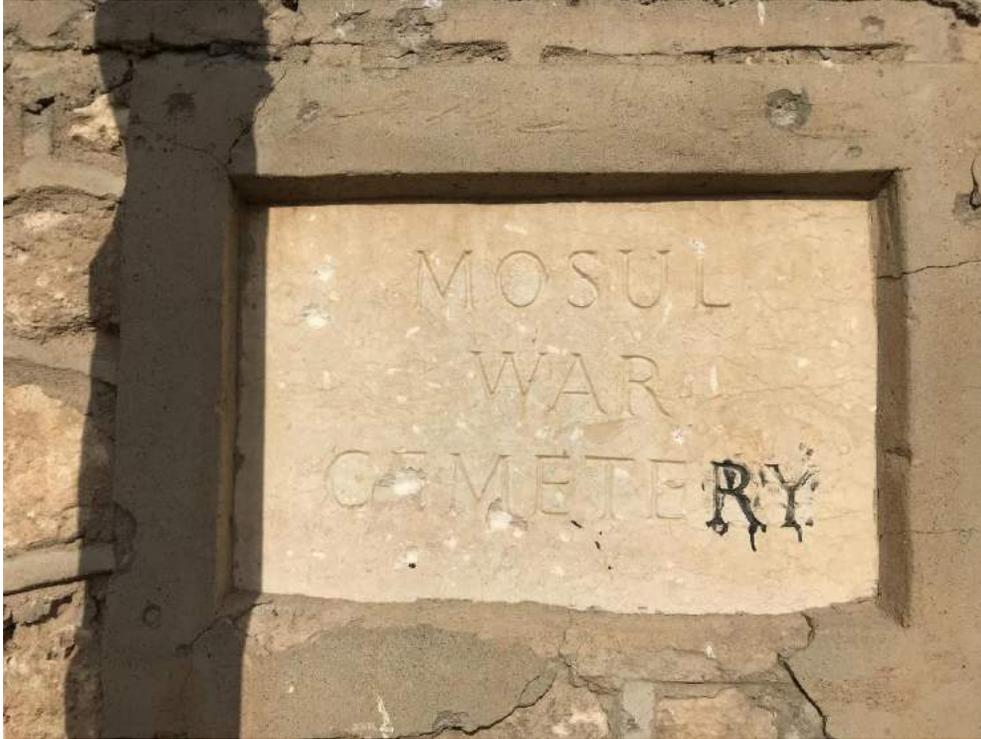
<https://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/69702/Mosul%20War%20Cemetery>

Campbell MacDiarmid:

<https://twitter.com/CampbellMacD/status/943384628513198081>



The entrance to the Mosul War Cemetery (Campbell MacDiarmid; December 22, 2017)



Damage to the Mosul War Cemetery entrance sign (Campbell MacDiarmid; December 22, 2017)



The Mosul War Cemetery showing bulldozing or large equipment tracks (Campbell MacDiarmid; December 22, 2017)



The Mosul War Cemetery showing bulldozing or large equipment tracks (Campbell MacDiarmid; December 22, 2017)



The Mosul War Cemetery showing bulldozing or large equipment tracks (Campbell MacDiarmid; December 22, 2017)



The Mosul War Cemetery showing damage to buildings (Campbell MacDiarmid; December 22, 2017)



Damage to a headstone (Campbell MacDiarmid; December 22, 2017)



Damage to a tombstone (Campbell MacDiarmid; December 22, 2017)



Debris from damage to a possible headstone or sign (Campbell MacDiarmid; December 22, 2017)



Damage to a grave (Campbell MacDiarmid; December 22, 2017)



Damage to a headstone (Campbell MacDiarmid; December 22, 2017)



Damage to a headstone (Campbell MacDiarmid; December 22, 2017)



Damage to a headstone (Campbell MacDiarmid; December 22, 2017)



Damage to a headstone (Campbell MacDiarmid; December 22, 2017)



Damage to a headstone (Campbell MacDiarmid; December 22, 2017)



Damage to a grave in the Mosul War Cemetery (Campbell MacDiarmid; December 20, 2017)



Damage to the gravestone of Sergeant Watkin Hugh Price (Campbell MacDiarmid; December 20, 2017)



Spent munitons at the Mosul War Cemetery (Campbell MacDiarmid; December 22, 2017)



The British Cemetery in Mosul prior to any damages or change (DigitalGlobe NextView License; December 2, 2010)



Initial damage to the cemetery indicated by red arrows. Several modern structures around the edges of the cemetery. The installation of the structure on the southwest corners appeared to be the most damaging. There are visible bulldozer scars toward the east (DigitalGlobe NextView License; September 10, 2016)



Increased damage to the cemetery as a result of airstrikes, as evidenced by two craters and indicated by red arrows, as well as other forms of destruction. At least three buildings have been destroyed by unknown means, also indicated by red arrows (DigitalGlobe NextView License; July 27, 2017)

**IHI 17-0084**

**Report Date:** December 20, 2017

**Site Name:** Derbon Cemetery

**Date of Incident:** December 18, 2017

**Location:** Derbon, Dohuk Governorate, Iraq

**Site Description:** Christian Cemetery in Derbon

**Site Date:** Unknown

**Incident Summary:** Newly released photographs show damage to cemetery.

**Incident Source and Description:** On December 18, 2017 Nahrain Post published photographs showing damage to the Christian cemetery in Derbon, including cracked and toppled tombstones.<sup>98</sup>

**Pattern:** Vandalism.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of the Derbon Cemetery, as well as the condition of other religious sites located in regions subject to intentional damage.

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

Nahrain Post: <https://www.facebook.com/NahrainPost/posts/1205129986297565>

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<sup>98</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/NahrainPost/posts/1205129986297565>



Damage to a Christian grave in Derbon (Nahrain Post; December 18, 2017)



Damage to a Christian Grave in Derbon (Nahrain Post; December 18, 2017)



Damage to a Christian Grave in Derbon (Nahrain Post; December 18, 2017)

**IHI 17-0085****Report Date:** December 28, 2017**Site Name:** Hatra (الحضر)**Date of Incident:** December 14, 2017**Location:** Hatra, Ninawa Governorate, Iraq**Site Description:** According to UNESCO:

“The city of Hatra—a large fortified urban center—was built by the Seleucid Empire in the third or second centuries BCE and was later conquered by the Parthians. During the first and second centuries CE it rose to prominence as a religious center and as a major trading city along the Silk Road. Roman Emperors Trajan and Septimius Severus unsuccessfully attempted to capture the city in 116 CE and 198 CE, respectively. Hatra eventually formed an alliance with the Romans in 230 CE, during the reign of Emperor Gordian III, but the city was conquered in 241 CE and destroyed by Ardashir I (226–42 CE), founder of the Sassanid dynasty...The surviving remains of Hatra date between the first century BCE and the second century CE. The city is approximately 2 km in diameter and was protected by two large fortification walls, separated by a wide ditch with four fortified gates. The city center is marked by a temple complex dedicated to several Greco-Roman, Mesopotamian, Canaanite, Aramean, and Arabian deities, with monumental architectural remains blending Hellenistic, Roman, and Middle Eastern traditions. The archaeological site was successfully inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1985.”<sup>99</sup>

**Site Date:** 3rd/2nd century BCE–241 CE**Incident Summary:** Newly released photographs show the condition of Hatra.

**Incident Source and Description:** On December 28, 2017 an in-country source sent photographs to ASOR CHI taken at Hatra approximately two weeks prior. These images show human and animal carvings that were damaged by ISIS, as well as damage to buildings from small-arms fire. Some photos also show damage due to weathering and neglect of the site. These photographs have also appeared on social media sites beginning around December 28.<sup>100</sup> DigitalGlobe satellite imagery shows no new damage has occurred at Hatra during the past month.

For more information on previous damage to Hatra, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 15-0068** in **Weekly Report 31**, **IHI 15-0068 UPDATE** in **Weekly Report 35**, **IHI 17-0024** in **Weekly Report 137–140**, **IHI 17-0024 UPDATE** in **Weekly Report 141–144**.

**Pattern:** Site management: tourism/visitor activity; Military activity: gunfire/light weaponry; Military activity: occupation/militarization; Military activity: reuse of ancient/historic structure; Military activity: intentional performative destruction; Natural impacts.

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<sup>99</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/277>

<sup>100</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=2029457817284358&id=1792507200979422](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=2029457817284358&id=1792507200979422)

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of Hatra, as well as the condition of other cultural sites located in regions subject to intentional damage, military activity, and neglect. Hatra is on the World Heritage List of Iraqi sites, and as such ASOR CHI is committed to monitoring its damage status.

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

Civilisation of East:

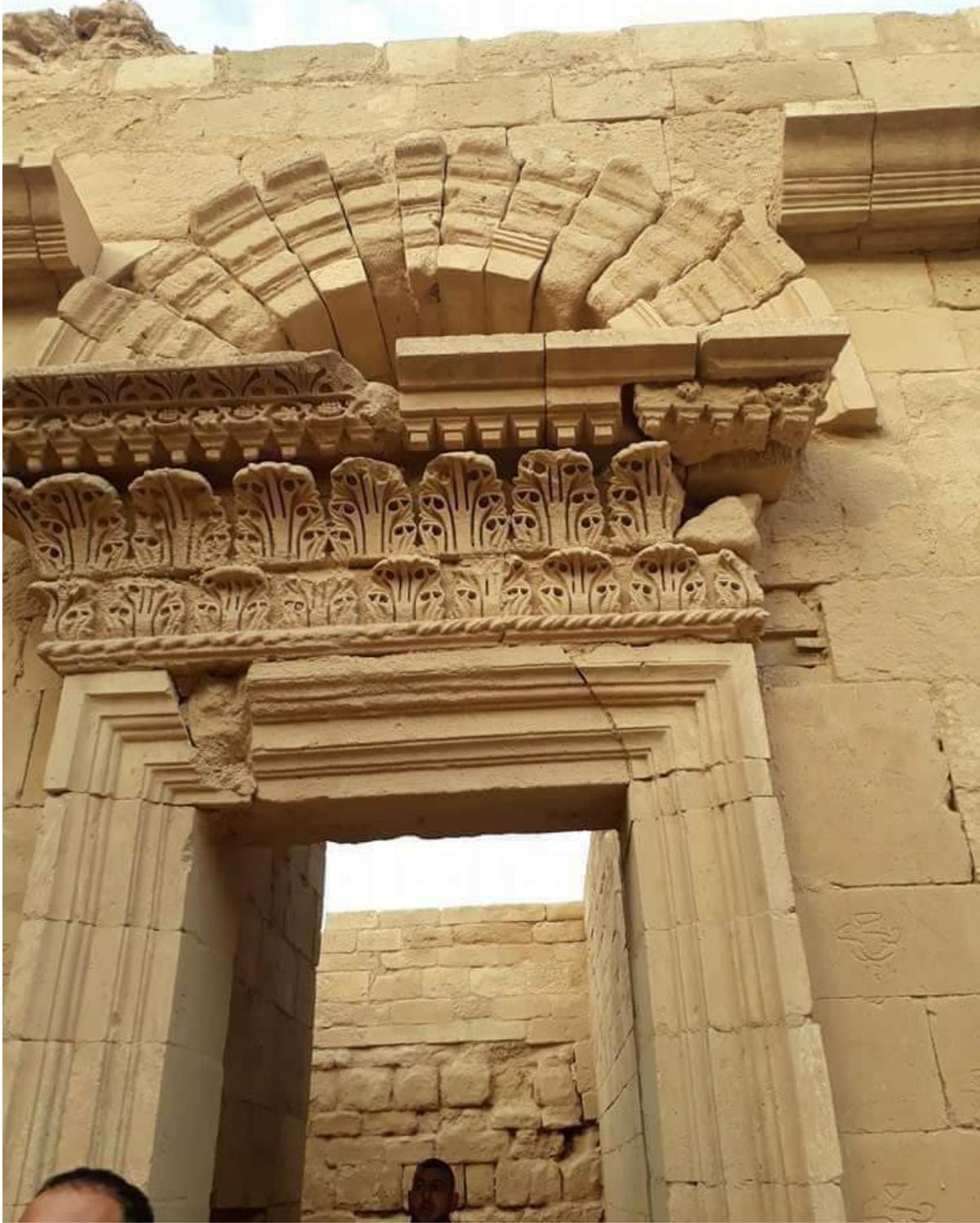
[https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=2029457817284358&id=1792507200979422](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=2029457817284358&id=1792507200979422)

Scholarly:

UNESCO: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/277>



Destruction of statue of Shahru and presence of gunfire/shrapnel holes in walls (ASOR CHI Source; December 14, 2017)



Damage to lintel above a doorway at Hatra (ASOR CHI Source; December 14, 2017)



Intentional damage to gorgon image on left side of entrance to iwan on east side of side, as well as damage from weathering (ASOR CHI Source; December 14, 2017)



Damage to a building at Hatra showing a destroyed column and gunfire/shrapnel holes in the facade (ASOR CHI Source; December 14, 2017)



Damage to a gateway from gunfire/shrapnel and damage to a face either intentional or due to weathering (ASOR CHI Source; December 14, 2017)



Carvings of camels at entrance to Temple of Allat that have remained relatively untouched by ISIS (ASOR CHI Source; December 14, 2017)



Damage to a buttress at Hatra, due to weathering and neglect (ASOR CHI Source; December 14, 2017)

## Incident Reports: Libya

### LHI 17-0036 UPDATE

**Report Date:** December 24, 2017

**Site Name:** Qasr al-Manar (قصر المنار)

**Date of Incident:** December 24, 2017

**Location:** Benghazi, Cyrenaica, Libya

**Site Description:** An Italian-era palace built to be the seat of the Italian Governors of Libya, this site was also the location where King Idris declared Libya to be an independent nation.

**Site Date:** 1913 CE

**Incident Summary:** Newly released photographs show damage to Qasr al-Manar.

**Incident Source and Description:** To commemorate the anniversary of the declaration of Libyan Independence on December 24, 1951 Ayad Aslil, a member of the Libyan Department of Antiquities (DoA) in Benghazi, circulated two photographs. The first shows the balcony of Qasr al-Manar as it was when King Idris announced Libyan Independence from that spot. The second shows the current state of the same balcony, which was largely destroyed during the battle of Benghazi. DoA Benghazi is currently working to restore Qasr al-Manar.

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives; Site management.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of Qasr al-Manar, as well as the condition of other heritage sites located in regions subject to intense military activity. ASOR CHI is also committed to helping the DoA Benghazi.

### Sources:

#### Online Reporting:

Private Facebook Account



King Idris announcing Libyan Independence from the balcony of Qasr al-Manar on December 24, 1951 (Private Facebook Account)



The current condition of the same balcony at Qasr al Manar (Private Facebook Account)

## **LHI 17-0038 UPDATE**

**Report Date:** December 18, 2017

**Site Name:** Qasr al-Birka

**Date of Incident:** December 18, 2017

**Location:** Benghazi, Cyrenaica, Libya

**Site Description:** Qasr al-Birka was built by the Ottoman governor Rashid Pasha II and is one of the most prominent public buildings in southern Benghazi.

**Site Date:** 1895 CE

**Incident Summary:** Newly released photographs show stabilization of Qasr al-Birka.

**Incident Source and Description:** As part of the ongoing effort to stabilize Qasr al-Birka with the assistance of ICCROM ATHAR and the Prince Claus Fund, DoA has installed some preliminary shoring in the interior of the building.

**Pattern:** Site management: reconstruction.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of Qasr al-Birka, as well as the condition of other heritage sites located in regions subject to intense military activity. ASOR CHI is also committed to helping the DoA Benghazi.

### **Sources:**

Online Reporting:

Private Facebook Account



Shoring installed inside Qasr al-Birka (Private Facebook Account)



Shoring installed inside Qasr al-Birka (Private Facebook Account)



Shoring installed inside Qasr al-Birka (Private Facebook Account)

**LHI 17-0041**

**Report Date:** December 12, 2017

**Site Name:** Berenice

**Date of Incident:** December 12, 2017

**Location:** Benghazi, Cyrenaica, Libya

**Site Description:** Eusperides was an ancient Greek colony founded in the 5th century BCE and renamed Berenice 200 years later.<sup>101</sup> The site later fell to the Romans and prospered until the 5th century CE, when it was attacked by Vandals. The site then dwindled to a small village. The remains of the site are located along the corniche to the northeast of the Old City of Benghazi.

**Site Date:** 3rd century BCE to 5th century CE

**Incident Summary:** The Libyan Department of Antiquities (DoA) relocated items from a storeroom.

**Incident Source and Description:** Given the ongoing fighting in the neighborhood of Sidi Khrebish, (adjacent to Bernice) DoA sought and received authorization from the Engineering Corps of the Libyan National Army to remove the most valuable artifacts from the storerooms of Bernice. The items included three bronze bells which once hung in the Italian colonial cathedral of Benghazi, other furniture and carved decoration from this church, as well as Islamic period gravestones. DoA Benghazi announced this move on their official Facebook page.

**Pattern:** Site management.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of Berenice as well as the condition of other heritage sites located in regions subject to intense military activity. ASOR CHI is also committed to helping the DoA Benghazi.

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

Akhbar Libya 24: <http://www.akhbarlibya24.net/2017/12/12/مراقبة-آثار-بنغازي-تنقل-قطع-أثرية-نادر/>

Private Facebook Account

Scholarly

The Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Sites (Perseus Project, Tufts):  
<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0006%3Aalphabeti+c+letter+%3DE%3Aentry+group%3D3%3Aentry%3Deusperides>

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<sup>101</sup><http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0006%3Aalphabeti+c+letter+%3DE%3Aentry+group%3D3%3Aentry%3Deusperides>



DoA Benghazi staff work to remove one of the bells from the Bernice storeroom (Private Facebook Account)



DoA Benghazi staff remove one of the carved decorations associated with the Italian colonial cathedral from the Bernice storeroom (Private Facebook Account)



DoA Benghazi staff remove one of the Islamic gravestones from the Bernice storeroom (Private Facebook Account)

**LHI 17-0042**

**Report Date:** December 19, 2017

**Site Name:** al-Faakat (Ard al-Qasibeh)

**Date of Incident:** December 19, 2017

**Location:** Benghazi, Cyrenaica, Libya

**Site Description:** This site, also known as Ard al-Qasibeh, is a small Roman-era settlement.

**Site Date:** 1st–3rd century CE

**Incident Summary:** A Roman-era settlement was damaged by urban encroachment.

**Incident Source and Description:** The Department of Documentation and Recording in the Benghazi office of the Libyan Department of Antiquities (DoA) visited al-Faakat and documented the damage that has occurred as local residents have cleared the land of archaeological material to make way for the construction of new homes.

DigitalGlobe satellite imagery confirms that the archaeological remains in the area were compromised by development disturbances between November 5, 2011 and January 16, 2016. There is visible road work, newly constructed modern buildings, and soil dumping within the vicinity of the archaeological site.

**Pattern:** Development disturbances.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of al-Faakat, as well as the condition of other heritage sites located in regions subject to intense military activity. ASOR CHI is also committed to helping the DoA Benghazi.

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

Private Facebook Account



Al-Faakat prior to an increase in development disturbances (DigitalGlobe NextView License; November 5, 2011)



Red arrows indicate mounds of soil, new modern buildings and new roads surrounding the archaeological remains (DigitalGlobe NextView License; January 16, 2016)

**LHI 17-0043**

**Report Date:** December 21, 2017

**Site Name:** Ptolemais

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

**Location:** Tolmeitha, Cyrenaica, Libya

**Site Description:** Ptolemais was one of the five cities of the Roman pentapolis in eastern Libya. Built on top of a small Greek settlement dating to the 7th Century BCE, the city was founded and grew to over 280 hectares under Ptolemaic rule. The ancient city remains largely intact today, and is well known for a series of well preserved villas, public buildings, and a substantial water cistern.<sup>102</sup>

**Site Date:** 3rd Century BCE to 7th Century CE

**Incident Summary:** A stone sculpture was discovered in Ptolemais.

**Incident Source and Description:** Recent heavy rains in eastern Libya revealed portion of a stone sculpture at Ptolemais, near the ancient cistern. A local resident visiting the site noticed the sculpture sticking out and alerted the Tourist Police on site. The Tourist Police notified the Department of Antiquities (DoA), which excavated the sculpture, removed it to their storeroom for safekeeping, and provided a preliminary description of it on their Facebook page. DoA plans to conduct further salvage excavations in the area to properly describe the context of this rare find.

**Pattern:** Site management; Natural impacts.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of Ptolemais, as well as the condition of other heritage sites located in regions subject to natural impacts. ASOR CHI is also committed to helping the DoA and Tourist Police.

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

Private Facebook Account

Libya Herald:

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2017/12/22/rain-reveals-roman-statue-in-tolmeitha/>

Scholarly

The Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Sites (Perseus Project, Tufts):

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0006%3Aentry%3Dptolemais-2>

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<sup>102</sup> <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0006%3Aentry%3Dptolemais-2>



Members of DoA work to uncover the statue in Ptolemais (Private Facebook Account)



The general form of the statue is revealed (Private Facebook Account)



The DoA team removed the statue from the ground and transported it to their storage room on site (Private Facebook Account)

**LHI 17-0044**

**Report Date:** December 24, 2017

**Site Name:** Recovered Head of Cyrene

**Date of Incident:** December 24, 2017

**Location:** Cyrene, Shahat, Cyrenaica, Libya

**Site Description:** The UNESCO World Heritage site of Cyrene is adjacent to the town of Shahat.

**Site Date:** 1st century BCE-3rd century CE

**Incident Summary:** Two men were arrested for smuggling artifacts.

**Incident Source and Description:** LANA News reported that the Department of Criminal Investigations in Shahat received credible information that two individuals had a portion of a Roman-era statue that they intended to sell.<sup>103</sup> The two were apprehended by police, and the head of a Roman-era statue was recovered along with several artworks that appear to have been manufactured recently, including a copper-colored plate.

See the associated incident report in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Cyrene: **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0045**.

**Pattern:** Illegal excavation.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of Cyrene as well as the condition of other heritage sites located in regions subject to illegal excavation. ASOR CHI is also committed to helping the DoA.

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

LANA News: <http://www.lananews.com/ar/?p=106000>

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<sup>103</sup> <http://www.lananews.com/ar/?p=106000>



Head of a Roman-era sculpture recovered by authorities in Shahat (LANA News; December 24, 2017)

**LHI 17-0045**

**Report Date:** December 29, 2017

**Site Name:** Western Necropolis

**Date of Incident:** Ongoing

**Location:** Cyrene, Cyrenaica, Libya

**Site Description:** The Western Necropolis consists of a large number of rock cut tombs that lie beyond the fenced area of the UNESCO World Heritage site of Cyrene.

**Site Date:** 1st century BCE to 3rd century CE

**Incident Summary:** Illegal excavation is occurring in Cyrene.

**Incident Source and Description:** Ali Saadi, a prominent photographer in Shahat, visited the Western Necropolis and discovered evidence of recent illegal excavation of the tombs in this area. He alerted the local office of the Libyan Department of Antiquities (DoA) about this discovery, and posted photographic evidence of the looting on Facebook.

See the associated incident report in this monthly report for objects that were possibly looted from Cyrene: **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0044**.

**Pattern:** Illegal excavation.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of Cyrene, as well as the condition of other heritage sites located in regions subject to illegal excavation. ASOR CHI is also committed to helping the DoA Benghazi.

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

Private Facebook Account



Rock cut tomb of the Western Necropolis with signs of recent excavation (Private Facebook Account)



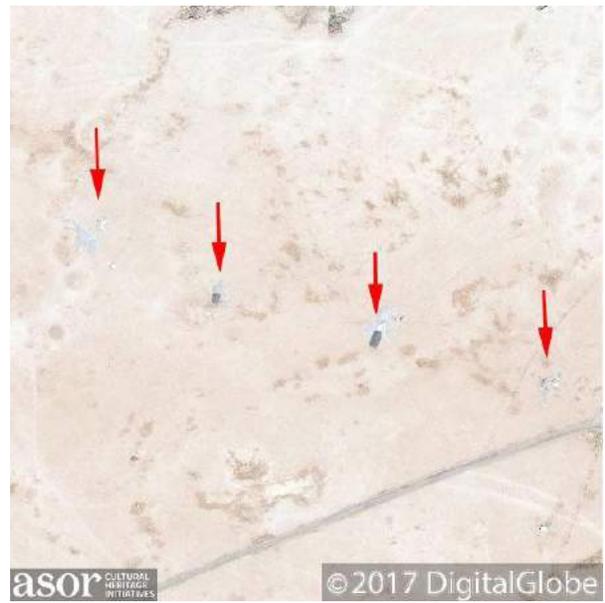
Interior of a cut tomb in the Western Necropolis, recently excavated by looters (Private Facebook Account)



Rock cut tomb of the Western Necropolis with signs of recent excavation (Private Facebook Account)

## Satellite Imagery and Geospatial Analysis

Since January 23, 2017 there have been some changes to the site of Dura Europos, as identified in satellite imagery. While the site was already severely damaged due to large scale illegal excavations beginning in 2014, looting has spread to additional areas and existing looting pits have been expanded. Between January 23, 2017 and May 12, 2017 there were minor increases in illegal excavation south of the ancient walls surrounding the site. Between May 12, 2017 and August 31, 2017 there were four instances of bulldozing/leveling approximately 950 m south of the site. This does not appear to have damaged any visible archaeological remains but may be related to acts of illegal excavation. Temporary tents were erected for a few months. After their removal, the area was leveled using heavy machinery. During this same time period, there was an increase in illegal excavations within the area of the Dig House. Large rectangular pits were dug into the courtyard. By late December 2017, there were also three visible white tents erected within the site of Dura Europos, one within the courtyard of the Dux Ripae Palace and another outside the Palmyrene Gate. Their purpose is not clear from the satellite images alone.

 <p>asor CULTURAL HERITAGE INITIATIVES © 2017 DigitalGlobe</p>	 <p>asor CULTURAL HERITAGE INITIATIVES © 2017 DigitalGlobe</p>
<p>Four areas prior to bulldozing, occupied by modern implements (DigitalGlobe NextView License; May 12, 2017)</p>	<p>Four instances of bulldozing indicated by arrows (DigitalGlobe NextView License; August 31, 2017)</p>



The Dig House prior to an increase in illegal excavation (DigitalGlobe NextView License; May 12, 2017)



Four instances of increased illegal excavation indicated by arrows (DigitalGlobe NextView License; August 31, 2017)



White tent erected within the Dux Ripae Palace at Dura Europos (DigitalGlobe NextView License; December 31, 2017)



White tent located close to the Palmyrene Gate (DigitalGlobe NextView License; December 31, 2017)

In a recent image from November 14, 2017, there are several visible changes due to airstrikes. There is a small crater along the eastern edge of the site in an agricultural field, just north of the Dig House. There is another small crater, along with darker colored soil approximately 200 m

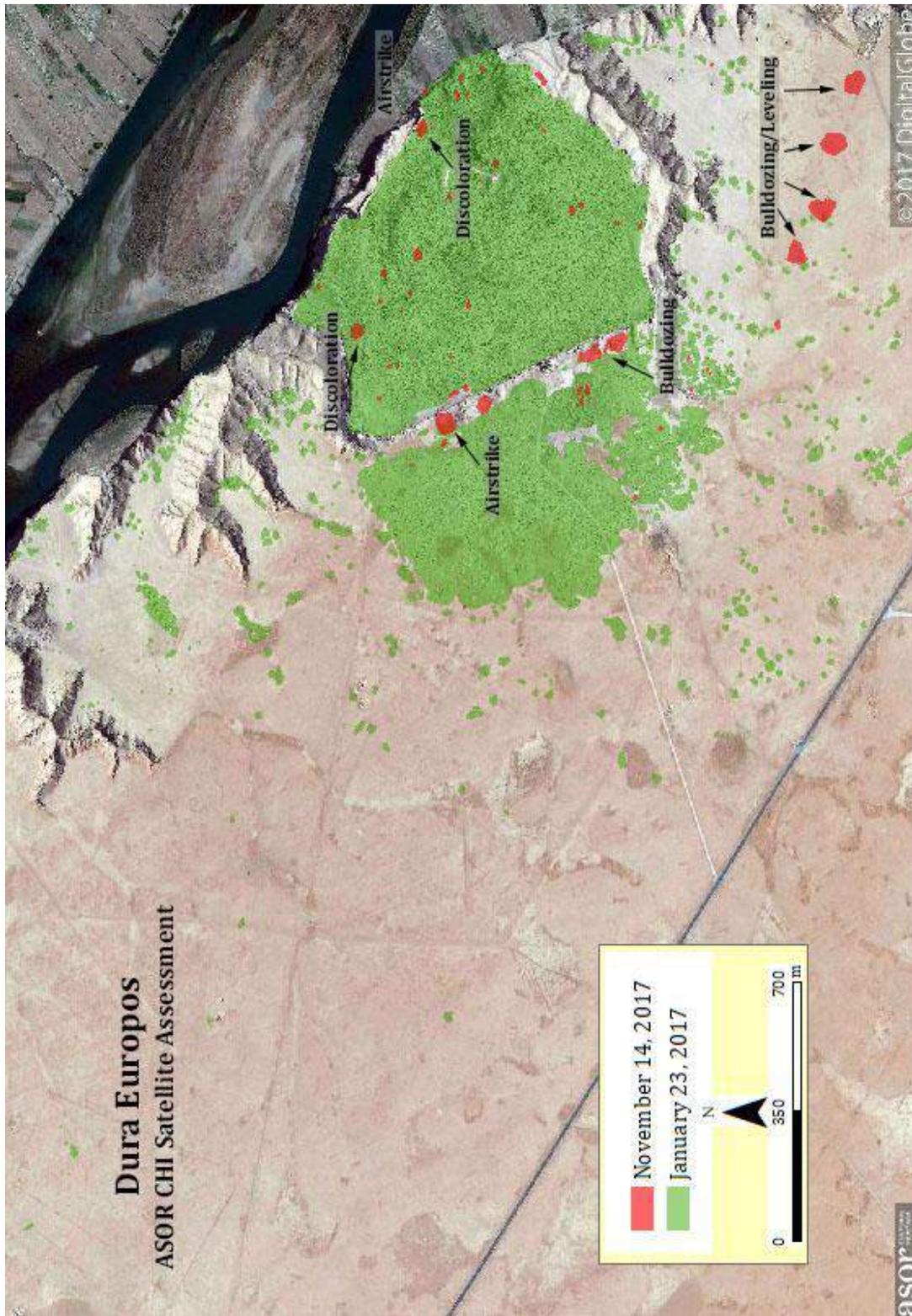
northwest of the Synagogue and just west of the site's wall. This appears to be from an explosion or possible airstrike.



Crater visible within red circle, north of the Dig House (DigitalGlobe NextView License; November 14, 2017)



Evidence of an airstrike visible within the red circle (DigitalGlobe NextView License; November 14, 2017)



This overview map illustrates the extent of looting as of January 23, 2017 in green with increases in damage as of November 14, 2017 in red. (ASOR CHI/DigitalGlobe NextView License; November 14, 2017)

## SNHR Vital Facilities Report

On December 9, 2017 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) released a vital facilities report for November 2017. According to SNHR, there were 98 attacks against vital civilian facilities. The sites attacked include 26 mosques.<sup>104</sup>

- On November 1, SARG warplanes reportedly fired missiles at al-Ta'as Mosque in the town of al-Ta'as, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, damaging the mosque. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0196**
- On November 5, SARG warplanes reportedly fired missiles at a mosque in Subaykhan, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, causing minor damage to the mosque.
- On November 8, SARG warplanes reportedly fired a missile at al-Kabir Mosque in Kafr Batna, Rif Dimashq Governorate, severely damaging the mosque and rendering it out of commission. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0203**
- On November 11, SARG forces reportedly shelled Uthman ibn Affan Mosque in Talbisa, Homs Governorate, causing moderate damage to the mosque. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0204**
- On November 12, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham fighters reportedly fired mortar shells near Saad ibn Mouath Mosque in Kafr Naha, Aleppo Governorate, damaging the mosque's minaret. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0207**
- On November 17, Russian warplanes reportedly fired missiles at al-Tawhid Mosque in al-Ghabra, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, severely damaging the mosque and rendering it out of commission. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0214**
- On November 18, SARG forces reportedly shelled the Fatima al-Zahraa Mosque in al-Bukamal (Abu Kamal), Deir ez-Zor Governorate, severely damaging the mosque and rendering it out of commission.
- On November 22, SARG warplanes reportedly fired missiles near Omar ibn al-Khattab Mosque in al-Kishkiyeh, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, causing moderate damage to the mosque. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0216**
- On November 27, SARG warplanes fired a missile at al-Qadim Mosque in Misraba, Rif Dimashq Governorate, severely damaging the mosque. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0210**
- On November 27, a mortar shell fired by an unknown party struck Abdullah ibn Rawaha Mosque in Damascus, Damascus Governorate, causing moderate damage to the mosque. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0217**

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<sup>104</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/12/09/49325/>

## Heritage Timeline

- December 31, 2017 **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-31-december-2017/>
- December 30, 2017 *The Libya Observer* published an article titled “**Libyan Antiquities Authority kicks off survey project in eastern region**” (by Safa Alharathy). The Libyan Antiquities Authority launched an archaeological survey project in the coastal area extending from Tobra town to Tolmeita.  
<https://www.libyaobserver.ly/inbrief/libyan-antiquities-authority-kicks-survey-project-eastern-region>
- December 29, 2017 *Gulf News* published an article titled “**In rubble of Aleppo souk, tablecloth shop makes solitary comeback.**” Few shopkeepers have returned to marketplaces like Khan al-Harir in Aleppo.  
<http://gulfnews.com/news/mena/syria/in-rubble-of-aleppo-souk-tablecloth-shop-makes-solitary-comeback-1.2145961>
- *Al Monitor* published an article titled “**One year later, Aleppo's residents still mourn destroyed city**” (by Marta Bellingeri). A discussion of the destruction of Aleppo, a year after its recapture by SARG forces.  
<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/12/syria-one-year-after-aleppo-battle-journalists-arrest.html>
- December 28, 2017 *The Associated Press* published an article titled “**Few ready to pay to rebuild Iraq after Islamic State defeat**” (by Susannah George & Lori Hinnant). Baghdad estimates \$100 billion is needed nationwide to rebuild, while local leaders in Mosul say that amount is needed to rehabilitate their city alone.  
[https://apnews.com/daf97af61a044eecd9c5f2a7b283ed00?utm\\_campaign=SocialFlow&utm\\_source=Twitter&utm\\_medium=AP](https://apnews.com/daf97af61a044eecd9c5f2a7b283ed00?utm_campaign=SocialFlow&utm_source=Twitter&utm_medium=AP)
- December 27, 2017 *Al Monitor* published an article titled “**Reviving Kurdish language in northern Syria**” (by Mohammed Abdulsattar Ibrahim). The semi-autonomous Kurdish regions of northern Syria have opened higher education institutions aimed at promoting and teaching Kurdish as an official language, along with Arabic and Syriac.  
<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/12/syria-kurdish-language-official-self-administration.html>

December 24, 2017

*CBS News* published an article titled “**The men saving history from ISIS**” (by Lesley Stahl). A Benedictine monk from Minnesota and a Dominican friar from Iraq are working to rescue old documents and manuscripts from sites like the Monastery of Mar Behnam in northern Iraq.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/the-men-saving-history-from-isis/>

- *Al Monitor* published an article titled “**Iraqi Christians return after IS amid safety concerns**” (by Judit Neurink). Christian families are slow to return to their homes in towns in the Ninawa Plains, citing unease with the presence of Muslim militias.  
<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/12/qaraqosh-bartella-christian-iraq-nineveh.html>
- *Reuters* published an article titled “**For Iraq's Christians, a bittersweet first Christmas home after Islamic State**” (by Raya Jalabi). Renovations have been carried out at several churches in Northern Iraq, including the Church of St. George in Teleskuf and the Church of al-Tahira in Qaraqosh.  
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-christmas-season-iraq-nineveh/for-iraqs-christians-a-bittersweet-first-christmas-home-after-islamic-state-idUSKBN1EIOLA?il=0>

December 22, 2017

*Libya Herald* published an article titled “**Rain reveals Roman statue in Tolmeitha**” (by Jamal Adel). Heavy rains in the region of the archaeological site of Ptolemais revealed a Roman statue in the vicinity of an ancient cistern.

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2017/12/22/rain-reveals-roman-statue-in-tolmeitha/>

- **The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation** published a statement titled “**Joint Statement on humanitarian mine action in Syria including the UNESCO list of cultural heritage sites.**” Iran, Russia, and Turkey released a joint statement declaring that there exists a large-scale threat of deliberate destruction and mining of world historical monuments and UNESCO cultural heritage sites in Syria by terrorist organizations and mines.  
[http://www.mid.ru/en\\_GB/foreign\\_policy/news/-/asset\\_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/3001245](http://www.mid.ru/en_GB/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/3001245)
- *The Smithsonian* published an article titled “**Manhattan DA Launches First Antiquities Trafficking Unit**” (by Jason Daley). The Manhattan District Attorney’s office announced the formation of its first antiquities trafficking unit, which will be comprised of composed of lawyers, a paralegal, and a team of antiquities trafficking analysts.  
<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/manhattan-da-launches-first-antiquities-trafficking-unit-180967607/>

December 21, 2017

*Dipnote* published an article titled “**How the U.S. is Helping Iraqis Recover from ISIS**” (by Thomas Staal). USAID is currently reviewing proposals from a wide array of groups concerned about the future of Iraq, “including groups concerned about the preservation of religious and ethnic diversity in the country.”

<https://blogs.state.gov/stories/2017/12/21/en/how-us-helping-iraqis-recover-isis>

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*Reuters* published an article titled “**Turkey seizes largest ever haul of ancient statues and coins.**” Turkish police announced they rescued thousands of Anatolian, Greek, and Egyptian artifacts in the largest operation to combat smuggling of ancient treasures in the country’s history.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-smuggling/turkey-seizes-largest-ever-haul-of-ancient-statues-and-coins-idUSKBN1EF1L0>

December 20, 2017

*Daily Sabah* published an article titled “**500-year-old Syrian rug seized in anti-smuggling op in Ankara.**” Turkish police seized a rug thought to have been looted from a Syrian museum and smuggled into Turkey.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/investigations/2017/12/20/500-year-old-syrian-rug-seized-in-anti-smuggling-op-in-ankara>

December 19, 2017

*National Geographic* published an article titled “**Beautiful Babylon: Jewel of the Ancient World**” (by Juan Luis Montero Fenollós). The history and mythology of Babylon is explored.

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/archaeology-and-history/magazine/2017/01-02/babylon-mesopotamia-ancient-city-iraq/>

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*Penn Current* published an article titled “**Enlisting dogs to sniff out stolen antiquities**” (by Katherine Unger Baillie). The Penn Vet Working Dog Center and the Penn Museum at the University of Pennsylvania are part of an effort to train dogs to help prevent the smuggling of archaeological artifacts.

<https://penncurrent.upenn.edu/features/enlisting-dogs-to-sniff-out-stolen-antiquities>

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*Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique* published a press release titled “**Découverte d'un réseau militaire vieux de 4 000 ans en Syrie du Nord.**” A joint French-Syrian team led by the DGAM and researchers from Archéorient at Université Lumière Lyon 2 announced the discovery of a 4,000-year old network of fortifications in Syria’s Hama Governorate.

<http://www2.cnrs.fr/presse/communiqu/5377.htm>

December 18, 2017

DGAM published an article titled “افتتاح معرض  
للصور في حمص بعنوان: تراث حمص.. المأساة.. عودة الألق

(**The opening of a photo exhibition in Homs titled ‘Heritage of Homs: Tragedy and Return to Glory’.**)” A new exhibition displays photographs and video footage of restoration efforts carried out by the DGAM in Homs at cultural sites like the Palace of al-Zahrawi, the Church of Umm al-Zanar, the Khalid ibn al-Walid Mosque, and the city’s historic souqs.

<http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=177&id=2366>

December 16, 2017

*The Financial Tribune* published an article titled “**World Museums Join to Combat Destruction of Antiquities.**” On December 8, 2017 directors from 19 museums, including the Louvre, the Smithsonian Institute, the Rijksmuseum and the Hermitage Museum, signed the ReACH (Reproduction of Art and Cultural Heritage) initiative to combat the destruction of antiquities.

<https://financialtribune.com/articles/art-and-culture/77938/world-museums-join-to-combat-destruction-of-antiquities>

December 14, 2017

*The Atlantic* published an article titled “**What It's Like to Evacuate a Museum in a Natural Disaster**” (by Sarah Zhang). Participants in the weeklong Heritage Emergency and Response Training workshop at the Smithsonian took part in a drill exercise in which a group of cultural-heritage professionals and emergency responders tried to evacuate a fictional museum after a pretend cyclone.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2017/12/museum-evacuation/547514/>

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*Global Journalist* published an article titled “**In looted artifacts, archaeologist sees destruction of past**” (by Lexi Churchill & Jiwon Choi). Dr. Mark Altaweel, a Near East specialist at University College London’s Institute of Archaeology, searches for looted artifacts in the antiquities shops of London.

<http://globaljournalist.org/2017/12/in-looted-antiquities-archaeologist-sees-destruction-of-past/>

December 13, 2017

*The Journal of Field Archaeology* published an article titled “**The Illegal Excavation and Trade of Syrian Cultural Objects: A View from the Ground**” (by Neil Brodie & Isber Sabrine). This paper presents texts of interviews with seven people resident in Syria who have first-hand knowledge of the trade in illegally excavated artifacts. It uses information they provided to suggest a model of socio-economic organization of the Syrian war economy regarding the trafficking of cultural objects.

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00934690.2017.1410919>

- December 11, 2017 *The Libya Observer* published an article titled “**King Idris museum to be opened in Jaghbub.**” A new museum in the town of Jaghbub will showcase artifacts excavated in the area.  
<https://www.libyaherald.com/2017/12/12/king-idris-museum-to-be-opened-in-jaghbub/>
- **Heritage for Peace** published its bi-weekly newsletter titled “**Damage to Syria’s Heritage - December 11, 2017.**”  
<http://www.heritageforpeace.org/syria-culture-and-heritage/damage-to-cultural-heritage/previous-damage-newsletters/damage-to-syrias-heritage-11-december-2017/>
- December 10, 2017 *The New York Times* published an article titled “**After Fall of ISIS, Iraq’s Second-Largest City Picks Up the Pieces**” (by Margaret Coker). A discussion of efforts to rebuild areas across Mosul, including Mosul University where classes have recently restarted.  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/10/world/middleeast/iraq-isis-mosul.html? r=0>
- December 7, 2017 **Human Rights Watch** published an article titled “**Libya: New Wave of Attacks Against Sufi Sites.**” Two Sufi mosques in Tripoli have been attacked and damaged in the last two months: Sheikha Radiya Zawiyat and Sidi Abu Gharara Mosque.  
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/12/07/libya-new-wave-attacks-against-sufi-sites>
- *The National* published an article titled “**Roman imperial treasures looted by ISIL on US wanted list**” (by Rob Crilly). American authorities are trying to recover a collection of ancient gold artifacts allegedly looted by ISIS, including a gold ring sold for \$250,000 and jewels depicting a Roman emperor.  
<https://www.thenational.ae/world/the-americas/roman-imperial-treasures-looted-by-isil-on-us-wanted-list-1.682656>
  - *News Deeply* published an article titled “**Women at the Forefront of Saving Syria’s Heritage**” (by Arwa al-Basha & Florence Massena). A discussion of the role of Syrian women at home and internationally in safeguarding Syrian cultural heritage, including work with The Day After Project.  
<https://www.newsdeeply.com/syria/articles/2017/12/07/women-at-the-forefront-of-saving-syrias-heritage>
  - *Hyperallergic* published an article titled “**How Antiquities Have Been Weaponized in the Struggle to Preserve Culture**” (by Michael Press). The author argues that news media tend to highlight or exaggerate looting of or damage to archaeological and historic sites by ISIS in Syria, while overlooking the same by SARG forces, Syrian opposition groups, or Syrian civilians.  
<https://hyperallergic.com/415471/how-antiquities-have-been-weaponized-in-the-struggle-to-preserve-culture/>

December 6, 2017

*Iraq News* published an article titled “**Iraq, with UNESCO’s help, to rebuild historic Mosul minaret next week**” (by Mohamed Mostafa). Iraqi engineering teams hope to restore al-Hadba Minaret in Mosul in the next three months. The minaret was blown up by ISIS in June 2017.

<https://www.iraqinews.com/features/iraq-unescos-help-rebuild-historic-mosul-minaret-next-week/>

- *The Washington Times* published an article titled “**Rich in historic architecture, Mosul faces a painful recovery from Islamic State war**” (by Gilgamesh Nabeel & Jacob Wirtschafter). A discussion of the challenges facing reconstruction efforts in Mosul. Lisa Grande, head of the UN Development Program in Iraq, estimates that the cost of stabilizing western Mosul neighborhoods and making them habitable could surpass \$700 million.

<https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/dec/6/mosul-war-recovery-threatens-historic-architecture/>

- The **Protecting the Past Conference** published a post titled “**Protecting the Past 2017: Conference statement.**” This conference, which ended on December 4, brought together specialists from the Middle East, North Africa, the US and Europe to discuss the role of documentation (particularly digital) for the protection of cultural heritage.

<http://www.protectingthepast.com/PtP/news/protecting-the-past-2017-conference-statement/>

- The **U.S. Department of Justice** published a press release titled “**United States Seeks Warrant to Seize Ring Trafficked by ISIS.**” The Department of Justice announced that it is seeking a warrant to seize a Hellenistic-era ring believed to have been trafficked by ISIS and currently in the hands of Turkish authorities.

<https://www.justice.gov/usao-dc/pr/united-states-seeks-warrant-seize-ring-trafficked-islamic-state-iraq-and-syria-isis>

December 5, 2017

**The Federal Register** published a docket titled “**Emergency Import Restrictions Imposed on Archaeological and Ethnological Materials From Libya.**” U.S. Customs and Border Protection and the Department of the Treasury have instituted emergency import restrictions on endangered Libyan cultural property under the Cultural Property Implementation Act.

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/12/05/2017-26278/emergency-import-restrictions-imposed-on-archaeological-and-ethnological-materials-from-libya>

- *Arab News* published an article titled “**Reconstruction of Aleppo’s Old City faces cultural, logistical challenges**” (by Alan Tello). The Syrian government announced in May 2017 that plans were underway to renovate and restore around 250 buildings in Aleppo’s Old City. Experts warn that “such processes often fail to take into account the needs and desires of local communities.”  
<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1203801/middle-east>
  - *El País* published an article titled “**Syria begins to rebuild**” (by Natalia Sancha). The Syrian government has begun to restore infrastructure in large cities like Aleppo and Homs.  
[https://elpais.com/elpais/2017/12/04/inenglish/1512390729\\_211293.html](https://elpais.com/elpais/2017/12/04/inenglish/1512390729_211293.html)
- December 3, 2017
- The National* published an article titled “**As the rebuilding of ISIL-desecrated Iraq begins, what will happen to its cultural heritage sites?**” (by Levison Wood). The World Bank approved \$400 million in additional funding to help rebuild parts of Iraq liberated from ISIS, with a small amount of that money pledged to restore cultural heritage sites such as the Old City of Mosul and some damaged religious sites. The author argues it is unlikely that this money will reach more remote sites that are equally deserving of restoration.  
<https://www.thenational.ae/opinion/comment/as-the-rebuilding-of-isil-desecrated-iraq-begins-what-will-happen-to-its-cultural-heritage-sites-1.680966>
- November 30, 2017
- PLOS One* published an article titled “**Satellite imagery-based monitoring of archaeological site damage in the Syrian civil war**” (by Jesse Casana & Elise Jakoby Laugier). This paper presents the results of a project, undertaken in collaboration with the American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR) and the US Department of State, to monitor damage to archaeological sites in Syria, northern Iraq, and southern Turkey using recent, high-resolution satellite imagery.  
<http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0188589>