

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

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Executive Summary

During the reporting period, heavy weaponry and bombardment resulted in significant damage to cultural sites in Syria. In Aleppo Governorate, mortar fire from Opposition Forces damaged a mosque in Aleppo and a mortar shell damaged the Maronite Diocese Office in Damascus. Aerial bombardment resulted in damage to places of worship in Rif Dimashq, Aleppo, Hama, and Idlib Governorates.

Despite significant losses of territory as Iraqi forces have marched toward Mosul, ISIL continues to engage in the intentional destruction of heritage places, resulting in significant losses. The Latin Church in Mosul, also known colloquially as the Clock Tower Church, was demolished by militants during the reporting period. Additionally, the Ziggurat at the archaeological site of Nimrud, the ancient Assyrian capital of Kalhu, was completely leveled, with destruction beginning at some point between September 31 and October 2, 2016 and continuing until October 16.

The liberation of areas east and south of the city by the Mosul Operation has revealed new evidence of damage to cultural sites that occurred earlier during the ISIL occupation of Ninawa Governorate. These regions are home to predominantly Christian populations, and much of the related news media and open source coverage has focused on damaged places of worship and civilian property. Reports so far have covered damage to multiple sites in the towns of Batnaya, Bakhdida (Qaraqosh), Karamlish, and Bartella.

As a consequence of the Mosul Operation Kurdish Peshmerga forces have militarized the site of Khorsabad. The Peshmerga have constructed extensive trenches and earthworks across the entire archaeological mound that cut deep into archaeological deposits and revealed large architectural fragments. The trenching has impacted the entire perimeter of the ancient city and large areas of the palace area. Like the Russian sapper base at Palmyra, the actions of the Peshmerga at Khorsabad may potentially represent a violation of Article 4 of the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, commonly known as the 1954 Hague Convention.

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

Key Points

- Newly published photographs show damage to several Christian sites in Bartella, Ninawa Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0035 UPDATE**).
- New video footage and photographs show destruction of multiple Christian sites in Karamlish, Ninawa Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0038**).
- Satellite imagery confirms ISIL militants demolished a section of the Clock Church in Mosul, Ninawa Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0039**).
- ISIL militant seized and occupy the Grand Mosque of Shirqat, Salah ad Din Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0040**).
- ISIL-affiliated Amaq News Agency released a video of recruitment taking place inside a mosque in Tel Afar, Ninawa Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0041**).
- New video footage and photographs from Batnaya show damage to two churches and the town cemetery (**ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0042**).
- New video footage and photographs show damage to several Christian sites in Bakhdida, Ninawa Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0043**).
- Local reports and new satellite imagery show damage to the site of Khorsabad due to militarization (**ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0044**).
- Satellite imagery shows earthmoving equipment leveled the Ziggurat and damaged the Ishtar Temple at the site of Nimrud, Ninawa Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0045**).
- The DGAM reports ongoing illegal excavation at Dura Europos, Deir ez-Zor Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0161**).
- A missile, allegedly fired by opposition forces, damaged a mosque in the city of Aleppo (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0162**).
- An alleged Russian airstrike damaged a mosque in Darat Izza, Aleppo Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0163**).
- A mortar shell damaged the Maronite Diocese Office in Damascus (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0164**).
- An alleged SARG airstrike damaged a mosque in Tarmala, Idlib Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0165**).
- Alleged SARG forces dropped barrel bombs on a mosque in Kafr Zaita, Hama Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0166**).
- An airstrike, allegedly conducted by SARG or SARG-allied forces, damaged a mosque in Khan al-Sheih, Rif Dimashq Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0167**).
- A Russian airstrike allegedly damaged a mosque in Mashmashan, Idlib Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0168**).

Heritage Timeline

November 15, 2016

The Australian published an article titled “**Syria’s brave monuments men triumph amid tears and ruin**” (by Christina Lamb). Maamoun Abdulkarim, Syria’s Director-General of Antiquities and Museums, is interviewed.

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/world/the-times/syrias-brave-monuments-men-triumph-amid-tears-and-ruin/news-story/765c3b9283d275f350cb559e399db53c>

- *Il Velino* published an article titled “**Iraq, Carabinieri: a Baghdad il corso ‘Tutela Patrimonio Culturale’ per la polizia irachena.**” The Cultural Heritage Protection branch of the Carabinieri held a program for Iraqi police aimed at the development of skills to protect Iraqi cultural heritage.
<http://www.ilvelino.it/it/article/2016/11/15/iraq-carabinieri-a-baghdad-il-corso-tutela-patrimonio-culturale-per-la/5911da5e-e738-49a2-9d86-f25945c02c7c/>
- *Crux* published an article titled “**Digital history captures story of Middle Eastern Christianity**” (by Robin Darling Young). Scholars at the Catholic University of America have initiated a digital history project that aims to create an online archive of the life and language of the Christian communities of the Middle East.
<https://cruxnow.com/global-church/2016/11/15/digital-history-captures-story-middle-eastern-christianity/>
- *Rudaw* published an article titled “**Mosul battle damages major archeological sites**” (by Judit Neurink). ASOR CHI’s Michael Danti discusses the ongoing destruction of and damage to multiple archaeological sites near Mosul.
<http://rudaw.net/english/middleeast/iraq/151120164>
- *Smithsonian* published an article titled “**ISIS has destroyed a nearly 3,000-Year-Old Assyrian ziggurat**” (by Danny Lewis). The recent destruction of the ziggurat at Nimrud by ISIL militants is discussed.
<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/isis-has-destroyed-nearly-3000-year-old-assyrian-ziggurat-180961101/?no-ist>

November 14, 2016

Several news agencies published articles discussing the **recent recapture of the ancient site of Nimrud** from ISIL militants. **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0045.**

<http://www.iol.co.za/travel/world/middle-east/how-ancient-iraqi-city-was-smashed-to-smithereens-2090258>

<https://www.yahoo.com/news/iraq-military-says-recaptures-nimrud-ancient-city-104042104.html>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/isis-mosul-iraq-army-terrorists-destroy-demolish-nimrud-temples-artefacts-a7418136.html>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/nov/13/iraqi-troops-capture-nimrud-ancient-assyrian-city-isis>

<http://www.straitstimes.com/world/middle-east/heritage-site-at-risk-in-battle-for-mosul>

<http://theartnewspaper.com/news/news/ancient-nimrud-ziggurat-bulldozed-by-isis/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/jonathanjonesblog/2016/nov/14/nimrud-isis-art-destruction>

- *BBC* published an article titled “**Nimrud: Iraqi forces ‘retake ancient city from IS’.**” ASOR CHI’s Michael Danti discusses the ongoing destruction to the ancient site of Nimrud, including recent findings of damage to the Ziggurat. **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0045.**
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37966657>
- *Reuters* published an article titled “**Drones fly over ancient Nimrud to help secure Assyrian ruins**” (by Ahmed Rasheed). The Iraqi army is using unarmed drones to survey the recently recaptured site of Nimrud in order to monitor the area for remaining threats.
<http://uk.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-nimrud-idUKKBN1391P9>
- *The Guardian* published an article titled “**The UK should lead on heritage protection.**” A letter signed by various MPs and heritage scholars in the UK urges the UK government to use its newly created cultural protection fund (CPF) to support the International Blue Shield, highlighting the fact that the committee stage of the cultural property (armed conflict) bill will take place on November 15, 2016 in the House of Commons.
<https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2016/nov/14/uk-should-lead-on-heritage-protection>

- **SNHR** published a post titled “**Suspected Russian forces targeted Mashmashan Mosque in Mashmashan town in Idlib governorate, November 14.**” A mosque was damaged in an airstrike. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0168.**
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/11/14/suspected-russian-forces-targeted-mashmashan-mosque-mashmashan-town-idlib-governorate-november-14/>
 - **Heritage for Peace** published its bi-weekly newsletter titled “**Damage to Syria’s Heritage - 14 November 2016.**”
<http://www.heritageforpeace.org/syria-culture-and-heritage/damage-to-cultural-heritage/previous-damage-newsletters/damage-to-syrias-heritage-14-november-2016/>
- November 13, 2016
- I*News published an article titled “**Treasures worth billions of dollars ‘hidden in free ports to fund ISIS’**” (by Cahal Milmo). Milmo discusses the use of ‘free ports’ in hiding ISIL trafficked antiquities.
<https://inews.co.uk/essentials/news/treasures-worth-billions-hidden-free-ports-fund-isis/>
- **SNHR** published a post titled “**Government forces targeted Al Huda mosque in Khan Al Sheeh camp in Damascus suburbs governorate, November 13.**” A mosque was damaged in an airstrike. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0167.**
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/11/13/government-forces-targeted-al-huda-mosque-khan-al-sheeh-camp-damascus-suburbs-governorate-november-13/>
 - *Al Monitor* published an article titled “**How NGOs are helping preserve Syria’s heritage**” (by Florence Massena). This article discusses various international organizations, including APSA, Shirin International, and ICONEM, working to protect Syrian cultural heritage.
<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/11/syria-heritage-destruction-sites-protection.html>
- November 12, 2016
- Telegraph* published an article titled “**We’ve hidden our treasures from Isil, only a handful know the secret location’, says Syria’s antiquities chief**” (by Josie Ensor). From Damascus, Syria’s Director of Antiquities Maamoun Abdulkarim discusses his efforts to hide museum objects and protect them from looters.
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/11/12/weve-hidden-our-treasures-from-isil-only-a-handful-know-the-secr/>

- **DGAM** published an article titled “**The Three-Day High Level Forum for Museums was finished.**” Museum curators and experts gathered at a UNESCO forum in Shenzhen, China from November 9-12, 2016 to explore how museums can contribute to global sustainable development and intercultural communication.
<http://dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2099>
- November 11, 2016 *The Irish Times* published an article titled “**Why the tide of ‘cultural cleansing’ must be rolled back**” (by Mounir Bouchenaki). This article argues that in countries like Syria, cultural heritage must “become an instrument for bringing warring parties closer and reconciling them, a starting point for the resumption of dialogue and the construction of a common future.”
<http://www.irishtimes.com/culture/why-the-tide-of-cultural-cleansing-must-be-rolled-back-1.2859974>
- **SNHR** published a post titled “**Government forces targeted Abi Obayda Bin Al Jarrah Mosque in Kafr Zaita city in Hama governorate in November 11.**” A mosque was damaged in an airstrike. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0166.**
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/11/11/government-forces-targeted-abi-obayda-bin-al-jarrah-mosque-kafr-zaita-city-hama-governorate-november-11/>
- November 10, 2016 **DGAM** published an article titled “**A set of Palmyrene funerary busts.**” A set of Palmyrene funerary busts was recovered from a former ISIL headquarter in the city of Palmyra.
<http://dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2097>
- *Niqash* published an article titled “**In Basra, Locals Set Up ‘Museums’ At Home**” (by Ammar al-Saleh). Locals in Basra display private collections of antiques and antiquities in their homes.
<http://www.niqash.org/en/articles/society/5402/In-Basra-Locals-Set-Up-%E2%80%98Museums%E2%80%99-At-Home.htm>
- *National Geographic* published an article titled “**Iconic Ancient Sites Ravaged in ISIS’s Last Stand in Iraq**” (by Kristin Romey). The article discusses ASOR CHI’s recent reporting on the destruction of the Nimrud Ziggurat and severe damage caused by military digging at Khorsabad.
<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2016/11/iraq-mosul-isis-nimrud-khorsabad-archaeology/>
- November 9, 2016 *Syria Untold* published an article titled “**The Long Walk to Protect Syrian Artifacts**” (by Cristel Abou Anni). Cheikhmous Ali of APSA 2011 is interviewed regarding the illegal antiquities trade in Syria.
<http://www.syriauntold.com/en/2016/11/protect-syrian-artifacts-dr-ali-cheikhmous/>

- November 8, 2016 *CPH Post* published an article titled “**An attack on cultural heritage is an attack on our bodies – in Syria and beyond.**” Syrian-Armenian photographer Angélique Sanossian’s new exhibition ‘Moharamat’ opened at Nordvest Bibliotek in Copenhagen. The exhibit highlights the destruction of heritage in Syria.
<http://cphpost.dk/activities/art/an-attack-on-cultural-heritage-is-an-attack-on-our-bodies-in-syria-and-beyond.html>
- **SNHR** published a post titled “**Government forces targeted Tarmala Mosque in Tarmala town in Idlib governorate, November 8.**” A mosque was damaged in an airstrike. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0165.**
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/11/08/government-forces-targeted-tarmala-mosque-tarmala-town-idlib-governorate-november-8/>
- November 5, 2016 **SNHR** published a post titled “**Suspected Russian forces targeted Abu Bakr Al Sedeeq Mosque in Daret Azza city in Aleppo governorate, November 5.**” A mosque was damaged in an airstrike. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0163.**
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/11/06/suspected-russian-forces-targeted-abu-bakr-al-sedeeq-mosque-daret-azza-city-aleppo-governorate-november-5/>
- November 4, 2016 **DGAM** published an article titled “**UNESCO International Conference on World Heritage Sites and Museums.**” DGAM participated in a conference at the Regional Centre for World Heritage Sites in Bahrain from November 3-4, 2016.
<http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2095>
- **SNHR** published a post titled “**Armed opposition forces targeted Zain Al Abedeen Mosque in Halab Al Jadedeh neighborhood in Aleppo city, November 3.**” A mosque in Aleppo was damaged by shelling. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0162.**
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/11/04/armed-opposition-forces-targeted-zain-al-abedeen-mosque-halab-al-jadedeh-neighborhood-aleppo-city-november-3/>
- November 3, 2016 **Universität Tübingen** published an article titled “**Bedeutende bronzezeitliche Stadt im Nordirak entdeckt**” (“Significant Bronze Age City in Northern Iraq”). Archaeologists from the University of Tübingen discovered a large bronze age complex near the town of Dohuk.
<https://www.uni-tuebingen.de/aktuelles/newsfullview-aktuell/article/bedeutende-bronzezeitliche-stadt-im-nordirak-entdeckt.html>

- **The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, Office of Press and Public Diplomacy (NEA/PPD) and Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Cultural Heritage Center (ECA/CHC)** announced an open competition for the FY 2017 **Safeguarding the Heritage of the Near East Initiative Collaborative Services Award**. The deadline for proposals is December 14, 2016.
<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=289884>
 - *The Portugal News* published an article titled **“Lisbon hosts international conference on cultural heritage crises.”** The Musée Calouste Gulbenkian in Lisbon hosted a conference titled **“Cultural Heritage: Prevention, Response and Recovery from Disasters”** from November 3-4, 2016.
<http://theportugalnews.com/news/lisbon-hosts-international-conference-on-cultural-heritage-crisis/40078>
 - **GIM International** published an article titled **“Crowdsourcing the Reconstruction of Lost Heritage.”** This article discusses the ongoing work of Rekrei, a project using crowdsourcing and photogrammetry to recreate destroyed or damaged sites.
<https://www.gim-international.com/content/article/crowdsourcing-the-reconstruction-of-lost-heritage>
- November 2, 2016
- **The Louvre** opened a temporary exhibit titled **“History Begins in Mesopotamia.”** The exhibit will run from November 2, 2016 - January 23, 2017.
<http://www.louvre.fr/en/expositions/history-begins-mesopotamia>
- *The Art Newspaper* published an article titled **“Louvre may safeguard artefacts from war-torn areas”** (by Gareth Harris). At the opening of an exhibit on Mesopotamia at the Louvre, Francois Hollande suggested that endangered works of art from war-torn regions may be housed at the Louvre’s planned new storage facility in Liévin.
<http://theartnewspaper.com/news/museums/louvre-may-safeguard-artefacts-from-war-torn-areas/>
- November 1, 2016
- *BBC The Inquiry* released an audio report titled **“What’s the Story of Aleppo.”** The report includes an interview with The Day After Project (TDA) Director Amr al-Azm.
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04d2dmg>
 - **DGAM** published an article titled **“Latest News on Dura Europos.”** ISIL militants continue to loot the site of Dura Europos, with locals allegedly participating in the illegal excavations and receiving a cut of the profits from the finds. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0161.**
<http://dgam.gov.sy/?d=239&id=2092>

- *BBC* published an article titled “**A new use for Saddam Hussein’s palace**” (by Husna Haq). Saddam Hussein’s former Lakeside Palace has been converted into the Basra Museum.
<http://www.bbc.com/travel/story/20161024-a-new-use-for-saddam-husseins-palace>

Military and Political Context

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

1. Aleppo Governorate:
 - On November 2, the Russian Defense Ministry urged all opposition fighters to leave the city of Aleppo. Opposition fighters would be allowed to exit the city, with their weapons, between 9:00 am and 7:00 pm using two special corridors. The following day, Syrian opposition forces rejected the offer and fighting escalated in both the east and west areas of the city.²
 - On November 4, Russian and SARG forces began a 10-hour ceasefire in the city of Aleppo, allowing the possibility for civilians and opposition forces to leave besieged areas of the city.³
 - On November 6, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced that Turkish-backed forces were within eight miles of the ISIL-held town of al-Bab and were continuing to push the militants to the south of the city.⁴⁵
 - On November 7, Russia announced that they would continue to refrain from airstrikes over Aleppo unless “militants [begin] combat action.”⁶
 - On November 7, Turkey deployed additional tanks and armored personnel carriers to the northern Aleppo town of Djerablus.⁷
 - On November 8-9, pro-regime forces advanced in opposition-held areas on the outskirts of Aleppo city.⁸
 - On November 12, SARG forces captured the district of Dahiyet al-Assad and Minyan in western Aleppo city, reversing gains made by opposition forces over the past two weeks. Russian warships arrived off the coast of Syria as part of what is anticipated to be a large-scale, multi-pronged assault on the city.⁹

² <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/11/rebels-reject-russian-demand-leave-syria-aleppo-161102161526242.html> ; <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/11/battle-aleppo-russia-offers-humanitarian-pause-161102082020033.html> ; <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/11/rebels-reject-russian-demand-leave-syria-aleppo-161102161526242.html> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37855869> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37869193> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37869457>

³ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37869193> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37869457> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/11/warning-update-russia-prepares-to.html> ; <http://mobile.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSKBN12Z203> ; <http://www.understandingwar.org/backgro-nder/syria-situation-report-october-27-november-4-2016>

⁴ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-turkey-idUSKBN1310M7>

⁵ <http://understandingwar.org/background-nder/syria-situation-report-november-3-11-2016>

⁶ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-russia-idUSKBN132165>

⁷ <http://understandingwar.org/background-nder/syria-situation-report-november-3-11-2016>

⁸ <http://understandingwar.org/background-nder/syria-situation-report-november-3-11-2016>

⁹ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-aleppo-idUSKBN13709H> ; <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/11/12/russian-warships-arrive-off-syrian-coast-ahead-of-final-assault/> ; <http://understandingwar.org/background-nder/syria-situation-report-november-10-18-2016>

- On November 13-15, clashes occurred between the Syrian opposition groups of Ahrar al-Sham and the Levant Front near the town of Azzaz. The two groups later agreed to form a “reconciliation committee” in order to solve the dispute.¹⁰
 - On November 14, Turkish warplanes struck 15 ISIL targets near al-Bab in support of Turkish-backed Free Syrian Army (FSA) fighters’ efforts to retake the city of Raqqa.¹¹
 - On November 15, activists reported that SARG airstrikes targeted opposition-held eastern areas of the city of Aleppo for the first time in three weeks. Meanwhile, Russian airstrikes targeted several other areas in Aleppo Governorate. Residents have reported receiving text messages from the regime ordering them to leave the city.¹²
2. Idlib Governorate:
 - On November 2, Pentagon Press Secretary Peter Cook announced that an October 17 drone strike had targeted and killed al-Qaeda Leader Haydar Kirkan near Idlib.¹³
 - On November 6, SARG airstrikes targeted a market and school in the town of al-Dana, killing at least 11 civilians, many of whom were students of the school.¹⁴
 - On November 15, the Local Coordination Committees in Syria reported that Russian airstrikes had targeted the towns of Saraqib, Ariha, Ihsim, Khan Sheikhoun, and Tal Nabi Ayoub.¹⁵
 3. Raqqa Governorate:
 - On November 6, Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) announced the start of operations to recapture the ISIL-held stronghold of Raqqa.¹⁶
 - On November 7, SDF fighters reported that they had captured several villages as they advanced towards the city of Raqqa.¹⁷
 4. Quneitra Governorate:
 - On November 9, Syrian opposition group Jaish al-Hermon Operations Room, backed by other opposition forces including Jabhat Fatah al-Sham, began an offensive aimed at seizing pro-regime positions on the outskirts of the town of Hader.¹⁸
 5. Rif Dimashq Governorate:
 - On November 5, Syrian activists reported that negotiations for an evacuation of the opposition-held town of Khan al-Sheih had failed.¹⁹

¹⁰ <http://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/syria-situation-report-november-10-18-2016>

¹¹ <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/11/turkey-strikes-al-bab-area-push-isil-raqqa-161114073915686.html>

¹² <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37988798> ; <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/violence-northern-syria-kills-12-43505977> ; <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/11/syrian-government-texts-east-aleppo-residents-leave-161113104323233.html> ; <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/latest-airstrikes-hit-syrias-aleppo-week-pause-43543544> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/11/warning-update-russia-begins-major.html>

¹³ <http://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/994180/transregional-strikes-hit-al-qaida-leaders-in-syria-yemen-afghanistan> ; <http://www.stripes.com/news/pentagon-strikes-killed-al-qaida-leaders-in-syria-yemen-1.437085> ; <http://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/syria-situation-report-october-27-november-4-2016>

¹⁴ <http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/regime-airstrike-kills-11-in-syria-s-idlib/679835>

¹⁵ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37988798>

¹⁶ <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/07/world/middleeast/us-backed-militia-opens-drive-on-isis-capital-in-syria.html> ; <http://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/syria-situation-report-october-27-november-4-2016> ; <http://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/syria-situation-report-november-3-11-2016>

¹⁷ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-raqqa-idUSKBN13217A>

¹⁸ <http://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/syria-situation-report-november-3-11-2016>

¹⁹ <http://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/syria-situation-report-november-3-11-2016>

6. Homs Governorate:
 - On November 3, ISIL militants destroyed a Russian helicopter in the vicinity of Huwaysis. Russian officials stated that the crew had been previously evacuated.²⁰
 - On November 11, Hezbollah held a military parade in the town of Qusayr marking the group's 'Martyrs Day.' The military parade "notably featured" US armored personnel carriers reportedly seized from the inoperable South Lebanon Army.²¹
7. Hasakah Governorate:
 - On November 6, around 140 Sunni Arab fighters affiliated with the Syrian Kurdish YPG allegedly defected to the pro-regime National Defense Forces militia near Qamishli city.²²

Other Key Points:

- During the reporting period, the US-led coalition conducted airstrikes in the areas of Abu Kamal, Ayn Isa, Deir ez Zor, Idlib, Manbij, Mara, Palmyra, Raqqa, and Shaddadi.²³
- On November 3, the former head of Israel's domestic intelligence agency stated that Iran was in charge of a force of around 25,000 Shia militants operating in Syria.²⁴
- On November 4, the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) reported that Russia was likely gearing up to escalate its military operations in the key cities of Damascus and Aleppo.²⁵
- On November 10, US President Barack Obama ordered the Pentagon to "find and kill leaders" of the Al Qaeda affiliate Jabhat Fatah al-Sham (formerly known as al-Nusra Front).²⁶
- On November 11, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Executive Council passed a draft resolution condemning ISIL and Syrian President Bashar al-Assad for the use of chemical weapons. In addition, this resolution "granted a mandate for the OPCW to conduct twice-yearly inspections at facilities in Barzeh and Jamrayah outside Damascus" where inspectors have previously found traces of such weapons.²⁷
- On November 14, the European Union added 18 Syrian "regime-affiliated individuals to its sanction list" citing "violent repression against the civilian population."²⁸

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

1. Ninawa Governorate:
 - During the reporting period, reports continued of ISIL militants executing civilians inside the city of Mosul as Iraqi forces advanced into the city.²⁹
 - On November 1, Iraqi counterterrorism forces broke through Mosul's eastern border.³⁰

²⁰ <http://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/syria-situation-report-november-3-11-2016>

²¹ <http://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/syria-situation-report-november-10-18-2016>

²² <http://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/syria-situation-report-november-3-11-2016>

²³ See: "US DOD News Release Military Strikes Hit ISIL in Syria, Iraq". *Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve*. News Release No: [995054](#), [996087](#), [997164](#), [997275](#), [997589](#), [998874](#), [1000091](#), [1001361](#), [1002402](#), [1002544](#), [1002612](#), [1003909](#), [1005501](#)

²⁴ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-israel-idUSKBN12Y1VK>

²⁵ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/11/warning-update-russia-prepares-to.html>

²⁶ https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/obama-directs-pentagon-to-target-al-qaeda-affiliate-in-syria-one-of-the-most-formidable-forces-fighting-assad/2016/11/10/cf69839a-a51b-11e6-8042-f4d111c862d1_story.html

²⁷ <http://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/syria-situation-report-november-10-18-2016>

²⁸ <http://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/syria-situation-report-november-10-18-2016>

²⁹ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/11/iraq-situation-report-november-9-17-2016.html>

³⁰ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/11/iraq-situation-report-november-2-8-2016.html>

- On November 1-3, Iraqi Shia militias continued to move towards the city of Tal Afar, recapturing several mainly Sunni villages.³¹
- On November 2, Iraqi counterterrorism forces entered the district of al-Karama in Mosul. The forces also recaptured the Mosul neighborhood of Samah, as well as areas on the outskirts of Hammam al-Alil, the last major ISIL-held city en route to Mosul.³²
- On November 2, a 31-minute audio message reported to be of ISIL leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi was released addressing the ongoing battle for Mosul. The recording called on his followers not to retreat from the upcoming fight.³³
- On November 3, Iraqi army forces entered the Mosul neighborhood of al-Intasar.³⁴
- On November 4, Iraqi Special Forces captured the Mosul districts of Malaeen, Samah, Khazraa, Karakul, Quds, and Karamah.³⁵
- On November 5, Iraqi forces recaptured the town of Hammam al-Alil as Iraqi security forces continued to advance against ISIL, reaching to within a few miles of the Mosul airport located on the edge of the city.³⁶
- On November 7, 2,000 Kurdish Peshmerga forces stormed the ISIL-held town of Bashiqa, approximately 10 miles northeast of Mosul. Additional reports stated that Iraqi Army forces had recaptured the village of Bawiza and entered the area of Sada in Mosul's northern city limits.³⁷
- On November 7, Iraqi forces uncovered a mass grave at the School of Agriculture, located on the outskirts of Hammam al-Ali. The grave appeared to hold the remains of approximately 100 bodies. The bodies are suspected to be those of Iraqi security forces and their family members.³⁸
- On November 13, Iraqi forces captured the ancient site of Nimrud from ISIL militants.³⁹

³¹ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/11/the-campaign-for-mosul-november-1-3.html>

³² <http://www.alliraqnews.com/modules/news/article.php?storyid=51897> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/11/the-campaign-for-mosul-november-1-3.html> ; <http://www.alliraqnews.com/modules/news/article.php?storyid=51932> ;

³³ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-baghdadi-idUSKBN12Y000> ; <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/03/world/middleeast/islamic-state-leader-baghdadi-new-recording-mosul.html> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37856274> ; <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2016/11/04/Pentagon-Baghdadi-losing-control-of-his-troops.html>

³⁴ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/11/the-campaign-for-mosul-november-1-3.html> ; <http://www.cnn.com/2016/11/03/middleeast/mosul-offensive-iraq-troops-in/index.html>

³⁵ <http://news.sky.com/story/is-deploy-flying-bombs-as-they-lose-districts-east-of-mosul-10643595> ; https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/iraqi-forces-advance-into-six-new-neighborhoods-in-east-mosul/2016/11/04/931206a0-a26f-11e6-a44d-cc2898cfab06_story.html ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37872392> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-shirqat-idUSKBN12Z00B>

³⁶ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/11/iraq-situation-report-november-2-8-2016.html> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-town-idUSKBN1300EK>

³⁷ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-idUSKBN1320PQ> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37894809> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/11/iraq-situation-report-november-2-8-2016.html>

³⁸ <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/11/07/middleeast/iraq-mosul-hammam-al-alil-mass-grave/index.html> ; <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/11/mosul-battle-100-decapitated-bodies-mass-grave-161107174249509.html> ; <https://www.buzzfeed.com/mikegiglio/mass-graves-on-the-road-to-mosul-show-the-horrors-that-lie-a> ; <http://www.wsj.com/articles/remains-in-mass-grave-near-mosul-identified-1478628332> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UJvIYhh5Bik>

³⁹ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-nimrud-idUSKBN13809W> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6O2CcCgThHs>

2. Salah ad Din Governorate:
 - On November 4, ISIL militants attacked the town of Shirqat, located 60 miles south of Mosul. The militants seized control of a mosque and neighboring buildings.⁴⁰
 - On November 6, ISIL suicide bombers used “explosives-laden ambulances” to carry out suicide bombing attacks in the cities of Samarra and Tikrit, killing at least 21 people and wounding dozens more.⁴¹
3. Anbar Governorate:
 - On November 3, a tribal militia stated that ISIL had destroyed two government administration buildings in the town of Aanah, and had begun placing IEDs in local houses and at the town’s entrance to prevent the entering of Iraqi security forces.⁴²
 - On November 14, two suicide car bombs targeted security checkpoints in central Fallujah. The attack killed two civilians, four police officers, and wounded 18 others.⁴³
4. Baghdad Governorate:
 - On November 8, a car bombing occurred in the southeastern neighborhood of al-Amin al-Thani, killing two people and wounding nine other. No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack.⁴⁴
5. Diyala Governorate:
 - On November 15, clashes between an Iranian-backed Shia militia and local police in Diyala erupted south of Baquba. Casualties were reported.⁴⁵

Other Key Points:

- During the reporting period, the US-led coalition conducted airstrikes in the areas of Baghdad, Bashir, Beiji, Haditha, Huwayjah, Kisik, Mosul, Qayyarah, Rawah, Sinjar, Taji, and Tal Afar.⁴⁶
- On November 2, Amnesty International released a report stating “militia fighters from the Sab’awi Tribal Mobilization militia had “unlawfully detained, publicly humiliated, and tortured or otherwise ill-treated boys and men in formerly ISIL-held villages south-east of Mosul.”⁴⁷

⁴⁰ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-shirqat-idUSKBN12Z0OB> ; <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2016/11/04/Pentagon-Baghdadi-losing-control-of-his-troops.html> ; <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20161104-daesh-invades-shirqat-liberated-by-iraqi-forces-2-months-ago/> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/11/iraq-situation-report-november-2-8-2016.html>

⁴¹ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37888028> ; <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/suicide-bombings-cities-north-baghdad-kill-least-25-officials-1394338824> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/11/iraq-situation-report-november-2-8-2016.html>

⁴² <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/11/iraq-situation-report-november-2-8-2016.html>

⁴³ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/11/iraq-situation-report-november-9-17-2016.html>

⁴⁴ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/11/iraq-situation-report-november-2-8-2016.html>

⁴⁵ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/11/iraq-situation-report-november-9-17-2016.html>

⁴⁶ See: “US DOD News Release Military Strikes Hit ISIL in Syria, Iraq”. *Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve*. News Release No: [993355](#), [995054](#), [996087](#), [997164](#), [997275](#), [997589](#), [998874](#), [1000091](#), [1001361](#), [1002402](#), [1002544](#), [1002612](#), [1003909](#), [1005501](#)

⁴⁷ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/11/iraq-tribal-militia-tortured-detainees-in-revenge-attacks-during-mosul-offensive/>

- On November 3, Human Rights Watch (HRW) released a report accusing Kurdish authorities in the city of Kirkuk of forcing Arab and Arab IDPs from their homes. The evictions reportedly began following the ISIL surprise attack on Kirkuk on October 21.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/11/03/kr-g-kurdish-forces-ejecting-arabs-kirkuk> ; <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/11/iraq-kurdish-authorities-bulldoze-homes-and-banish-hundreds-of-arabs-from-kirkuk/>

Incident Reports: Syria

SHI 16-0161

Report Date: November 1, 2016

Site Name: Dura Europos (Qal'at es-Salihiye; Tell Salihiye)

Date of Incident: Ongoing

Location: Tell Salihiye, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Dura Europos was founded ca. 300 BCE by the Hellenistic Seleucid dynasty at the intersection of strategic trade routes, and soon became a great caravan city.⁴⁹ In 113 BCE, the Parthians captured Dura Europos, and it remained largely in their possession until 164 CE, when the city was captured by the Romans. New temples and other civic structures were added throughout the second and third centuries and the city continued to thrive until 256 CE, when it was captured by the Sasanian army.⁵⁰ The Sassanians enslaved the surviving population of the city and Dura was abandoned. The city was never rebuilt. Dura Europos was a uniquely multicultural city, with inscriptions found in at least nine different languages and temples erected to Greek, Roman, and Palmyrene gods.⁵¹ The cosmopolitan nature of the city is exemplified by a series of well-preserved wall paintings excavated throughout the site, including in one of the world's oldest synagogues, the world's oldest house church, and a Mithraeum.⁵² Dura Europos was excavated by Yale University and the French Academy of Inscriptions and Letters in the 1920s and 1930s. A joint Syrian-French project led by Pierre Leriche began in the 1980s.⁵³

Site Date: ca. 300 BCE - 256 CE

Incident Summary: Illegal excavations are ongoing under the control of ISIL.

Incident Source and Description: On November 1, 2016 the DGAM reported that ISIL militants continue to destroy the site of Dura Europos with large-scale illegal excavations.⁵⁴ ISIL has reportedly granted excavation licenses across the area to profit from the ongoing looting. According to a DGAM resource, Iraqi vehicles have been witnessed transporting looted objects from the site. No photographs or satellite images of the alleged looting were available at the time of publication.

ASOR CHI has previously reported on the ongoing illegal excavations at Dura Europos in **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 14-0078** in **Weekly Report 15** and **SHI 14-0098** in **Weekly Report 19**.

Pattern: Illegal Excavation.

⁴⁹ Leriche and MacKenzie 1996: 589-594

⁵⁰ MacDonald 1986: 45-68

⁵¹ Millar 1993: 445-52, 467-72

⁵² Fine 2011: 246-249

⁵³ <http://media.artgallery.yale.edu/duraeuropos/dura.html>

⁵⁴ <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2093>

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI remains concerned about the ongoing illegal excavations taking place at Dura Europos and will continue to monitor the situation at this and other heritage sites occupied by ISIL militants.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

DGAM: <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2093>

Scholarly:

Fine, S. (2011). Dura Europos: Crossroads of Antiquity and Edge of Empires: Pagans, Jews, and Christians at Roman Dura-Europos. *Near Eastern Archaeology*. 74(4): 246-249.

Leriche, P. and D. N. MacKenzie (1996) Dura Europos. *Encyclopaedia Iranica:VII/6*, pp. 589-594. available online at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/dura-europos> (accessed online at 18 August 2016).

MacDonald, D. (1986). Dating the Fall of Dura-Europos. *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*. 35(1): 45-68.

Millar, F. (1993) *The Roman Near East, 31 BC - AD 337*. Cambridge. Harvard University Press.

Yale University Art Gallery: <http://media.artgallery.yale.edu/duraeuropos/dura.html>



Dura Europos prior to large scale illegal excavations (DigitalGlobe; August 4, 2011)



Illegal excavations visible throughout the site of Dura Europos (DigitalGlobe; April 11, 2015)

SHI 16-0162

Report Date: November 4, 2016

Site Name: Zain al-Abedeem Mosque (مسجد زين العابدين)

Date of Incident: November 3, 2016

Location: Halab al-Jadeedah neighborhood, Aleppo, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: A missile causes partial damage to mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On November 3, 2016 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that one missile landed near Zain al-Abedeem Mosque in the opposition-held neighborhood of Halab al-Jadeedah in Aleppo, causing partial damage.⁵⁵

Based on DigitalGlobe satellite images from November 8, 2016 the damage occurred in the western courtyard of the mosque. Part of an exterior fence and a metal covering were destroyed. The extent of the damage to the mosque itself is unclear.

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

SNHR:

<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/11/04/armed-opposition-forces-targeted-zain-al-abedeem-mosque-halab-al-jadedeh-neighborhood-aleppo-city-november-3/>

⁵⁵ <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/11/04/armed-opposition-forces-targeted-zain-al-abedeem-mosque-halab-al-jadedeh-neighborhood-aleppo-city-november-3/>



Zain al-Abideen Mosque prior to the damage (DigitalGlobe; November 3, 2016)



Zain al-Abideen Mosque with visible damage to the western courtyard noted with the red arrows (DigitalGlobe; November 8, 2016)

SHI 16-0163

Report Date: November 5, 2016

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

Date of Incident: November 5, 2016

Location: Darat Izza, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: Alleged Russian airstrike damages mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On November 5, 2016 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that a Russian airstrike struck Abu Bakr al-Sidiq Mosque in Darat Izza “damaging its building and furniture and rendering it inoperable.”⁵⁶ No photographs of the damage were available at the time of publication.

At least one other mosque in Darat Izza has been damaged by aerial bombardment. On February 26, 2016 the SNHR reported that suspected Russian warplanes fired on Ali ibn Abi Talib Mosque damaging the building. Then on June 6, 2016 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that a Russian airstrike damaged al-Farouq Mosque. For further information on these previous incidents, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0033** in **Weekly Report 81-82** and **SHI 16-0080** in **Weekly Report 95-96**.

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

SNHR:

<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/11/06/suspected-russian-forces-targeted-abu-bakr-al-sedeeq-mosque-daret-azza-city-aleppo-governorate-november-5/>

⁵⁶ <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/11/06/suspected-russian-forces-targeted-abu-bakr-al-sedeeq-mosque-daret-azza-city-aleppo-governorate-november-5/>

SHI 16-0164

Report Date: November 8, 2016

Site Name: Maronite Diocese of Damascus (مطرانية دمشق المارونية)

Date of Incident: November 8, 2016

Location: Bab al-Tuma neighborhood, Damascus, Damascus Governorate, Syria

Site Description: The Maronite Diocese of Damascus is the seat of the Maronite Catholic Archeparchy of Damascus, currently led by Archeparch Samir Nasser.

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: A mortar shell damages a religious institution in Damascus.

Incident Source and Description: On November 8, 2016 Damascus Now reported on Facebook that a mortar shell fired by “armed groups” hit the Maronite Diocese building, causing material damage and injuring two people.⁵⁷ Photographs accompanying the post show several broken windows, damaged furniture, and what appears to be blood on the ground.

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Damascus Now: <https://www.facebook.com/Damascus.Now1/posts/894469100684321>

National Media Network:

<https://twitter.com/nnsyria/status/796086150008029187>

⁵⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/Damascus.Now1/posts/894469100684321>



Broken windows at the Maronite Diocese building (Damascus Now; November 8, 2016)



Broken windows at the Maronite Diocese building (Damascus Now; November 8, 2016)



Broken windows at the Maronite Diocese building (Damascus Now; November 8, 2016)



Broken windows at the Maronite Diocese building (Damascus Now; November 8, 2016)



Suspected blood and debris following the mortar strike (Damascus Now; November 8, 2016)

SHI 16-0165

Report Date: November 8, 2016

Site Name: Great Mosque of Tarmala (مسجد ترملا الكبير)

Date of Incident: November 8, 2016

Location: Tarmala, Idlib Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: Reported SARG airstrike damages mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On November 8, 2016 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that a SARG airstrike struck the Grand Mosque of Tarmala, damaging the building and its furniture. No photographs were available at the time of publication.⁵⁸

The Grand Mosque of Tarmala was previously damaged in a reported SARG airstrike on October 20, 2016.⁵⁹ For further information on previous damage to the Grand Mosque of Tarmala see **ASOR CHI Incident Report 16-0158** in **Weekly Report 115-116**.

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

SNHR:

<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/11/08/government-forces-targeted-tarmala-mosque-tarmala-town-idlib-governorate-november-8/>

⁵⁸ <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/11/08/government-forces-targeted-tarmala-mosque-tarmala-town-idlib-governorate-november-8/>

⁵⁹ <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/10/20/government-forces-targeted-tarmala-grand-mosque-tarmala-town-idlib-governorate-october-20/>

SHI 16-0166

Report Date: November 11, 2016

Site Name: Abu Obeida ibn al-Jarrah Mosque (مسجد أبي عبيدة بن الجراح)

Date of Incident: November 11, 2016

Location: Kafr Zaita, Hama Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown, likely modern

Incident Summary: SARG forces allegedly strike mosque with barrel bombs.

Incident Source and Description: On November 11, 2016 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that SARG helicopters had dropped barrel bombs on Abu Obeida ibn al-Jarrah Mosque in Kafr Zaita, “damaging it severely and rendering it inoperable.”⁶⁰ An accompanying photograph shows debris in the mosque’s interior.

At least one other mosque in Kafr Zaita has been damaged by aerial bombardment. On February 16, 2016 SARG helicopters reportedly dropped barrel bombs on Abu Bakr al-Sadeiq Mosque, causing partial damage to the building. For further information on damage to Abu Bakr al-Sadeiq Mosque see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0028** in **Weekly Report 79–80**.

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

SNHR:

<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/11/11/government-forces-targeted-abi-obayda-bin-al-jarrah-mosque-kafr-zaita-city-hama-governorate-november-11/>

⁶⁰ <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/11/11/government-forces-targeted-abi-obayda-bin-al-jarrah-mosque-kafr-zaita-city-hama-governorate-november-11/>



Damage to the interior of Abu Obeida ibn al-Jarrah Mosque (SNHR; November 11, 2016)

SHI 16-0167

Report Date: November 13, 2016

Site Name: al-Huda Mosque (مسجد الهدى)

Date of Incident: November 13, 2016

Location: Khan al-Sheih Camp, Rif Dimashq Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown, likely modern

Incident Summary: An airstrike severely damages a mosque in a Damascus suburb.

Incident Source and Description: On November 13, 2016 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that a SARG or SARG-allied airstrike struck and damaged al-Huda Mosque in Khan al-Shieh, damaging the building and its furniture and rendering the mosque inoperable.⁶¹ An accompanying photograph shows significant rubble in the interior of the mosque and possibly a hole in the building's roof.

Al-Huda Mosque has suffered damage on several prior occasions. On August 18, 2016 Shahba Press Agency reported that a SARG airstrike damaged al-Huda Mosque.⁶² The extent of the damage to the mosque was unknown. On April 3, 2016 SNHR reported that SARG artillery fired shells on the mosque, damaging it severely.⁶³ On October 13, 2015 the Action Group for Palestinians of Syria reported that two shells hit the mosque, causing severe damage to its minaret.⁶⁴ The same group reported on July 7, 2015 that a mortar shell struck the mosque, causing "material damages." On June 19, 2015 they reported that a barrel bomb struck near al-Huda Mosque at prayer time, causing extensive damage to the mosque and surrounding area.⁶⁵ For more information on previous damage to al-Huda Mosque, see **ASOR CHI Incident Reports SHI 16-0045 in Weekly Report 87-88, SHI 16-0072 in Weekly Report 95-96, and SHI 16-0133 in Weekly Report 107-108.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

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

⁶¹ <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/11/13/government-forces-targeted-al-huda-mosque-khan-al-sheeh-camp-damascus-suburbs-governorate-november-13/>

⁶² <https://twitter.com/ShahbaPress/status/766191727866773504>

⁶³ <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/04/03/19954/>

⁶⁴ <http://www.actionpal.org.uk/en/post/1458/mortar-shell-targeted-a-mosque-at-khan-al-sheih-camp>

⁶⁵ <http://www.actionpal.org.uk/en/post/1337/bombing-with-explosive-barrels-led-to-mass-destruction-in-khan-al-sheih-camp-and-the-residents-appeal-to-stop-the-bombing-on-their-houses>

Sources:

Online Reporting:

ABC News:

<http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/violence-northern-syria-kills-12-43505977>

Action Group for Palestinians of Syria:

July 7, 2015:

<http://www.actionpal.org.uk/en/post/1458/mortar-shell-targeted-a-mosque-at-khan-al-sheih-camp>

June 19, 2015: <http://www.actionpal.org.uk/en/post/1337/bombing-with-explosive-barrels-led-to-mass-destruction-in-khan-al-sheih-camp-and-the-residents-appeal-to-stop-the-bombing-on-their-houses>

Shahba Press: <https://twitter.com/ShahbaPress/status/766191727866773504>

SNHR:

April 3, 2016: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/04/03/19954/>

November 13, 2016:

<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/11/13/government-forces-targeted-al-huda-mosque-khan-al-sheeh-camp-damascus-suburbs-governorate-november-13/>



Rubble and damage in the interior of al-Huda Mosque (SNHR; November 13, 2016)

SHI 16-0168

Report Date: November 14, 2016

Site Name: Mashmashan Mosque (مسجد مشمشان)

Date of Incident: November 14, 2016

Location: Mashmashan, Idlib Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: A suspected Russian airstrike damages a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On November 14, 2016 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that a suspected Russian airstrike struck Mashmashan Mosque, “damaging its building and furniture and rendering it inoperable.”⁶⁶ A photograph of the damage to the exterior of the mosque shows that its roof has partially collapsed.

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

SNHR:

<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/11/14/suspected-russian-forces-targeted-mashmashan-mosque-mashmashan-town-idlib-governorate-november-14/>

⁶⁶ <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/11/14/suspected-russian-forces-targeted-mashmashan-mosque-mashmashan-town-idlib-governorate-november-14/>



Severe damage to Mashmashan Mosque (SNHR; November 14, 2016)

Incident Reports: Iraq

IHI 16-0035 UPDATE

Report Date: November 1, 2016

Site Name:

- Mar Shmone Church (كنيسة مارت شموني)
- Syriac Orthodox Cultural Center (Mar Mata Syriac Orthodox Center) (المركز الثقافي للسريان (الأرثوذكس))
- Christian Cemetery

Date of Incident: Between August 2014-October 2016

Location: Bartella, Ninawa Governorate, Iraq

Site Description: The village of Bartella is one of the oldest Christian villages in the world.⁶⁷ The village is known to have at least four churches.⁶⁸ The Christian cemetery and cultural center are described as being adjacent to Mar Shmone Church. According to the LA Times, Mar Shmone Church was once: “an elegant place of worship, with octagonal marble columns and delicate stone filigree. Its courtyard was presided over by a statue of Patriarch Yacoub the Third, an important figure in the Syriac Orthodox Church who hailed from Bartella.”⁶⁹

Site Date:

- Mar Shmone Church: Original building date unknown. Renovations were completed in 1807 CE. The church was rebuilt in 1869 CE and renovated in 1971 CE.⁷⁰
- Syriac Orthodox Cultural Center: Unknown
- Christian Cemetery: Unknown

Incident Summary: New photographs of sites in Bartella.

Incident Source and Description: On November 1, 2016 Baretly.Net released new details on ISIL’s use of churches in Bartella.⁷¹ Although the church is not named in the article, it is most likely Mar Shmone Church, previously reported as extensively damaged by ISIL militants. In addition, new photographs were released of the Christian Cemetery and Syriac Orthodox Cultural Center adjacent to Mar Shmone Church.

For more information on damage to Bartella sites see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-00xx in Weekly Report 115-116.**

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

⁶⁷ <http://news.nationalpost.com/news/world/freed-from-isil-after-two-years-church-bells-ring-out-again-in-one-of-worlds-oldest-christian-towns> ; <http://www.ishtarty.com/en/viewarticle.35569.html>

⁶⁸ <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2014/06/22/the-tragic-exodus-of-iraq-s-christians.html>

⁶⁹ <http://www.latimes.com/world/la-fg-iraq-bartella-20161022-snap-story.html>

⁷⁰ <http://www.chaldeansonline.org/village/bartilla.html>

⁷¹ <http://baretly.net/index.php?topic=62078.0>

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Barety.Net: <http://barety.net/index.php?topic=62078.0>



Possible looting of graves at the cemetery in Bartella (Barety.net; November 1, 2016)



Evidence of ISIL use of church center as training site (Baretly.net; November 1, 2016)



Damage to religious text inside a church in Bartella (Baretly.net; November 1, 2016)

IHI 16-0038

Report Date: October 31, 2016 - November 15, 2016

Site Name:

- Mart Barbara Church (كنيسة مار بربارة)
- Mar Ada al-Rasool Church (كنيسة مار أدي الرسول)
- Mar George Church (كنيسة مار كوركيس)
- Mar Yonan Concert Hall (قاعة مار يونان الحفلات)
- Mar Joseph Cultural Center (مركز مار يوسف الثقافي)
- Virgin Mary Church (كنيسة مريم العذراء)
- Deir Mar Banat Mariam (دير مار بنات مريم)

Date of Incident: August 2014 – October 2016

Location: Karamlish, Nineveh Governorate, Iraq

Site Description: Churches in Karamlish Village.

- Mart Barbara Church (كنيسة مار بربارة) - Mar Barbara Church was built on the ruins of an Assyrian temple on top of the mound known as Tel Barabara, to the west of Karamlish.⁷² The site allegedly has an Assyrian ziggurat.⁷³ According to Wilmshurst: “The church of Mart Barbara outside the village is said to be the oldest church in the Mosul plain. It was [present]...in 1758, and was rebuilt by the Chaldeans in 1764, after having been abandoned by the village’s traditionalist community.”⁷⁴ Other sources claim that the church was heavily damaged in 1734 CE. Locals rebuilt the church in 1798 CE.⁷⁵ It is located on the northern side of the village and is adjacent to a cemetery.
- Mar Ada al-Rasool Church (كنيسة مار أدي الرسول) - Chaldean Catholic Church. Described as the “the largest and most modern at present” church in Karamlish.⁷⁶ The church is located in the northern part of Karamlish.
- **Mar George Church** (كنيسة مار كوركيس) - According to Wilmshurst, “the church of [Mar George]...is ...ancient. It was restored in 1715 and was used in 1758. It was later abandoned.”⁷⁷ Some descriptions of Mar George Church state that the site was turned into a cemetery following the Mongol invasion.⁷⁸ According to Ishtar TV, Mar George Church was, “established by monk Gewargis by the end of the 6th century AD. Its building is still standing today as the oldest building in the village. For a period of time it used to be a big school full of monks, where language, philosophy and church liturgy were taught and where many early biographies of church fathers and saints were written.”⁷⁹

⁷² <http://www.ishtartv.com/en/viewarticle,35768.html>

⁷³ <http://www.atour.com/education/20040819c.html>

⁷⁴ Wilmshurst 2000: 218

⁷⁵ <http://www.chaldeansonline.org/village/karamles.html>

⁷⁶ <http://www.ishtartv.com/en/viewarticle,35768.html>

⁷⁷ Wilmshurst 2000: 218

⁷⁸ <http://www.atour.com/education/20040819c.html>

⁷⁹ <http://www.ishtartv.com/en/viewarticle,35768.html>

- **Mar Yonan Concert Hall (قاعة مار يونان الحفلات)** - This site may be on top of the remains of the 7th century CE Mar Yonan Monastery, which was thought to be abandoned in 1743 following the invasion of Nadir Shah. The original monastery was built by a monk named Yonan in the 7th century CE. The site is described as later being turned into a school in the early 20th century. In the video footage taken on October 31, 2016 taken by Ishtar TV desks, chairs, and what appear to be classrooms are present in the buildings named after Mar Yonan.
- **Virgin Mary Church (كنيسة مريم العذراء)** - The Church of the Virgin Mary located in the center of Karamlish. According to Ishtar TV, the church was the “house of a lady who, before her death, endowed it for the service of souls.”⁸⁰ According to Wilmshurst, “The age of the church of Mart Maryam is not known, but it was renovated during the reign of the patriarch Joseph IV Audo (1848-1878).”⁸¹
- **Deir Mar Banat Mariam (دير مار بنات مريم)** - Deir Mar Banat Mariam is “adjacent to the Monastery of Mar Gewargis on its northern side” and once served as a “monastery for the nuns.”⁸² The monastery was heavily damaged by the Mongols in the 13th century and again by Ismael Pasha’s campaign in the 18th century.⁸³

Site Date:

- **Mar Barbara Church (كنيسة مر بربارة)** - Exact date of construction is unknown. Church was rebuilt in the mid-late 18th century CE after it was attacked by Nadir Shah.
- **Mar Ada al-Rasool Church (كنيسة مار أدي الرسول)** - Built between 1937-1949 CE. Work was halted between 1949 and 1959 due to lack of funding. The construction of the church was completed in 1963.⁸⁴ Based on photographs, the church was repainted and possibly restored between September 2011 and when ISIL invaded the village in August 2014.⁸⁵ In between those times the paint color of the exterior of the church as well as the detail surrounding the main altar appear to have been changed.
- **Mar George Church (كنيسة مر كوركييس)** - Built 6th century CE.⁸⁶ Restored in the early 18th century CE.
- **Mar Yonan Concert Hall (قاعة مار يونان الحفلات)** - Exact date of construction unclear. Likely re-used or rebuilt as a school in the early 20th century CE.
- **Mar Joseph Cultural Center (مركز مار يوسف الثقافي)** - Unknown, possibly modern.
- **Virgin Mary Church (كنيسة مريم العذراء)** - Built 1887 CE. Two temples were added to the site, enlarging the church, in 1902.⁸⁷
- **Deir Mar Banat Mariam (دير مار بنات مريم)**: Exact date of construction unknown, but was in existence prior as of the 13th century. A plaque at the building states that the church was renovated in 1986.

Incident Summary: New video footage and pictures show the level of destruction inside multiple sites in Karamlish.

⁸⁰ <http://www.ishartv.com/en/viewarticle,35768.html>

⁸¹ Wilmshurst 2000: 218

⁸² <http://www.ishartv.com/en/viewarticle,35768.html> ; <http://www.atour.com/education/20040819c.html>

⁸³ <http://www.ishartv.com/en/viewarticle,35768.html>

⁸⁴ <http://www.ishartv.com/en/viewarticle,35768.html>

⁸⁵ <http://www.ishartv.com/en/viewarticle,35413.html>

⁸⁶ <http://www.chaldeansonline.org/village/karamles.html> ; <http://www.atour.com/education/20040819c.html>

⁸⁷ <http://www.ishartv.com/en/viewarticle,35768.html> ; <http://www.atour.com/education/20040819c.html>

Incident Source and Description: At the end of October 2016, Iraqi and Kurdish forces recaptured the village of Karamlish from ISIL militants who had occupied the village since August 2014. Soon after, video footage and photographs began to emerge showing the extent of the damage inside the city, including extensive damage to several heritage sites.

- Mart Barbara Church (كنيسة مر بربارة) - On October 9, 2016 ARA News reported that ISIL militants had bombed Mart Barbara Church.⁸⁸ According to a local activist, ISIL militants “detonated a number of explosive devices inside the church.” According to the activist, the church was completely destroyed.⁸⁹ However, recently shared photographs and video footage taken by entering NPU forces in late October 2016, show that the church remains standing despite sustaining moderate damage. Shortly after Iraqi and Kurdish forces reached the village photographs shared by the Nineveh Plain Defense Fund showed soldiers of the NPU raising a makeshift cross atop Mart Barbara Church.⁹⁰ A France 24 correspondent describes the church as having been turned into a bunker by ISIL.⁹¹ According to the report “sculptures of the Virgin Mary and Christian saints have been defaced. In the chapel, Christian texts have been replaced by the Koran and tracts put out by the IS group's propaganda unit.”⁹² A large square cut-out in the floor, leading to a network of tunnels, lined with sandbags is seen in the video footage.⁹³ Video footage also shows extensive material damage inside the church including to church relics.⁹⁴ On November 6, 2016 the Nineveh Plain Protection Units (NPU) published a video of the current condition of Karamlish. The video shows the front of Mar Barbara Church.⁹⁵ NPU forces have erected a makeshift cross on the Tel where Mar Barbara Church is located. Additional video footage taken on October 31, 2016 shows a large tunnel dug by ISIL militants within a shrine adjacent inside Mar Barbara Shrine.⁹⁶

On November 15, 2016 photographs shared by Karamlish Chaldean showed local clean-up efforts taking place at Mar Barbara Church.⁹⁷

- Mart Barbara Church (كنيسة مر بربارة) - On October 31, 2016 Ishtar TV released video footage and photographs of the damage to Mar Ada al-Rasool Church.⁹⁸ The interior of the church shows evidence of intentional destruction, including the smashing of religious artifacts, graffiti, and extensive fire damage. The exterior of the church including the belfry and the church's courtyard also show extensive damage. According to local residents who finally returned to Karamlish in mid-November: “a confessional had been turned into a closet, a tomb had been desecrated, (and) red prayer benches were burned.”⁹⁹ A statue of the Virgin Mary had also been decapitated.

⁸⁸ <http://www.aina.org/news/20161010023611.htm>

⁸⁹ <http://www.aina.org/news/20161010023611.htm>

⁹⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/NinevehPlainDefenseFund/posts/1279939862039518>

⁹¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VsVl0dOEpPo>

⁹² <http://www.france24.com/en/20161029-iraq-christians-militia-liberated-rebuild-qaraqosh-islamic-state>

⁹³ <https://twitter.com/NinevehPU/status/791340486372065280>

⁹⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xzMgKRjckVI>

⁹⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3PIZhwvE9-4>

⁹⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xzMgKRjckVI>

⁹⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/karemleschaldean/posts/600931046774466>

⁹⁸ <http://www.ishtartv.com/viewarticle.71254.html> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xzMgKRjckVI>

⁹⁹ <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2016/11/14/iraqi-catholics-return-to-church-ransacked-by-isis/>

- Mar George Church (كنيسة مر كوركييس) - On October 31, 2016 Ishtar TV released video footage and photographs of the damage to Mar George Church.¹⁰⁰ The interior of the church shows evidence of intentional destruction. Video footage from Mar Gewargis Church shows that ISIL militants broke into the vaults in the church cemetery, and smashed open coffins.¹⁰¹ On November 9, 2011 an article published by Ishtar TV reported a pattern of ISIL vandalism of Christian cemeteries, stating that the militants particularly targeted graves of clergy members.¹⁰²
- Mar Yonan Concert Hall (قاعة مار يونان الحفلات) - On October 31, 2016 Ishtar TV released video footage and photographs of the damage to Mar Yonan Concert Hall.¹⁰³ The new footage and photographs show damage to the interior rooms of the building, which may have been used as classrooms. In addition, the footage suggests that many of the rooms were re-purposed by ISIL militants as living quarters.
- Mar Joseph Cultural Center (مركز مار يوسف الثقافي) - On October 31, 2016 Ishtar TV released video footage and photographs of the damage to Mar Yonan Concert Hall.¹⁰⁴ The footage shows a large crater near the building that may have been caused by an airstrike.¹⁰⁵ Photographs show that a nearby shrine to the Virgin Mary has been destroyed, the statue toppled over. The video footage taken inside the cultural center shows that its surrounding buildings have been re-purposed by ISIL militants. The walls of the rooms have been blasted through to create a network of rooms and tunnels in order to avoid detection.
- Virgin Mary Church (كنيسة مريم العذراء) - On November 5, 2016 Ishtar TV released a video of the bell ringing at the Virgin Mary Church.¹⁰⁶ Damage, possibly caused by ongoing clashes, is seen to the belfry. According to video footage taken by Ishtar TV on October 31, 2016 the church was burned by ISIL militants.¹⁰⁷ Photographs show extensive fire damage to the interior of the church.¹⁰⁸
- Deir Mar Banat Mariam (دير مار بنات مريم) - Video footage taken on October 31, 2016 by Ishtar TV shows the complete destruction of Der Mar Banat.¹⁰⁹ The reporter on the video blames an airstrike as being responsible for the damage. The entirety of the building appears to have been flattened.

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

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

¹⁰⁰ <http://www.ishtartv.com/viewarticle,71254.html> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xzMgKRjckVI>

¹⁰¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xzMgKRjckVI>

¹⁰² <http://www.ishtartv.com/en/viewarticle,38070.html>

¹⁰³ <http://www.ishtartv.com/viewarticle,71254.html> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xzMgKRjckVI>

¹⁰⁴ <http://www.ishtartv.com/viewarticle,71254.html> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xzMgKRjckVI>

¹⁰⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/karemlschaldean/videos/594552777412293/> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xzMgKRjckVI>

¹⁰⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/karemlschaldean/videos/596351097232461/>

¹⁰⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/karemlschaldean/videos/594552777412293/> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xzMgKRjckVI>

¹⁰⁸ <http://www.ishtartv.com/viewarticle,71254.html>

¹⁰⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xzMgKRjckVI>

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Assyrian Education Network: <http://www.atour.com/education/20040819c.html>

Catholic Herald:

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Chaldeans Online: <http://www.chaldeansonline.org/village/karamles.html>

Christians of Iraq:

October 22, 2016: <https://twitter.com/iraqichristian/status/790621015617470464>

October 23, 2016: <https://twitter.com/iraqichristian/status/790246527025360896>

France 24 English:

October 26, 2016: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VsVl0dOEpPo>

October 29, 2016: <http://www.france24.com/en/20161029-iraq-christians-militia-liberated-rebuild-qaraqosh-islamic-state>

Iraqi Christian Relief Council:

<https://www.facebook.com/iraqichristianreliefcouncil/posts/1804876636391055>

Ishtar TV:

September 24, 2011: <http://www.ishartv.com/en/viewarticle,35413.html>

December 24, 2011: <http://www.ishartv.com/en/viewarticle,35768.html>

October 31, 2016: <http://www.ishartv.com/viewarticle,71254.html> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xzMgKRjckVI>

November 9, 2016: <http://www.ishartv.com/en/viewarticle,38070.html>

Karamlesh:

October 24, 2016: <https://www.facebook.com/Karemlesh/posts/1314698125215614>

October 25, 2016: <https://www.facebook.com/Karemlesh/videos/1315344078484352/>

October 28, 2016: <https://www.facebook.com/Karemlesh/posts/1318471491504944> ; <https://www.facebook.com/Karemlesh/posts/1318688454816581> ; <https://www.facebook.com/Karemlesh/posts/1318693388149421>

October 29, 2016: <https://www.facebook.com/Karemlesh/posts/1319639064721520:0>

Karamles Chaldean:

October 31, 2016: <https://www.facebook.com/karemleschaldean/videos/594552777412293/>

November 1, 2016: <https://www.facebook.com/karemleschaldean/videos/594552777412293/>

November 5, 2016: <https://www.facebook.com/karemleschaldean/videos/596351097232461/>

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<https://www.facebook.com/NinevehPlainDefenseFund/posts/1279939862039518>

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November 6, 2016: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3PlZhwwE9-4>

Nineveh Protection Plain Units: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3PlZhwwE9-4>

NPR:

<http://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2016/11/12/501752175/isis-is-gone-but-iraqi-christians-are-wary-of-returning-home>

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This is Christian Iraq: <https://www.facebook.com/ThisIsChristianIraq/posts/1639916689590160>

Scholarly:

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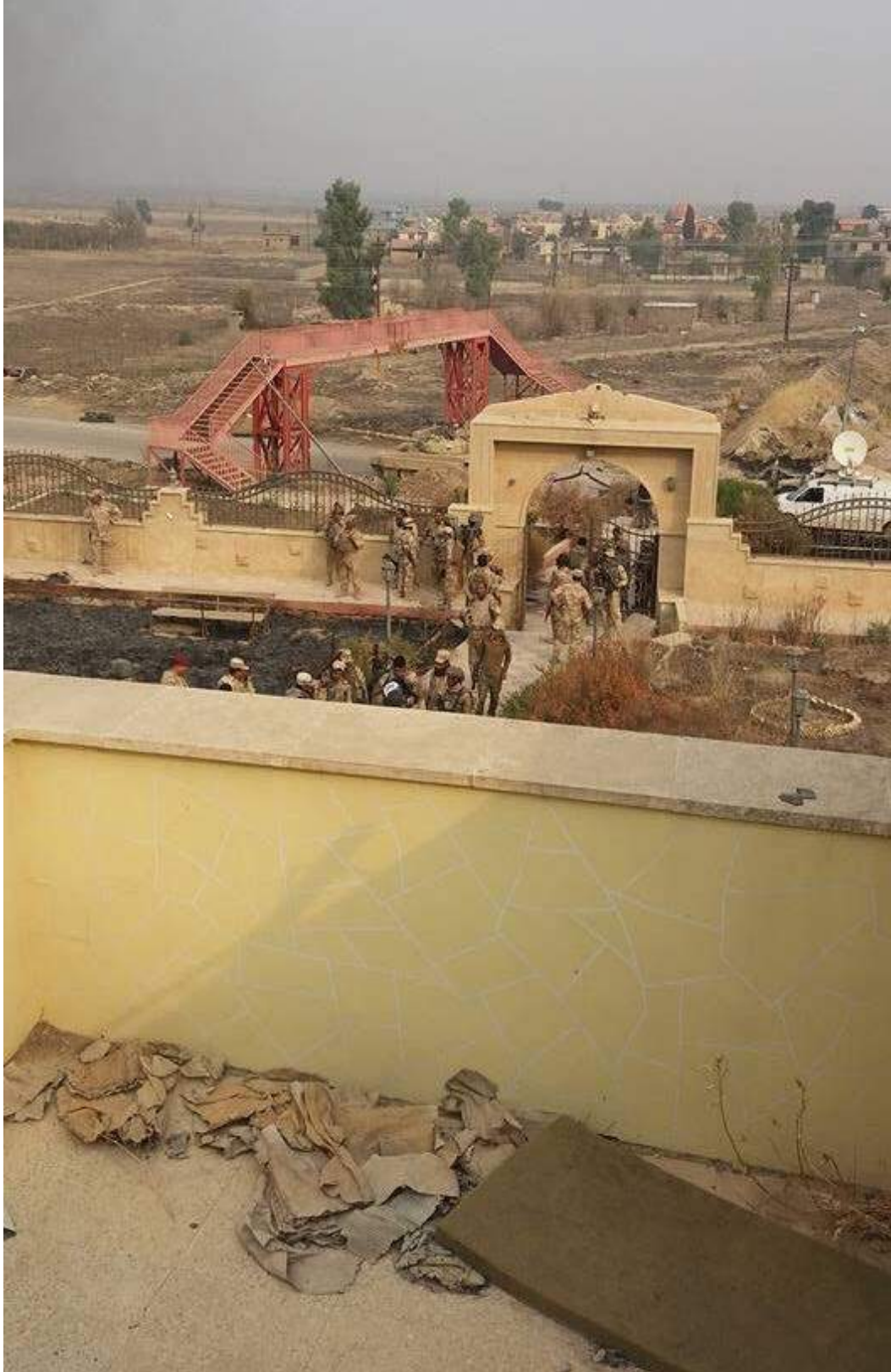
Mar Barbara Church (كنيسة مر بربرة):



Material distributed by the NPU shows soldiers replacing crosses atop Mar Barbara Church (NPU; October 24, 2016)



Material distributed by the NPU shows soldiers replacing crosses atop Mar Barbara Church (NPU; October 24, 2016)



Damage surrounding Mar Barbara Church (NPU; October 24, 2016)



Iraqi forces stand inside the Mar Barbara Church complex, holding an ISIL flag. Fire damage is present in the background (France 24; October 24, 2016)



Damage in the courtyard of Mar Barbara Church (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



An entrance to an ISIL-dug tunnel located inside Mar Barbara Church (France 24; October 24, 2016)



A soldier enters an ISIL-dug tunnel at Mar Barbara Church (Getty Images; October 28, 2016)



A tunnel built at Mar Barbara Church (Getty Images; October 28, 2016)



Graffiti left on the gates of Mar Barbara Church (Karamlesh; October 24, 2016)



Damage to the area surrounding Mar Barbara Church (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Mar Barbara Church as it stands today (NPU; November 6, 2016)



An Iraqi soldier standing guard over Mar Barbara Church (Christian Today; November 2, 2016)



Local cleanup efforts at Mar Barbara Church (Karamles Chaldean; November 15, 2016)

Mar Ada al-Rasool Church (كنيسة مار أدي الرسول):



Reporters stand at the gate to Mar Ada al-Rasool Church (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Exterior damage to Mar Ada al-Rasool Church (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Fire damage seen on the outside of Mar Ada al-Rasool Church (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Damage to exterior of Mar Ada al-Rasool Church (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Damage to the exterior of Mar Ada al-Rasool Church (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Damage to Mar Ada al-Rasool Church (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Damage to Mar Ada al-Rasool Church (Karamlesh; October 28, 2016)



Defacement outside Mar Ada al-Rasool Church (Karamlesh; October 28, 2016)



Damage to Mar Ada al-Rasool Church (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



A view of damage to Mar Ada al-Rasool Church (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Detail of damage to Mar Ada al-Rasool Church (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Damage to the interior of Mar Ada al-Rasool Church (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Detail of damage to Mar Ada al-Rasool Church (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Damage to the interior of Mar Ada al-Rasool Church where a statue has been crudely reconstructed (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Damage to Mar Ada al-Rasool Church (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Possibly the remaining portion of a statue of the Virgin Mary, whose head is set on a statue of what is most likely Jesus Christ (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Damage to Mar Ada al-Rasool Church (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



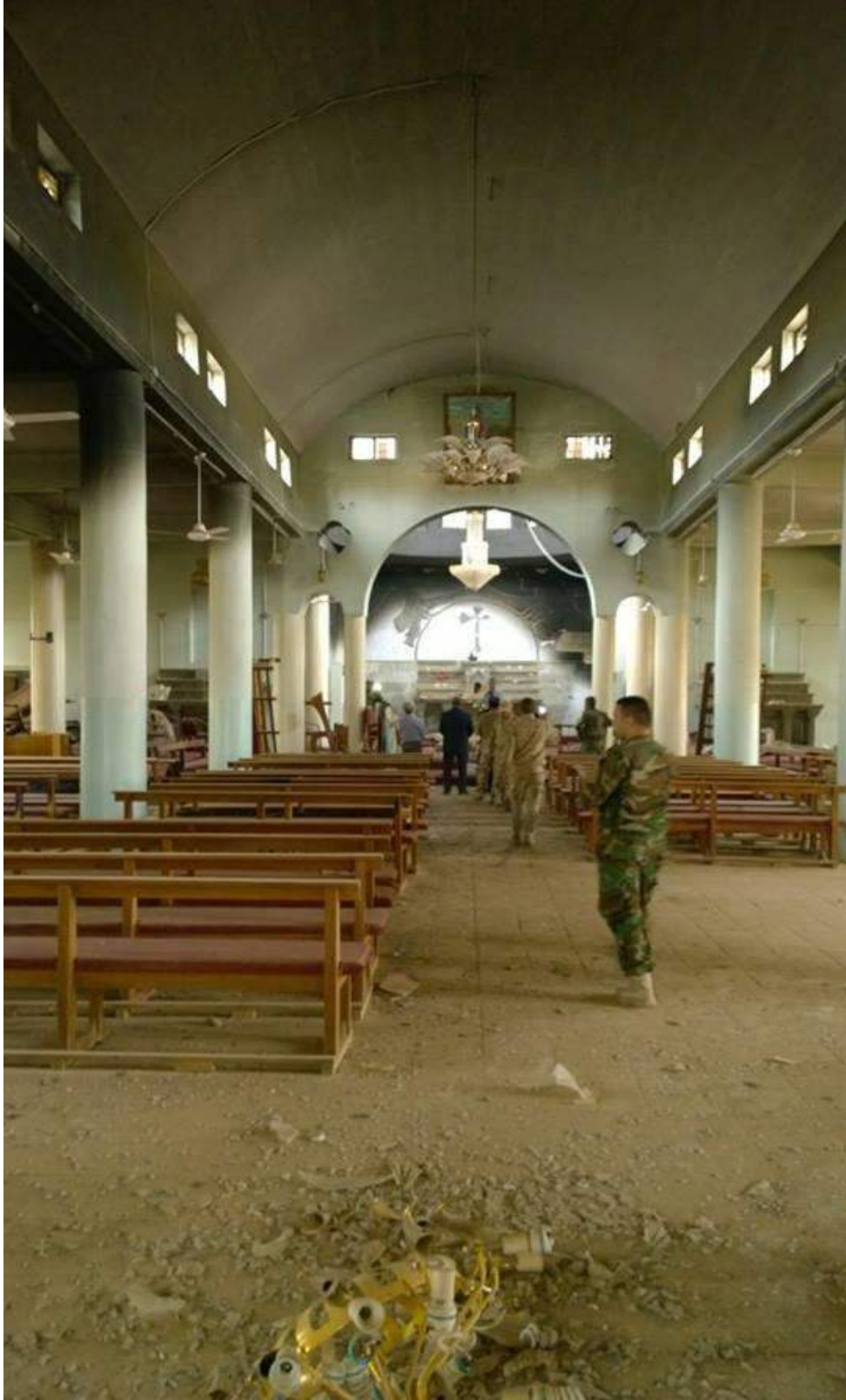
Damage to Mar Ada al-Rasool Church (Karamlesh; October 28, 2016)



The exterior Mar Ada al-Rasool Church where a statue had been removed (Karamlesh; October 28, 2016)



Damage to the interior of Mar Ada al-Rasool Church (Karamlesh; October 28, 2016)



Damage to Mar Ada al-Rasool Church (Karamlesh; October 28, 2016)



Damage to Mar Ada al-Rasool Church (Karamlesh; October 28, 2016)



Damage to Mar Ada al-Rasool Church (Karamlesh; October 28, 2016)

Mar George Church (كنيسة مر جورجيس):



Damage to a gate at Mar George Church (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Damage to a gate at Mar George Church (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Damage surrounding Mar George Church (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Damage to the interior of Mar George Church (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Damage to the interior of Mar George Church (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Damage to the interior of Mar George Church (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Damage to the cemetery at Mar George Church (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Damage to the cemetery at Mar George Church (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Reporters investigate graves that have been broken into at Mar George Cemetery (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Vandalized graves at Mar George Cemetery (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



A vandalized grave at Mar George Cemetery (Ishtar TV; November 9, 2016)



Vandalism at Mar George Cemetery (Ishtar TV; November 9, 2016)

Mar Yonan Concert Hall (قاعة مار يونان الحفلات):



Graffiti present at the Mar Yonan Concert Hall (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Graffiti inside the Mar Yonan Concert Hall (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)

Mar Joseph Cultural Center (مركز مار يوسف الثقافي):



Damage to Mar Joseph Cultural Center (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



A large hole in the wall allowing militants to move between rooms at Mar Joseph Cultural Center (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



A large hole in the wall allowing militants to move between rooms at Mar Joseph Cultural Center (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



An entrance to a tunnel dug by ISIL militants at Mar Joseph Cultural Center (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Evidence of reuse and tunneling at Mar Joseph Cultural Center (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Evidence of reuse and tunneling at Mar Joseph Cultural Center (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Evidence of reuse of Mar Joseph Cultural Center (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Evidence of reuse of Mar Joseph Cultural Center (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



A crater left by an airstrike near the Mar Joseph Cultural Center (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



The damaged Virgin Mary statue near Mar Joseph Cultural Center (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)

Virgin Mary Church (كنيسة مريم العذراء)



The exterior of the Virgin Mary Church (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Damage to the courtyard of the Virgin Mary Church (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Damage to the courtyard of the Virgin Mary Church (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Fire damage to the interior of the Virgin Mary Church (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Damage to the interior of the Virgin Mary Church (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Damage to the interior of the Virgin Mary Church (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Damage to the interior of the Virgin Mary Church (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



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Damage to the interior of the Virgin Mary Church (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Damage to the interior of the Virgin Mary Church (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Damage to the interior of the Virgin Mary Church (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Damage to the interior of the Virgin Mary Church (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Material damage at the Virgin Mary Church (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Fire damage to the interior of the Virgin Mary Church (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)

Deir Mar Banat Mariam (دير مار بنات مريم)



Video still of the complete destruction of Deir Mar Banat (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)

IHI 16-0039

Report Date: November 4, 2016

Site Name: Kanisat al-Sa'a (Kanisat al-Latin; Latin Church; Clock Church)

Date of Incident: Between October 21 – November 4, 2016

Location: Al-Sa'a Quarter / Central Mosul, Ninawa Governorate, Iraq

Site Description: Catholic church (Latin Rite) with famous clock tower gifted by Empress Eugenie of France.

Site Date: 1873 CE, the clock tower was completed in 1882 CE.

Incident Summary: ISIL militants demolish church.

Incident Source and Description: On November 4, 2016 Mosulyoon reported that ISIL militants had begun demolishing the Clock Church using “demolition machines” and “hydraulic hammers.”¹¹⁰ In early 2016 reports surfaced that ISIL had blown up the church, but that was later determined to be false.¹¹¹

DigitalGlobe imagery corroborates the Mosulyoon report. Damage to the church is first seen in an image from November 4, 2016. However, the damaged area has not increased since then, as seen in imagery from November 12, 2016. The damage is isolated to the southern portion of the church buildings. The main clock tower and church appear undamaged in satellite imagery.

Pattern: Military Activity: intentional destruction.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

AINA: <http://www.aina.org/news/20160426131246.htm>

Bellingcat:

<https://www.bellingcat.com/news/mena/2016/10/19/contrary-reports-clock-church-not-destroyed-mosul/>

Mosulyoon:

<https://www.facebook.com/mosulyoon2/posts/192601921762093> \ <https://www.facebook.com/mosulyoon2/posts/1925444014345117>

¹¹⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/mosulyoon2/posts/1925444014345117>

¹¹¹ <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/mena/2016/10/19/contrary-reports-clock-church-not-destroyed-mosul/>

Niqash: <http://www.niqash.org/en/articles/society/5113/>



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



Southern part of the church damaged (DigitalGlobe; November 4, 2016)



No change to the damaged area of the church (DigitalGlobe; November 12, 2016)

IHI 16-0040

Report Date: November 4, 2016

Site Name: Grand Mosque (جامع الكبير) (al-Baaja Mosque)

Date of Incident: November 4, 2016

Location: Shirqat, Salah ad Din Governorate, Iraq

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: ca. 2002 CE or later

Incident Summary: ISIL militants seize mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On November 4, 2016 Reuters reported that ISIL militants had launched an attack against the town of Shirqat, storming and taking over al-Baaja Mosque and its immediate surroundings.¹¹² The extent of damage to the mosque, if any, remains unknown as there were no photographs available at the time of publication.

Pattern: Military activity: occupation/militarization.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Al Arabiya:

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2016/11/04/Pentagon-Baghdadi-losing-control-of-his-troops.html>

Middle East Monitor:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20161104-daesh-invades-shirqat-liberated-by-iraqi-forces-2-months-ago/>

Reuters: <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-shirqat-idUSKBN12Z00B>

¹¹² <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-shirqat-idUSKBN12Z00B>

IHI 16-0041

Report Date: November 4, 2016

Site Name: Unnamed Mosque

Date of Incident: November 4, 2016

Location: Tel Afar, Ninawa Governorate, Iraq

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: Video footage shows recruitment taking place inside mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On November 4, 2016 ISIL-affiliated Amaq News Agency released a video of recruitment taking place inside a mosque in Tel Afar. The name of the mosque is not shared in the video.

ASOR CHI has previously reported on similar recruitments occurring inside mosques located in ISIL-held territory in Syria. For further information on these instances see, **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0085** in **Weekly Report 97-98**.

Pattern: Military activity: occupation/militarization.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor reports of militarization and occupation of sites in Nineveh Governorate.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Amaq News Agency: <https://jkikki.de/2016/11/04/انضمام-عدد-من-أهالي-تلعفر-للدولة-الإسلي/>



Video still of ISIL recruitment inside a mosque in Tel Afar (Amaq News Agency; November 4, 2016)

IHI 16-0042

Report Date: November 4, 2016

Site Name:

- Mar Qoryaqos Church (مار قرياقوس) (Mar Qiriaqs)
- Mar Oraha Monastery (دير مار اوراها)
- Batnaya Cemetery

Date of Incident: August 2014 - October 2016

Location: Batnaya, Ninawa Governorate, Iraq

Site Description:

- Mar Qoryaqos - Large church in the middle of the Batnaya built on a high area. It was renovated in 1944 CE.¹¹³
- Mar Oraha Monastery - Located approximately two kilometers to the east of Batnaya.¹¹⁴ The monastery “includes one large rectangular building 33 meters long and 26 meters wide. The building is surrounded by stones of marble and lapis lazuli meticulously carved with various Christian and ancient motifs.”¹¹⁵ It is surrounded by a small village.
- Batnaya Cemetery - Christian cemetery located in the town of Batnaya. Home to Mar Shmooni Shrine.¹¹⁶

Site Date:

- Mar Qoryaqos - Renovated in 1944 CE.¹¹⁷
- Mar Oraha Monastery - 581-596 CE. the monastery was rebuilt in the mid-17th century. In 1743, Nadir Shah’s army forcefully occupied the monastery, partially destroying the building and murdering the monks who inhabited the site. The monastery was rebuilt again in 1921.¹¹⁸
- Batnaya Cemetery - Exact date unknown.

Incident Summary: New video footage and photographs from Batnaya show damage to two churches and the town cemetery.

Incident Source and Description: On October 26, 2016 video footage from several sources surfaced of damage to churches in the recently recaptured town of Batnaya. Kurdish Peshmerga and Iraqi Christian forces freed the town from ISIL on October 25, 2016 after several days of operations.¹¹⁹ Present in the video were Mar Qoryaqos Church, the local cemetery, and the nearby Mar Oraha Monastery. Rough video footage taken on October 26, 2016 shows extensive damage to Mar Qoryaqos Church, including evidence of intentional destruction. ISIL graffiti is present on the walls of the church as well as on an altar. ASOR CHI in-country sources noted that this damage

¹¹³ <http://www.ishtartv.com/en/viewarticle,35878.html>

¹¹⁴ <http://www.ishtartv.com/en/viewarticle,35878.html>

¹¹⁵ <http://www.aina.org/aol/syriac.htm>

¹¹⁶ <http://www.ishtartv.com/en/viewarticle,35878.html>

¹¹⁷ <http://www.ishtartv.com/en/viewarticle,35878.html>

¹¹⁸ <http://www.aina.org/aol/syriac.htm>

¹¹⁹ <http://www.khoranat-alqosh.com/vb/showthread.php?p=207384#post207384>

occurred soon after ISIL took control of the area. In this recent video, Peshmerga and Iraqi Christian forces are seen erecting a makeshift cross over the church dome as well as a flag.¹²⁰

On October 26, 2016 video footage shows Peshmerga and Iraqi Christian forces entering the Mar Orah Monastery and raising a recovered cross atop the church.¹²¹ The interior of the monastery has sustained some damage, the extent of which is hard to determine based on the available video footage. There appears to be significant material damage, with one picture detailing a damaged altar, as well as graffiti present on the walls. On October 30, Peshmerga forces reported that they had secured the site.¹²²

On November 2, 2016 video footage shared by local reports via Youtube showed extensive destruction to a cemetery in Batnaya, with many headstones and mausolea toppled.¹²³ The exact cause of the damage is unknown, however ISIL militants have previously vandalized cemeteries in Iraq.

Pattern: Military activity: intentional destruction, explosives.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

AINA: <http://www.aina.org/aol/syriac.htm>

De Redactie:

<http://deredactie.be/cm/vrtnieuws/videozone/programmas/journaal/2.47365?video=1.2803668#>

Dwekh Nawsha:

October 25, 2016: <https://www.facebook.com/Dwekh.Nawsha/videos/1161965797230800/>

October 26, 2016: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bUNfhEw_Jxw ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=emO28VRyR9c>

November 2, 2016: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d-oTm8KkUPY>

Khoranat Alqosh : <http://www.khoranat-alqosh.com/vb/showthread.php?p=207384#post207384>

Kurdish Press: <https://twitter.com/KurdishPress/status/791396548362076160>

Kurdistan 247: <https://www.facebook.com/Kurdistan247/posts/1596393257052913>

IshtarTV: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vfvM1mvERYU>

March 6, 2012: <http://www.ishtartv.com/en/viewarticle.35878.html>

¹²⁰ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bUNfhEw_Jxw

¹²¹ <http://deredactie.be/cm/vrtnieuws/videozone/programmas/journaal/2.47365?video=1.2803668#>

¹²² <https://twitter.com/GCPFKurdistan/status/792736920052887552>

¹²³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d-oTm8KkUPY>

September 22, 2012: <http://www.ishtartv.com/en/viewarticle.35407.html>

October 26, 2016: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vfvM1mvERYU>

Lalish Media Network: <http://www.lalishduhok.com/ezidi/post/124664>

Peshmerga Command: <https://twitter.com/GCPFKurdistan/status/792736920052887552>

Peshmerga News: <https://twitter.com/PeshmergaNews/status/791367585170325504>

This is Christian Iraq:

https://www.facebook.com/pg/ThisIsChristianIraq/photos/?tab=album&album_id=1761712770743884

Shlama Foundation: <https://www.facebook.com/shlamafoundation/posts/1016991461745279>



Iraqi Christian militia members raise the cross atop Mar Qoryaqos Church (October 26, 2016)



Damage to the dome of Mar Qoryaqos Church (This is Christian Iraq; October 25, 2016)



Mar Qoryaqos Church with roof still intact (DigitalGlobe; May 21, 2016)



Mar Qoryaqos Church with visible holes in the roof (DigitalGlobe; November 12, 2016)



Damage to Mar Oraha Monastery (Twitter; October 26, 2016)



Damage to Mar Oraha Monastery (Twitter; October 26, 2016)



Fighters stand atop Mar Orah Monastery (Rudi Vranckx/Twitter; October 26, 2016)



Mar Orah Monastery (DigitalGlobe; November 15, 2013)



Mar Orah Monastery with damage to the southern and western walls (DigitalGlobe; November 12, 2016)



Video still of damage to Batnaya Cemetery (Dwekh Nawsha; November 2, 2016)



Video still of damage to Batnaya Cemetery (Dwekh Nawsha; November 2, 2016)



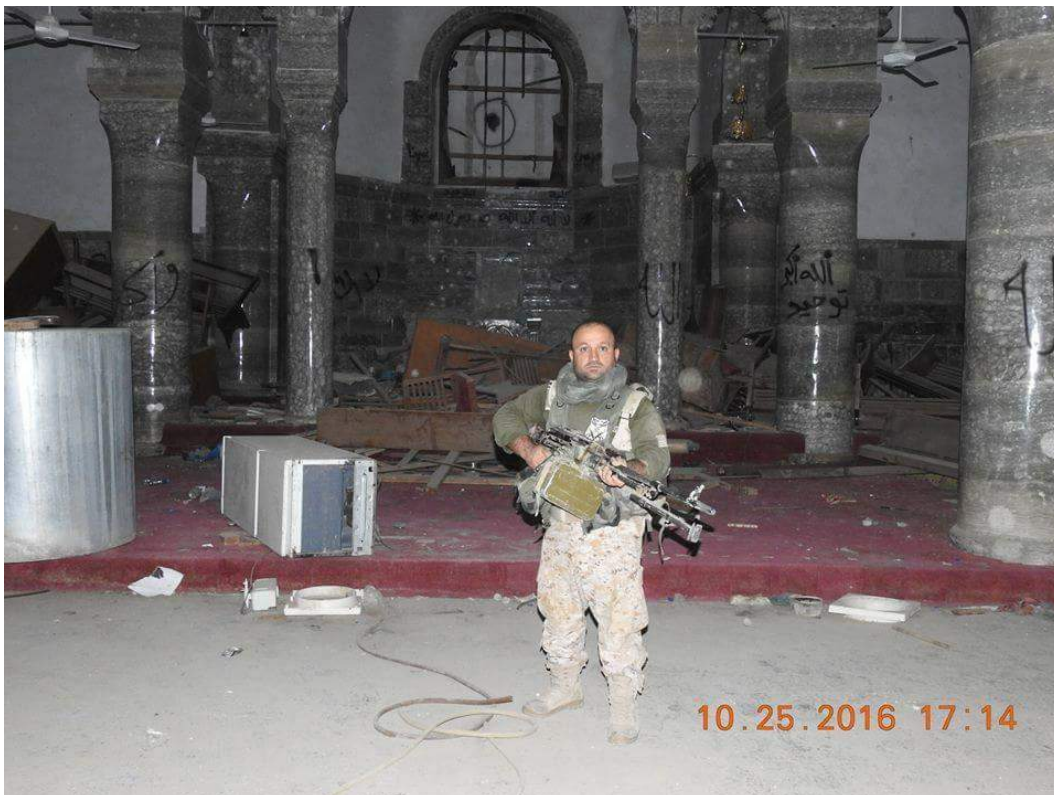
Batnaya Cemetery prior to damage (DigitalGlobe; September 28, 2014)



Batnaya Cemetery with damage to a large shrine and many graves (DigitalGlobe; April 1, 2016)



Batnaya Cemetery with a visible impact crater (DigitalGlobe; November 11, 2016)



Damage to the interior of an unidentified church in Batnaya (Dwekh Nawsha; October 25, 2016)

IHI 16-0043

Report Date: November 8 2016

Site Name:

- Naqortaya Monastery (دير ناقورتايا) (Monastery of Saint John of Dailam)
- Resurrection Cemetery (مقبرة القيامة)
- Church of the Resurrection (كنيسة القيامة)
- Ishtar Hall (قاعة عشتار بغديدا)
- al-Tahira Church (كنيسة الطاهرة)
- Mar Gerges Church (كنيسة مار غوركييس)
- Mar Yacob Church (كنيسة مار يعقوب)
- Mar Yohanna Church (كنيسة مار يوحنا)
- Dar Mar Polis Church Services (دار مار بولس الخدمات الكنيسة)
- Church of Saints Behnam and Sarah (كنيسة نيسه بهنام و ساره للسريان الكاثوليك)
- Mar Matta Hall (قاعة مار متى)

Date of Incident: August 2014 - October 2016

Location: Bakhdida (Qaraqosh), Ninawa Governorate, Iraq

Site Description: Bakhdida is considered to be Iraq’s largest and oldest Christian town.¹²⁴ It “is one of a string of settlements in the Nineveh plains near Mosul that trace their origins back to the dawn of Christianity.”¹²⁵ According to Ishtar TV, there are seven churches in Bakhdida, the oldest of which dates back to “late renovations” in the 12th or 13th century CE.¹²⁶

- Naqortaya Monastery - Syriac Orthodox monastery and pilgrimage site.
- Resurrection Cemetery - Cemetery adjacent to the Church of the Resurrection.
- Church of the Resurrection - Last church built in Bakhdida.¹²⁷
- Ishtar Hall - A multi-purpose hall located next to Mar Behnam and Sarah Church. Building of the hall began in October 2011 CE. The hall was opened on August 17, 2012 by Patriarch Mar Ignatius Joseph III Younan, Patriarch of Antioch Syriac Catholic Church.¹²⁸ The hall was used for many occasions, including religious occasions as well as educational purposes.
- al-Tahira Church - Syriac Catholic Church. According to The Daily Beast, al-Tahira Church is Iraq’s largest church with capacity for 3,000 people.¹²⁹ A “spacious courtyard” lies next to the church that is used for religious festivals.¹³⁰

¹²⁴ <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2016/10/26/the-painful-liberation-of-iraq-s-christian-heartland.html> ; <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/residents.of.largest.christian.town.in.iraq.pick.up.pieces.after.being.freed.from.isis/99514.htm>

¹²⁵ <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2016/10/26/the-painful-liberation-of-iraq-s-christian-heartland.html>

¹²⁶ <http://www.ishartv.com/en/viewarticle,35746.html>

¹²⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GQrZCQA5vzc>

¹²⁸ <http://ishartv.com/viewarticle,43793.html>

¹²⁹ <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2016/10/26/the-painful-liberation-of-iraq-s-christian-heartland.html> ; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_xchzEyFMyw

- Dar Mar Polis Church Services - The largest church service center in Iraq and provides religious education, as well as serving as a place for cultural and social events such as concerts, lectures, art exhibitions, etc. for the local community.¹³¹ The center includes a hall used as both a cinema and theater.¹³²
- Church of Saints Behnam and Sarah - Christian monastery.

Site Date:

- Naqortaya Monastery - Built 9th century CE. Rebuilt 1563 and 1998.
- al-Tahira Church - Construction began in 1932 CE. The first wing construction at the church began in 1939 CE and the final phase was completed in 1948.¹³³
- Church of the Resurrection - 2008 CE.
- Mar Yacob Church - Built prior to 1770 CE and renovated in 1970.¹³⁴
- Mar Yohanna - Built prior to 1748 CE.¹³⁵
- Dar Mar Polis Church Services - Construction began November 6, 1995 CE and was completed on June 29, 2000.¹³⁶

Incident Summary: New video footage and photographs show damage to several sites in Bakhdida.

Incident Source and Description: On October 22, 2016 Iraqi Army forces and members of the Nineveh Protection Units (NPU) entered the town of Bakhdida.¹³⁷ Shortly thereafter, local priests and journalists began inspecting and documenting the damage to religious cultural heritage in the town. The resulting video footage and photographs showed extensive damage to several sites in the town.

- Naqortaya Monastery (دير ناقورتايا) - On November 8, 2016 Ishtar TV released a video report on the condition of several sites in Bakhdida. The video included footage of Naqortaya Monastery. The monastery appears to have suffered intentional destruction to the interior of the site, including vandalism of religious objects.¹³⁸ Some rubble is visible around the church, but the cause of the exterior damage is unknown. Remnants of food, mattresses, clothing (including police uniforms), and other household items suggest that some of the rooms of the monastery were used to house militants during ISIL's occupation of the town.
- Resurrection Cemetery (مقبرة القيامة) - On November 8, 2016 Ishtar TV released a video report on the condition of several sites in Bakhdida.¹³⁹ The video included footage of Resurrection Cemetery, a large possibly modern cemetery, located adjacent to the Church of the Resurrection. The extent of the damage is not immediately apparent, however a building on the

¹³⁰ <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2016/10/26/the-painful-liberation-of-iraq-s-christian-heartland.html>

¹³¹ <http://www.zowaa.org/Arabic/bakhdeda%20branch/news/bakh%20news%20290511.htm>

¹³² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ZCRgreDntQ>

¹³³ <http://www.ishtartv.com/en/viewarticle,35746.html> ; <http://bakhdida.ca/Museum/churchesE.htm>

¹³⁴ <http://bakhdida.ca/Museum/churchesE.htm>

¹³⁵ <http://bakhdida.ca/Museum/churchesE.htm>

¹³⁶ <http://www.zowaa.org/Arabic/bakhdeda%20branch/news/bakh%20news%20290511.htm>

¹³⁷ <https://twitter.com/NinevehPU/status/789742259008921600>

¹³⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GQrZCQA5vzc>

¹³⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GQrZCQA5vzc>

grounds of the cemetery has sustained some exterior damage. The cemetery appears impacted by some overgrowth of vegetation. Some tomb sites appear to have sustained some damage, but no clear pattern is evident, possibly due in part to poor video quality. Several of the tombs have been opened, and evidence to suggest that some items inside have been damaged or stolen. Many grave epitaphs have also been defaced and crosses on the tombs appear to have been scratched off. On November 9, 2016 an article published by Ishtar TV described the phenomenon of ISIL damaging cemeteries in Bakhdida and neighboring areas.¹⁴⁰ According to the article, ISIL militants specifically targeted graves of clergy members.

- Church of the Resurrection (كنيسة القيامة) - On November 8, 2016 Ishtar TV released a video report on the condition of several sites in Bakhdida.¹⁴¹ The video included footage of Church of the Resurrection. The church appears to have been destroyed in its entirety, with debris scattered around the ground. Three of four walls of the church remain standing, but are heavily damaged. On October 10, 2014 Ishtar TV reported that ISIL militants had blown up the Church of the Resurrection.¹⁴²
- Mar Yacob Church (كنيسة مار يعقوب) - On November 8, 2016 Ishtar TV released a video report on the condition of several sites in Bakhdida.¹⁴³ The video included footage of Mar Yacob Church. Intentional destruction is apparent on the sides and roof of the building where the cross has been bent, a statue decapitated, and other religious figures on the exterior walls scratched off.
- Ishtar Hall (قاعة عشتار بغيديدا) - On November 8, 2016 Ishtar TV released a video report on the condition of several sites in Bakhdida. The video included footage of the Ishtar Hall. The building appears to have sustained significant fire damage, damaging the entire inside of the building.¹⁴⁴
- al-Tahira Church (كنيسة الطاهرة) - Following the recapturing of Bakhdida, several sources released reports as well as video footage and photographs detailing damage to al-Tahira Church. According to an article by *The Daily Beast*: “the church’s interior has been blackened by fire, and the altar has been vandalized...[ISIL] graffiti has been smeared on the walls, and songbooks lie burned on the ground...the organ has been smashed.”¹⁴⁵ In another report, a priest attested that the bell of the church was missing, seemingly ripped from its place.¹⁴⁶ The belfry apparently had been hit by a “tank shell.”¹⁴⁷ According to one Iraqi soldier, ISIL militants “store(d) weapons and ammunition in the church, knowing that [the church] would not be bombed by the coalition.”¹⁴⁸ The courtyard next to the church, once used for Christian festivals, was utilized by ISIL for target practice.¹⁴⁹ ISIL “set up mannequins for target practice, and empty cartridges litter the

¹⁴⁰ <http://www.ishartv.com/en/viewarticle.38070.html>

¹⁴¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GQrZCQA5vzc>

¹⁴² <http://ishartv.com/viewarticle.56522.html>

¹⁴³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GQrZCQA5vzc>

¹⁴⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GQrZCQA5vzc>

¹⁴⁵ <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2016/10/26/the-painful-liberation-of-iraq-s-christian-heartland.html>

¹⁴⁶ <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2016/10/26/the-painful-liberation-of-iraq-s-christian-heartland.html> ; <http://www.thenational.ae/world/middle-east/iraqi-priests-resurrect-cross-in-christian-town-nearly-recaptured-from-isil>

¹⁴⁷ <http://www.thenational.ae/world/middle-east/iraqi-priests-resurrect-cross-in-christian-town-nearly-recaptured-from-isil>

¹⁴⁸ <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2016/10/26/the-painful-liberation-of-iraq-s-christian-heartland.html>

¹⁴⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/shlamafoundation/videos/1016999588411133/>

stone floor.”¹⁵⁰ In addition the “the walls on all four sides have been sprayed with bullets, and spent cartridges litter the floor.”¹⁵¹ Another account by *The National* describes the damage adding that: “wooden rows of seats have been tossed over, the mezzanine floor housing the organ has been torched, and the altar and interior walls are charred. ISIL graffiti is scrawled on the columns supporting the central part of the building known as the nave.”¹⁵² On October 30, 2016 the first mass took place, using a makeshift altar, in al-Tahira Church after two years of ISIL occupation.¹⁵³

- Mar Gerges Church (كنيسة الطاهرة) - Video footage shared by the Nineveh Plain Protection Units (NPU) on October 28, 2016 showed evidence that Mar Gerges Church had been converted into a bomb-making factory by ISIL.¹⁵⁴ The footage shows some material damage to the church, including large amounts of broken glass, likely from the church’s windows. Weapons caches are clear both inside the church and in an out-building. The out-building, possibly once an office, also appears to contain materials for making IEDs.
- Mar Yohanna Church (كنيسة مار يوحنا) - Video footage published by the NPU on November 6, 2016 showed NPU forces ringing the bell in the badly-damaged church belfry.¹⁵⁵ The belfry has been heavily damaged. Video depicting the interior of the Mar Yohanna Church show extensive material damage.¹⁵⁶
- Dar Mar Polis Church Services (دار مار بولس للخدمات الكنيسة) - Photographs taken by the NPU on October 23, 2016 appear to show that the Dar Mar Polis Church Services building has been converted into a mosque. Graffiti written on the building reads ‘al-Khilafa Mosque’. Video footage from October 31, 2016 shows damage to the interior of the building. There is also evidence of intentional destruction of a cross on one interior wall.
- Church of Saints Behnam and Sarah (كنيسة نيسه بهنام و ساره للسريان الكاثوليك) - On November 10, 2016 members of the French Consulate in Erbil toured some of the damage in Bakhdida including Mar Behnam and Sarah Church. Photographs of Mar Behnam and Sarah Church show extensive damage, including severe damage to the interior of the church.¹⁵⁷ Video footage released by Ishtar TV on October 31, 2016 shows extensive exterior damage. According to the reporter ISIL militants “took down” the church tower, the remains of which are seen on the ground.¹⁵⁸
- Mar Matta Hall (قاعة مار متى) - Video footage taken by Ishtar TV on October 31, 2016 showed the re-use of Mar Matta Hall by ISIL militants. ISIL appeared to have used the hall as a sleeping area.¹⁵⁹ In addition, the office of the late priest of the church has been vandalized.

¹⁵⁰ <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2016/10/26/the-painful-liberation-of-iraq-s-christian-heartland.html>

¹⁵¹ <http://www.thenational.ae/world/middle-east/iraqi-priests-resurrect-cross-in-christian-town-nearly-recaptured-from-isil>

¹⁵² <http://www.thenational.ae/world/middle-east/iraqi-priests-resurrect-cross-in-christian-town-nearly-recaptured-from-isil>

¹⁵³ <http://qz.com/826624/the-first-christian-mass-took-place-in-a-haunting-church-near-mosul-two-years-after-isis-occupation/> ; <http://fraternite-en-irak.org/la-toute-premiere-messe-celebree-dans-qaraqosh-liberee-de-daech/>

¹⁵⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WyCY6Jow5o>

¹⁵⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=upNLTle39s4>

¹⁵⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=upNLTle39s4>

¹⁵⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/NPU.NinevehPlainProtectionUnits/posts/1196293400463602>

¹⁵⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ZCRgreDntQ>

¹⁵⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ZCRgreDntQ>

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

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

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Twitter: <https://twitter.com/arissroussinos/status/791654305480765440>

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October 25, 2016: <https://twitter.com/iraqichristian/status/790994284954746880>
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Naqortaya Monastery (دير ناقتايا):



Video still of an Ishtar TV broadcaster entering Naqortaya Monastery (Ishtar Tv; November 8, 2016)



Video still of an Ishtar TV broadcaster gesturing to food items left behind by ISIL militants at Naqortaya Monastery (Ishtar Tv; November 8, 2016)



Video still of graffiti in a room at Naqortaya Monastery (Ishtar Tv; November 8, 2016)



Video still of ISIL graffiti in a room at Naqortaya Monastery (Ishtar Tv; November 8, 2016)

Resurrection Cemetery (مقبرة القيامة):



Video still of damage at Resurrection Cemetery (Ishtar TV; November 8, 2016)



Video still of damage at Resurrection Cemetery (Ishtar TV; November 8, 2016)



Video still of damage at Resurrection Cemetery (Ishtar TV; November 8, 2016)



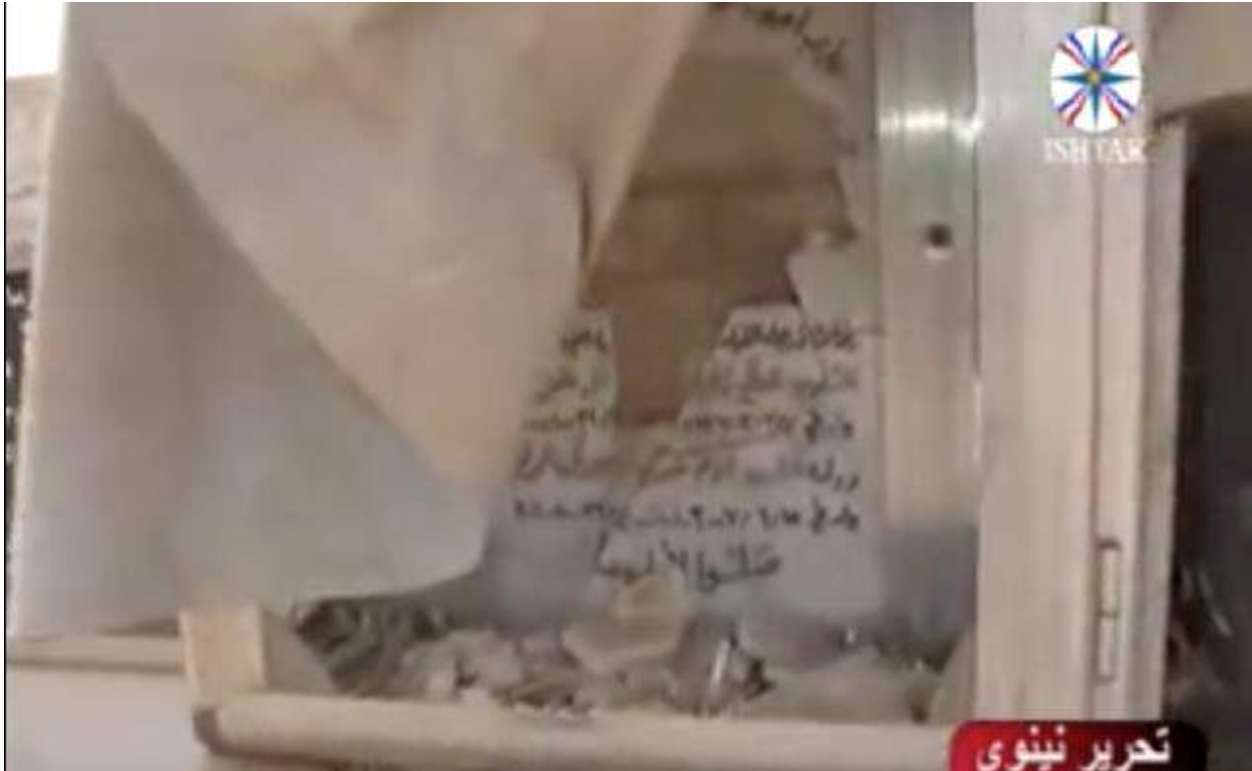
Video still of Resurrection Cemetery (Ishtar TV; November 8, 2016)



Video still of damage to a tomb at Resurrection Cemetery (Ishtar TV; November 8, 2016)



Video of an open tomb at Resurrection Cemetery (Ishtar TV; November 8, 2016)



Video still of damage to a tomb at Resurrection Cemetery (Ishtar TV; November 8, 2016)



Video still of damage to a tomb at Resurrection Cemetery (Ishtar TV; November 8, 2016)

Church of the Resurrection (كنيسة القيامة):



Video still of damage to the Church of the Resurrection (Ishtar TV; November 8, 2016)



Video still of a fallen cross at the entrance to the Church of the Resurrection (Ishtar TV; November 8, 2016)



Video still of damage to interior of the Church of the Resurrection (Ishtar TV; November 8, 2016)



Video still of damage to the interior of the Church of the Resurrection (Ishtar TV; November 8, 2016)



Video still of damage to the interior of the Church of the Resurrection (Ishtar TV; November 8, 2016)



Video still of damage to the Church of the Resurrection (Ishtar TV; November 8, 2016)



Video still of damage to the Church of the Resurrection (Ishtar TV; November 8, 2016)

Ishtar Hall (قاعة عشتار بغداد):



Video still of fire damage to the exterior of Ishtar Hall (Ishtar TV; November 8, 2016)



Video still of fire damage to the interior of Ishtar Hall (Ishtar TV; November 8, 2016)

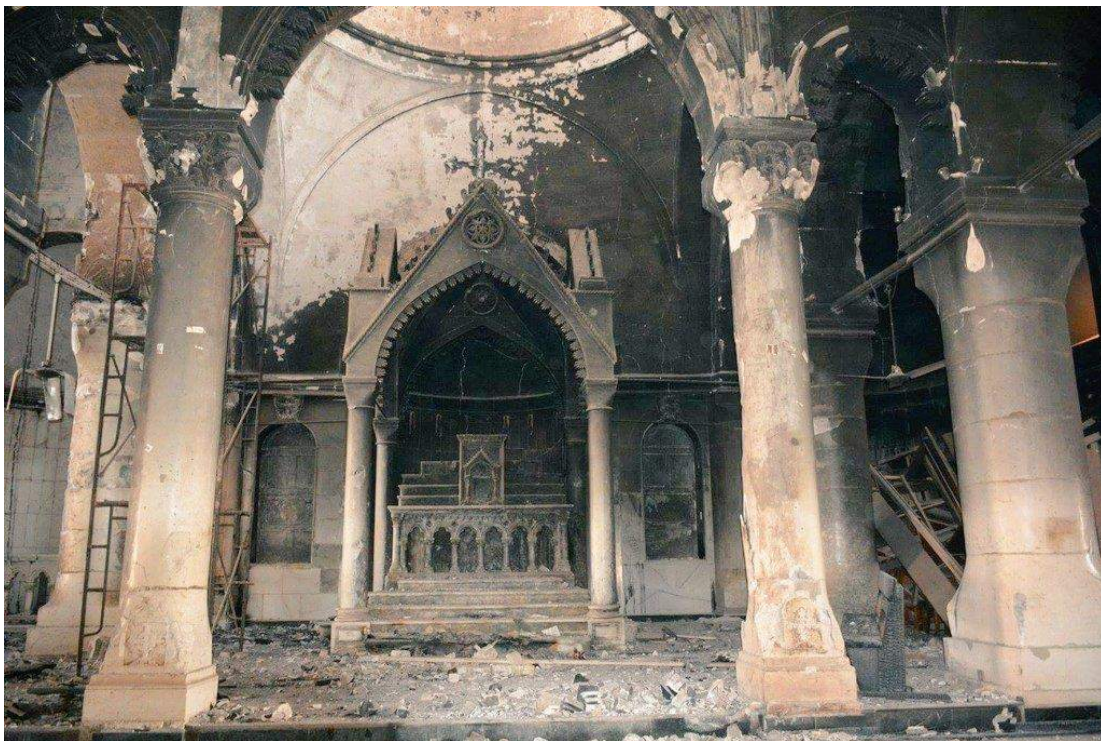
al-Tahira Church (كنيسة الطاهرة):



Damage to the al-Tahira Church (Twitter; October 24, 2016)



Damage to al-Tahira Church (Fraternité en Irak; November 4, 2016)



Damage to the interior of al-Tahira Syriac Church (Iraqi Christian Relief Council; October 26, 2016)



Extensive damage to al-Tahira Syriac Church (Iraqi Christian Relief Council; October 26, 2016)



Damage to the interior of the al-Tahira Church (Twitter; October 25, 2016)



Damage to the interior of the al-Tahira Church (The Daily Beast; October 26, 2016)



Extensive fire damage inside the al-Tahira Church (Getty Images; October 30, 2016)



A member of Iraqi Christian Forces stands guard inside the al-Tahira Church (Getty Images; October 30, 2016)



Material damage inside the al-Tahira Church (Getty Images; October 30, 2016)



Material damage inside the al-Tahira Church (Getty Images; October 30, 2016)



Material damage inside the al-Tahira Church (Getty Images; October 30, 2016)



The courtyard of the al-Tahira Church (Fraternité en Irak; October 27, 2016)



Damage to the courtyard at the al-Tahira Church (NPU; October 23, 2016)



Extensive damage in the courtyard of the al-Tahira Church (Iraqi Christian Relief Council; October 26, 2016)



Ashes, reported to be of books, litter the courtyard of the al-Tahira Church (Twitter; October 27, 2016)



Members of the French Consulate in Erbil visit the al-Tahira Church (NPU; November 14, 2016)



Members of the French Consulate in Erbil visit the al-Tahira Church (NPU; November 14, 2016)



What appears to be ISIL training materials inside the al-Tahira Church (Fraternité en Irak; October 27, 2016)



Damage and results of target practice in the courtyard at the al-Tahira Church (Fraternité en Irak; October 27, 2016)



Fraternité en Irak 2016

Mannequins and other remains of target practice in the al-Tahira Church (Fraternité en Irak; October 27, 2016)



An Iraqi Christian soldier raises a makeshift cross over al-Tahira Church (The Daily Beast; October 26, 2016)



Priests and soldiers lift a cross over a church the al-Tahira Church (Iraqi Christian Relief Council; October 26, 2016)



Fire and explosives damage to the exterior of the al-Tahira Church (Getty Images; October 30, 2016)

Mar Gerges Church (كنيسة مار گورگيس):



Video still of weapons manufacturing materials at Mar Gerges Church (NPU; November 6, 2016)



Video still of weapons manufacturing materials at Mar Gerges Church (NPU; November 6, 2016)



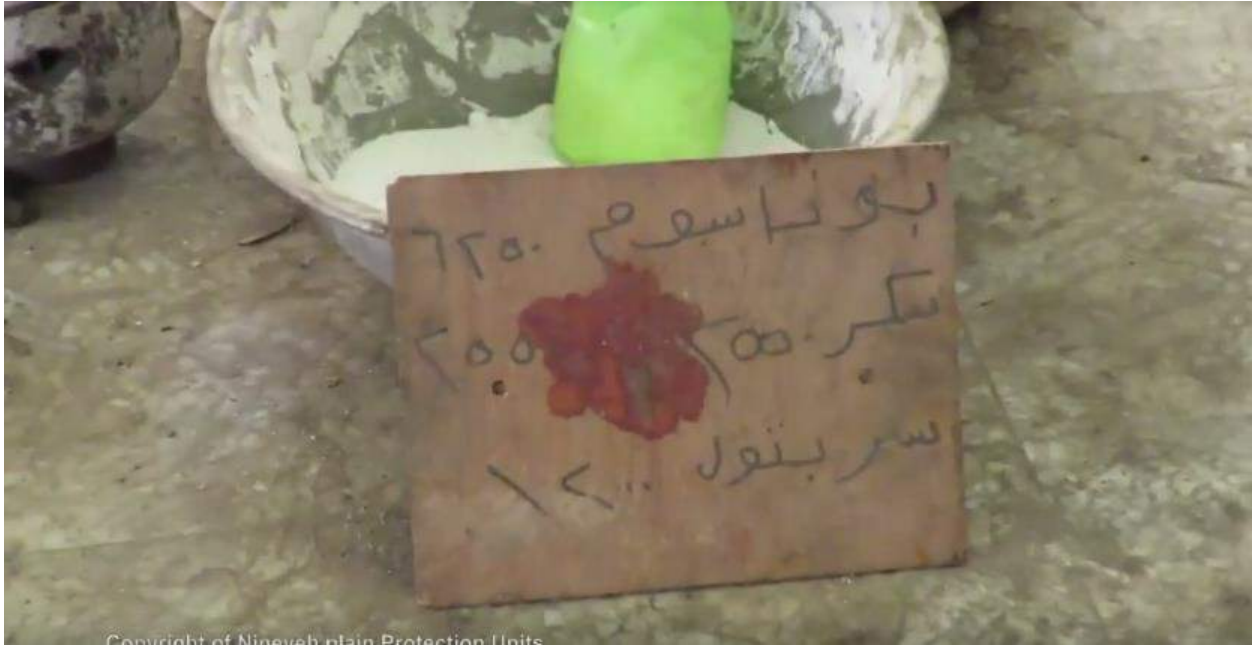
Video still of weapons manufacturing materials at Mar Gerges Church (NPU; November 6, 2016)



Video still of weapons manufacturing materials at Mar Gerges Church (NPU; November 6, 2016)



Video still of a weapons cache found at Mar Gerges Church (NPU; November 6, 2016)



Video still of weapons manufacturing materials at Mar Gerges Church (NPU; November 6, 2016)



Video still of Mar Gerges Church as it stands today (NPU; November 6, 2016)



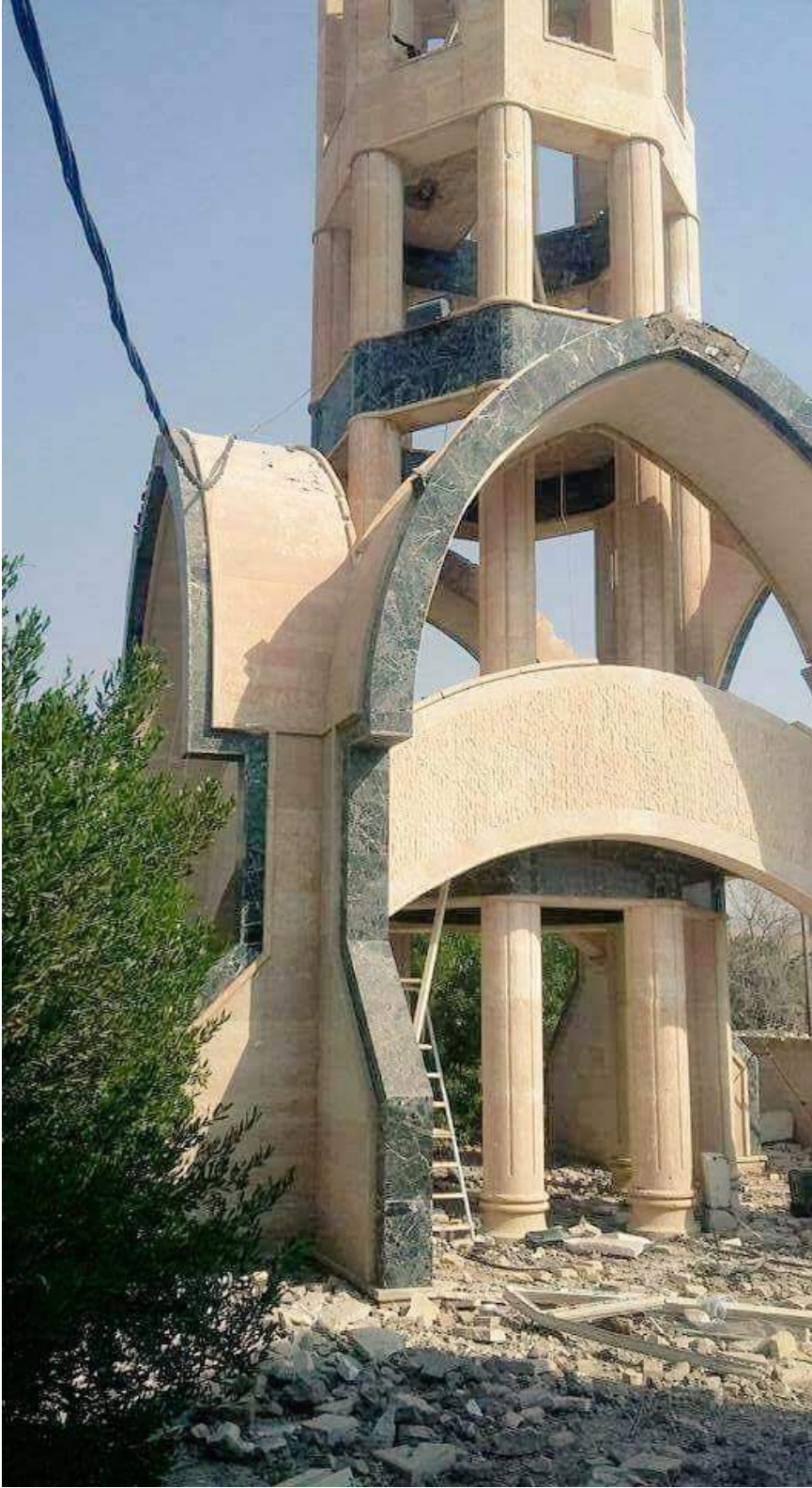
Video still of Mar Gerges Church as it stands today (NPU; November 6, 2016)



Video still of damage to the interior of Mar Gerges Church (The Lad Bible; November 4, 2016)



Video still of exterior damage and graffiti at Mar Gerges Church (The Lad Bible; November 4, 2016)



Damage to Mar Gerges Church (Christian of Iraq; October 28, 2016)



Damage to Mar Gerges Church (Christian of Iraq; October 28, 2016)



Damage to Mar Gerges Church (Christian of Iraq; October 28, 2016)

Mar Yacob Church (كنيسة مار يعقوب)



Damage to the belfry at Mar Yacob Church (Shlama Foundation; October 23, 2016)



Video still of soldiers showing religious icons recovered at Mar Yacob Church (NPU; November 8, 2016)



Video still of suspected intentional defacement of a cross at Mar Yacob Church (NPU; November 8, 2016)



Video still of suspected intentional defacement of a cross at Mar Yacob Church (NPU; November 8, 2016)



Video still of suspected intentional defacement of a religious statue at Mar Yacob Church (NPU; November 8, 2016)

Mar Yohanna Church (كنيسة مار يوحنا)



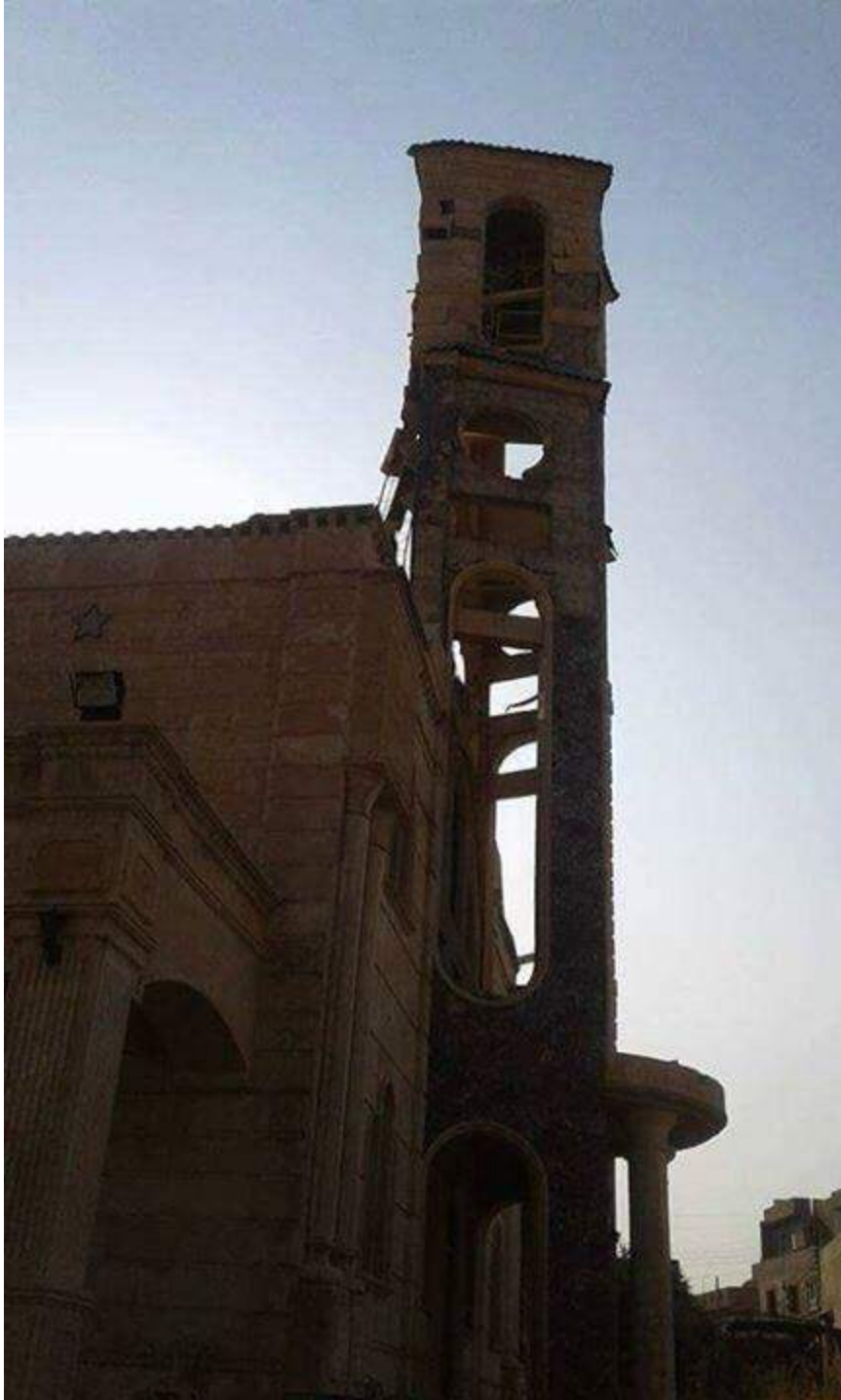
Extensive damage to the belfry of Mar Yohanna Church (Shlama Foundation; October 20, 2016)



Damage to Mar Yohanna Church (Fraternité en Irak; October 23, 2016)



Damage to the interior of Mar Yohanna Church (Fraternité en Irak; October 23, 2016)



Damage to Mar Yohanna Church (Fraternité en Irak; October 23, 2016)

Dar Mar Polis Church Services (دار مار بولس):



Graffiti on Dar Mar Polis Church Services reads al-Khilafa Mosque (Iraqi Christian Relief Council; October 23, 2016)



Video still of damage to the interior of Dar Mar Polis Church Services (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Video still of suspected vandalism to a cross inside Dar Mar Polis Church Services (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)

Mar Behnam and Sarah Church (كنيسة مار بهنام وسارة):



Damage to the Church of Saints Behnam and Sarah (Twitter; October 28, 2016)



Damage to the Church of Saints Behnam and Sarah (Foreign Policy; November 8, 2016)



Members of the French Consulate in Erbil tour the damage inside the Church of Saints Behnam and Sarah (NPU; November 14, 2016)



Members of the French Consulate in Erbil tour the damage inside the Church of Saints Behnam and Sarah (NPU; November 14, 2016)



Members of the French Consulate in Erbil tour the damage inside the Church of Saints Behnam and Sarah (NPU; November 14, 2016)



Members of the French Consulate in Erbil tour the damage to the Church of Saints Behnam and Sarah (NPU; November 14, 2016)



Video still of detail of damage to the Church of Saints Behnam and Sarah (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Video still of the fallen tower at the Church of Saints Behnam and Sarah (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Video still of the fallen tower at the Church of Saints Behnam and Sarah (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Video still of the fallen tower at the Church of Saints Behnam and Sarah (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Video still of detail of the fallen tower at the Church of Saints Behnam and Sarah (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Video still of an Ishtar TV reporter standing in front of the fallen tower at the Church of Saints Behnam and Sarah (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)

Mar Matta Hall (قاعة مار متي)



Video still of abandoned ISIL sleeping quarters at Mar Matta Hall (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)



Video still of vandalism inside the priest's office at Mar Matta Hall (Ishtar TV; October 31, 2016)

IHI 16-0044

Report Date: November 14, 2016

Site Name: Khorsabad (Dur Sharrukin)

Date of Incident: October 27, 2016

Location: Khorsabad, Nineveh Governorate, Iraq

Site Description: In 717 BCE the Assyrian king Sargon II (722 -705 BCE) ordered a new capital for the Neo-Assyrian Empire be built at the confluence of the Tigris River and the Greater Zab River.¹⁶⁰ The court was moved from Nimrud (ancient Kalhu) to Dur Sharrukin (modern Khorsabad) in 706 BCE, though the city was still undergoing construction. Sargon II was killed in battle soon after, and his successor, Sennacherib (705-681 BCE), abandoned the city and moved the capital to Nineveh.¹⁶¹ The city was fortified by a wall (w. 7.3 m) with seven gates, each decorated with a colossal stone lamassu sculpture. The center of the city was dominated by the royal palace, decorated with colossal stone sculptures and reliefs, as well as numerous temples and a ziggurat (stepped tower).¹⁶² Paul-Émile Botta first excavated the site 1842-1844, later followed by Victor Place 1852-1855, the Oriental Institute of Chicago 1928-1935, and Fuad Safar of the Iraqi Department of Antiquities in 1957.

Site Date: ca. 700-600 BCE

Incident Summary: Reports and new satellite imagery show damage to Khorsabad due to military entrenchments.

Incident Source and Description: On October 27, 2016 local reports emerged detailing the finding of Neo-Assyrian artifacts by Kurdish Peshmerga forces at an unspecified site near Khorsabad.¹⁶³ These artifacts were found while the forces were digging defensive berms and trenches at the site between mid-October and early November.¹⁶⁴ The published images show figural relief sculptures, cuneiform inscriptions on slabs, and decorative elements from buildings.¹⁶⁵ The Facebook post stated the commander reported the finds to the Kurdistan Regional Government Directorate of Archaeology on October 20, and some of the pieces were removed to a local antiquities office.¹⁶⁶

ASOR CHI acquired DigitalGlobe satellite imagery of the region that shows military embankments being constructed in the archaeological area of Khorsabad between October 16 and November 4, 2016. A small military post has been located within the area of the site since 2007, but the majority of the site remained untouched prior to the Mosul Operation.¹⁶⁷ Imagery dating to November 4, 2016, however, reveals embankments built following the lines of the ancient city walls and military posts placed on top of the archaeological remains of the city gates. Within the Palace area, heavy

¹⁶⁰ Frankfort 1933

¹⁶¹ Frankfort 1933

¹⁶² Loud 1936; Loud 1938

¹⁶³ https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=712497808918431

¹⁶⁴ <http://www.dwarozh.net/details.aspx?jimare=33901>

¹⁶⁵ <http://www.dwarozh.net/details.aspx?jimare=33901>

¹⁶⁶ https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=712497808918431

¹⁶⁷ <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2016/11/iraq-mosul-isis-nimrud-khorsabad-archaeology/>

machinery was used to create new earthen embankments and to dig into the existing archaeological material. In addition, a larger military post and embankments were built directly over the previously visible archaeological remains of the ancient Military Review Palace and Arsenal or *Ekal Masharti*, located in the southern portion of the site.

Khorsabad has been allegedly subjected to looting by ISIL militants for some time (see **ASOR CHI Weekly Report 31**). One of the first reports of looting covered in ASOR CHI reporting dates to March 8, 2015, when Adel Shirshab, Minister of Tourism and Antiquities in Iraq, discussed in a press conference that the government was investigating reports of looting and destruction at the site. International media picked up on the story, citing witnesses who reported that ISIL militants were destroying the ancient site and looting artifacts. The first reports of ISIL activity at Khorsabad occurred just one day after video footage showed the militants carrying out intentional destructions at the site of Hatra. Satellite imagery of the area at the time showed no visible damage to the archaeological remains due to looting. Since then, CHI has identified only a single looting tunnel located in the area of the Arsenal dating to around May 9, 2016.

Pattern: Military activity: earthworks/roadwork.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: The militarization of cultural property goes against the principles of the 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, and as such, ASOR CHI strongly recommends that armed forces withdraw from the archaeological site of Khorsabad due to the extent of the damage caused to the remains and because the actions now classifies the site as a legitimate military target. Furthermore, Peshmerga officers should continue to be in communication with KRG Directorate of Antiquities as well as the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage regarding current base operations as well as the continued care of the historic features at the site. ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the situation and gather further information from in-country sources and new DigitalGlobe satellite imagery as it becomes available.

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Peshmerga soldier and stone reliefs in berm of military trench dug by Peshmerga forces (Dwarozh.net; October 26, 2016)



Peshmerga and antiquities officials looking at stone reliefs in berm of military trench (Dwarozh.net; October 26, 2016)



Peshmerga and antiquities officials at Khorsabad (Dwarozh.net; October 26, 2016)



Peshmerga and antiquities officials at Khorsabad (Dwarozh.net; October 26, 2016)



Peshmerga and antiquities officials at Khorsabad (Dwarozh.net; October 26, 2016)



Stone basin found in military trench dug by Peshmerga at Khorsabad (Dwarozh.net; October 26, 2016)



Neo-Assyrian relief fragment found in military trench dug by Peshmerga at Khorsabad (Dwarozh.net; October 26, 2016)



Slab with cuneiform writing found in military trench dug by Peshmerga at Khorsabad (Dwarozh.net; October 26, 2016)



Column base with Assyrian pottery on top of it found in military trench dug by Peshmerga at Khorsabad (Dwarozh.net; October 26, 2016)



Carved relief fragment found in military trench dug by Peshmerga at Khorsabad (Dwarozh.net; October 26, 2016)



Stone relief found in military trench dug by Peshmerga at Khorsabad (Dwarozh.net; October 26, 2016)



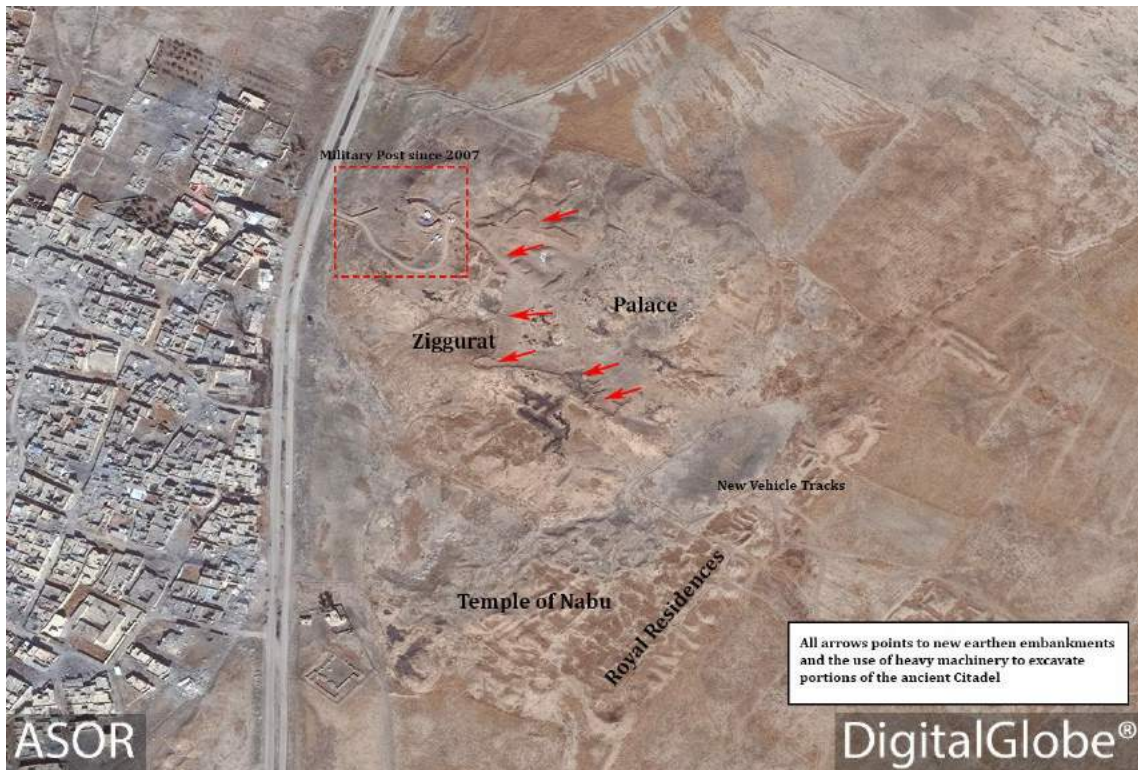
KRG antiquities officials collecting fragments of stone reliefs (Dwarozh.net; October 26, 2016)



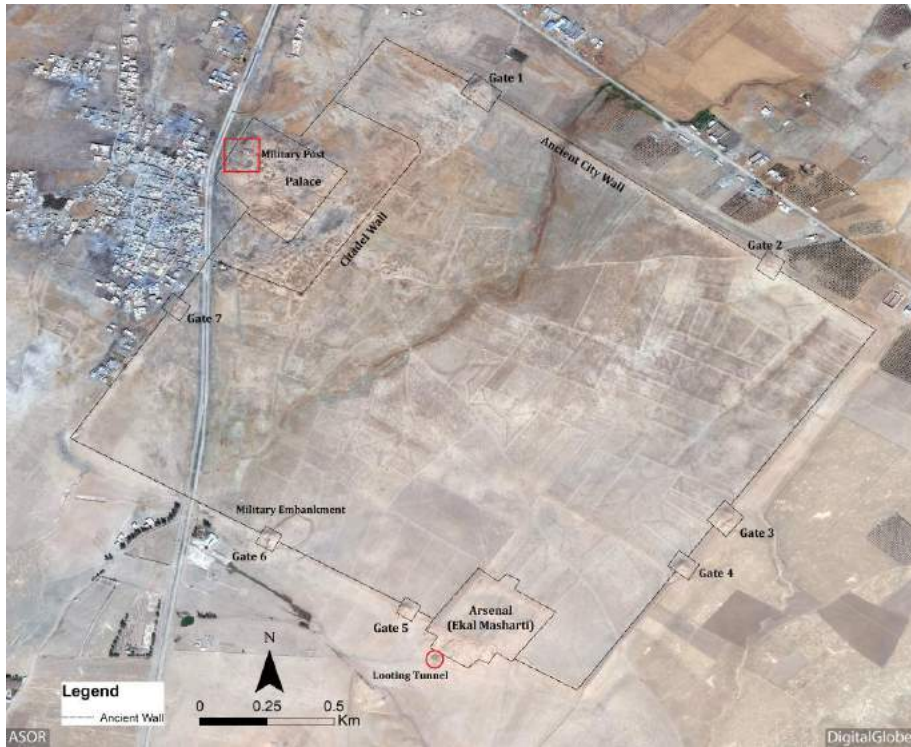
Fragments of sculpture and relief in bed of pickup being transported to local antiquities office (Dwarozh.net; October 26, 2016)



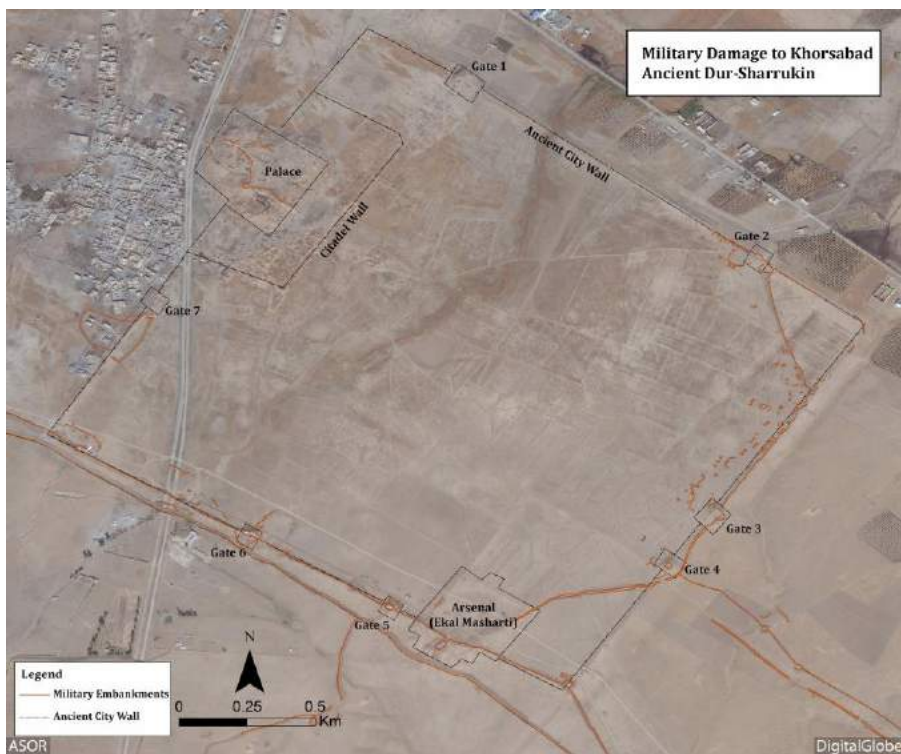
Satellite imagery of Khorsabad indicating the area containing an earlier military post established in 2007 (DigitalGlobe; October 16, 2016)



Satellite imagery of Khorsabad noting citadel and palace with new embankments affecting the archaeological remains (DigitalGlobe; November 4, 2016)



Satellite imagery of Khorsabad highlighting the walls, arsenal, and palace with previous damage noted in red (DigitalGlobe; October 16, 2016)



Satellite image of Khorsabad showing military embankments are outlined in orange to show extent of fortification (DigitalGlobe; November 4, 2016)



Satellite imagery showing the arsenal at Khorsabad with previous damage to the site noted in red (DigitalGlobe; October 16, 2016)



Satellite imagery showing the arsenal at Khorsabad with new military trenches and post (DigitalGlobe; November 4, 2016)

IHI 16-0045

Report Date: November 15, 2016

Site Name: Nimrud (Kalhu), which contains:

- Ziggurat
- Temple of Ishtar
- Northwest Palace
- Nabu Temple

Date of Incident: August 31 – October 16, 2016

Location: Nimrud, Ninawa Governorate, Iraq

Site Description: The site of Nimrud (also known as Kalhu, Calah, Kalakh) is located on the Tigris River southeast of Mosul. The site was occupied intermittently from the 6th millennium BC to at least the Hellenistic period, with one of the largest building campaigns undertaken by Shalmaneser I (1274/1254 BCE) during the Middle Assyrian Empire.¹⁶⁸ It was later named the capital of the Neo-Assyrian Empire by Ashurnasirpal II (883-859 BCE). The large mound was converted into a citadel that housed the royal palace and several temples, namely those dedicated to Ninurta and Ishtar.¹⁶⁹ The citadel was protected by its own fortification walls but occupied only a small part in the south-western corner of the larger city which was surrounded by a 7.5 km long fortification wall.¹⁷⁰ Rulers Ashurnasirpal II, Shalmaneser III, and Tiglath-Pileser III all built royal palaces at Nimrud, and Shalmaneser III built the Great Ziggurat. It is known for its extensive palace reliefs and colossal figurative sculptures. The city remained the capital of the Neo-Assyrian Empire until 706 BCE when Sargon II (722-705 BCE) moved the capital Khorsabad (Dur-Sharrukin). It continued as a major urban center until the end of the Neo-Assyrian Empire sometime between 616 and 605 BCE.¹⁷¹

Archaeologist Austen Henry Layard first excavated the site 1845-1847 and 1849-1851. Later investigations were led by Hormuzd Rassam 1853-54 and 1877-1879, W. K. Loftus in 1854-55, George Smith in 1873 and Rassam returned there from 1877 to 1879, Max Mallowan with the British School of Archaeology in Iraq in 1949, continuing with David Oates 1958-1962 and Julian Orchard in 1963, Janusz Meuzynski 1974–76, Paolo Fiorina and the Centro Ricerche Archeologiche e Scavi di Torino 1987–89, John Curtis in 1989, and the Iraqi Directorate of Antiquities of the Republic of Iraq in 1956, 1959–60, 1969–78, and 1982–92.

Site Date: 6th millennium BCE to 1st century CE

Incident Summary: Earthmoving equipment leveled the Ziggurat and damaged the Ishtar Temple.

Incident Source and Description: New DigitalGlobe satellite imagery obtained by ASOR CHI showed extensive damage to the site of Nimrud, specifically the Ziggurat. The top of the Ziggurat was leveled, likely with heavy earth moving equipment at some point between August 31, 2016 and October 2, 2016. The mound was further removed in the October 16 imagery. Also during this

¹⁶⁸ Oates 1962: 1-24

¹⁶⁹ Mallowan 1966

¹⁷⁰ Mallowan 1966

¹⁷¹ Mallowan 1966

period, heavy equipment tracks appeared in the Ishtar Temple, located next to the Ziggurat, in the November 2 imagery.

Photographs taken by journalists Al Harith Al Shwely and Max Delaney of the AFP show extensive damage to the Northwest Palace and Nabu Temple as a result of previous attacks by ISIL (see **Weekly Report 31, IHI 15-0067** in **Weekly Report 34, IHI 15-0079** in **Weekly Report 36, IHI 15-0079** in **Weekly Report 38**, and **IHI 16-0017** in **Weekly Report 96–96**). No photographs of the damage to the Ziggurat or the Ishtar Temple were available at the time of publication.

Although it is not certain at this time, it would appear the destruction of the ziggurat was carried out by ISIL forces. There are multiple reasons why ISIL militants may have destroyed the ziggurat, and the group has destroyed other monuments at the site as performative deliberate destructions, such as the reconstructed Northwest Palace and the Nabu Temple (the Ezida). The ziggurat mound is the highest point in the nearby landscape, making it an ideal defensive position for encroaching forces. However, the archaeological site is located in a remote area far from strategic points. Alternatively, like the Northwest Palace and the Nabu Temple at Nimrud, the attack could have served a dual purpose: intentional destruction for the composition of future propaganda and retributory violence to demoralize local populations and goad invading military forces. ISIL militants could also have been searching for antiquities in the mound.

As of November 10, 2016 the AFP reported that the Joint Operations Command announced the Coalition forces were moving to the villages of Abbas Rajab and Al-Nomaniyah, located near Nimrud.¹⁷²

Pattern: Military activity: intentional destruction.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will attempt to gather further information on these reports via updates from in-country sources and DigitalGlobe satellite imagery as it becomes available. ASOR will continue to monitor the situation and provide updates on the condition of Nimrud as more information and photographs are released by journalists and specialists who visit the site.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

AFP: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B66o-YcNwHs>

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<http://theartnewspaper.com/news/news/ancient-nimrud-ziggurat-bulldozed-by-isil-/>

BBC: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37966657>

The Guardian:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/nov/13/iraqi-troops-capture-nimrud-ancient-assyrian-city-isis>

¹⁷² <https://www.afp.com/en/news/205/battle-held-mosul-nears-ancient-site>

The Independent:

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/isis-mosul-iraq-army-terrorists-destroy-demolish-nimrud-temples-artefacts-a7418136.html>

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<http://www.straitstimes.com/world/middle-east/heritage-site-at-risk-in-battle-for-mosul>

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Reade, J.E. (2002) "The Ziggurat and Temples at Nimrud." *Iraq*. 64: 135-216.



Satellite image showing the intact Ziggurat and Temple of Ishtar at Nimrud (DigitalGlobe; August 31, 2016)



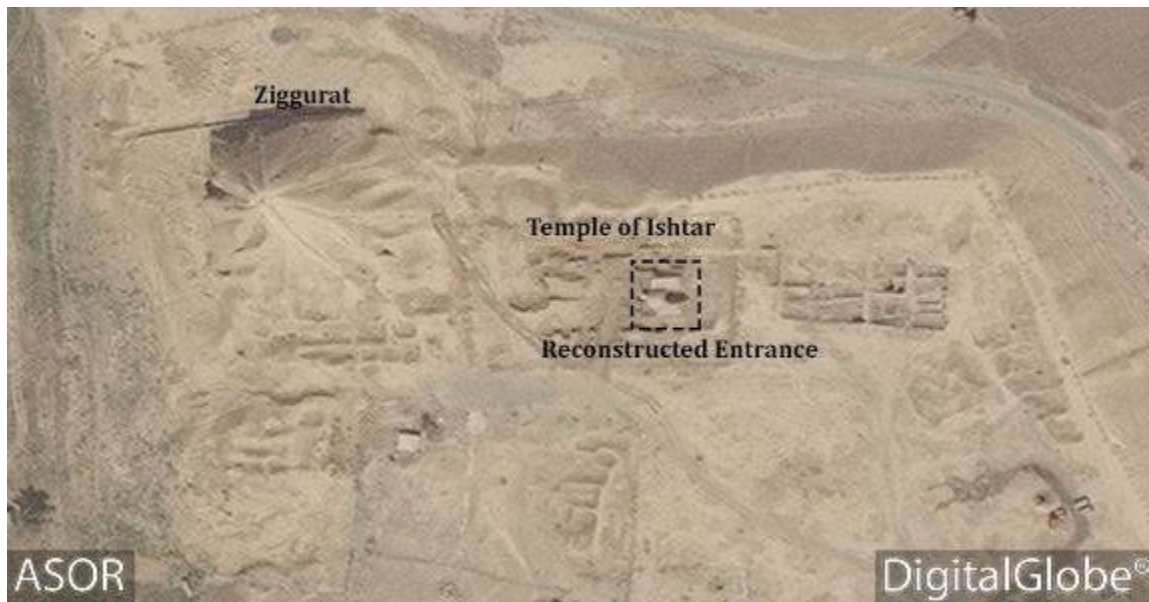
Satellite image showing earth removed from Ziggurat likely by machinery (DigitalGlobe; October 2, 2016)



Satellite imagery showing Ziggurat with additional earth removed (DigitalGlobe; October 16, 2016)



Satellite imagery showing heavy machinery tracks in the Temple of Ishtar (DigitalGlobe; November 4, 2016)



Satellite image showing Ziggurat and Temple of Ishtar intact (DigitalGlobe; August 31, 2016)



Satellite image showing destruction of Ziggurat and heavy machinery tracks in the Temple of Ishtar (DigitalGlobe; November 4, 2016)



Ziggurat of Nimrud (Dr. Richard Zettler; 1975)



The Northwest Palace, rooms EB/EA after destruction in April (Al Harith Al Shwely; November 15, 2016)



Recent photo of Nimrud after recapture from ISIL probably Northwest Palace (Al Harith Al Shwely; November 15, 2016)



Damage to the Northwest Palace at Nimrud (Courtesy of Max Delaney, AFP; November 15, 2016)



Garbage and debris in the Northwest Palace at Nimrud (Courtesy of Max Delaney, AFP; November 15, 2016)



Damage to the Northwest Palace at Nimrud (Courtesy of Max Delaney, AFP; November 15, 2016)



Damage to the Northwest Palace at Nimrud (Courtesy of Max Delaney, AFP; November 15, 2016)



Damage to the Northwest Palace at Nimrud (Courtesy of Max Delaney, AFP; November 15, 2016)



Damage to the Northwest Palace at Nimrud (Courtesy of Max Delaney, AFP; November 15, 2016)



Well in the Northwest Palace at Nimrud (Courtesy of Max Delaney, AFP; November 15, 2016)



Damage to Northwest Palace (Courtesy of Max Delaney, AFP; November 15, 2016)



Damage to Northwest Palace at Nimrud (Courtesy of Max Delaney, AFP; November 15, 2016)



Damage to Northwest Palace at Nimrud (Courtesy of Max Delaney, AFP; November 15, 2016)



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Damage to Northwest Palace at Nimrud (Courtesy of Max Delaney, AFP; November 15, 2016)



Damage to Northwest Palace at Nimrud, possibly showing damage done by ISIL in April (Courtesy of Max Delaney, AFP; November 15, 2016)



Northwest Palace at Nimrud (Courtesy of Max Delaney, AFP; November 15, 2016)



Northwest Palace at Nimrud showing destruction by ISIL in April looking towards Room W (Al Harith Al Shwely; November 15, 2016)



Damage to Room W in the Northwest Palace (Courtesy of Max Delaney, AFP; November 15, 2016)



Damage to the outside facade of Gate D at the Northwest Palace at Nimrud (Courtesy of Max Delaney, AFP; November 15, 2016)



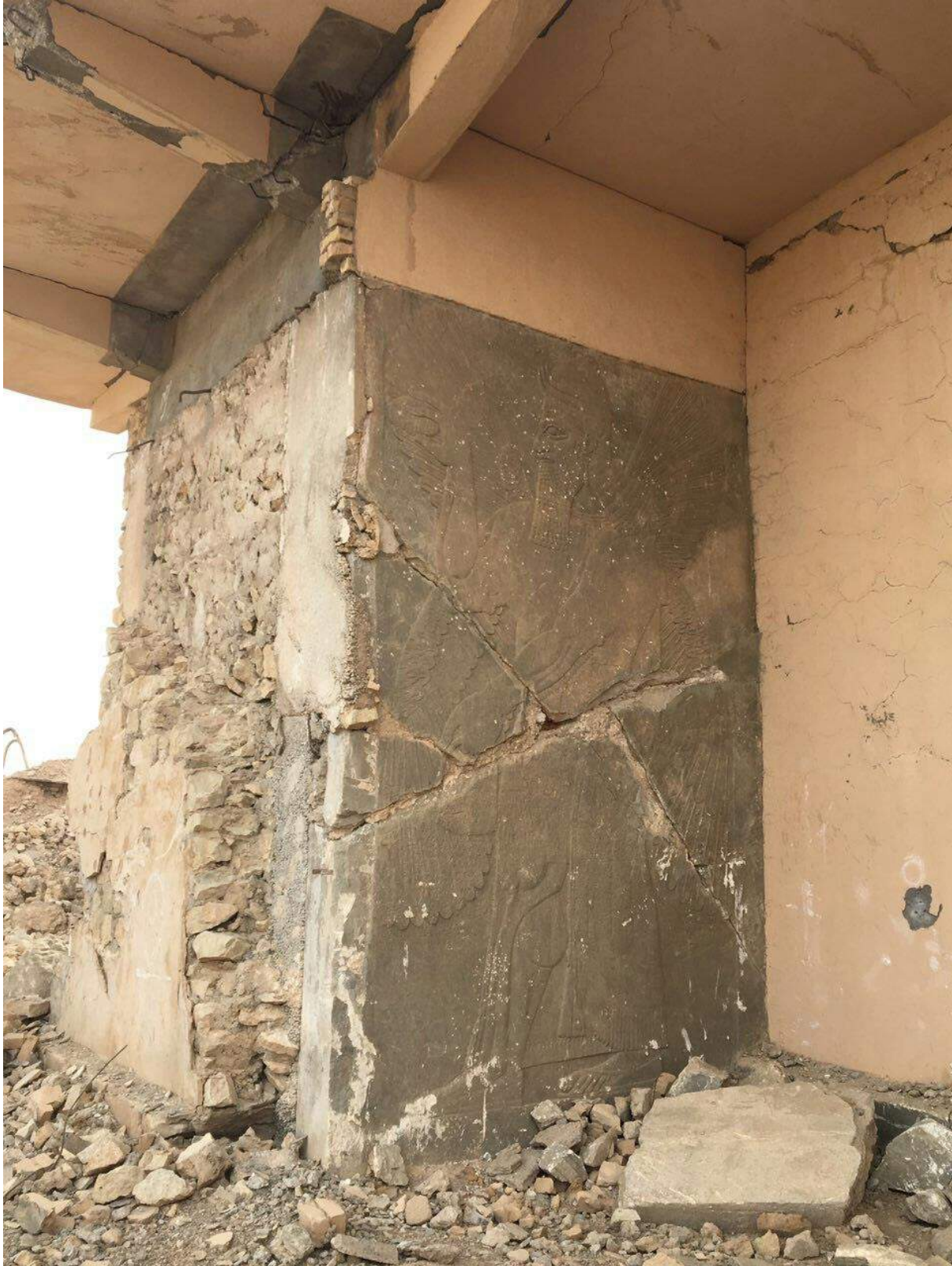
Gate D wall looking towards shrine (Courtesy of Max Delaney, AFP; November 15, 2016)



The Northwest Palace at Nimrud, showing Gate D into the throne room, showing damage to reliefs and lamassu (Al Harith Al Shwely; November 15, 2016)



The Northwest Palace at Nimrud, showing Gate D into the throne room showing damage to reliefs and lamassu (Al Harith Al Shwely; November 15, 2016)



Northwest Palace at Nimrud showing the standing relief D-1, but missing Lamassu and reliefs along the other wall (Al Harith Al Shwely; November 15, 2016)



Northwest Palace at Nimrud showing the standing relief D-1 (Al Harith Al Shwely; November 15, 2016)



Northwest Palace at Nimrud showing damage to relief B-13, across the throne room from Gate E (Al Harith Al Shwely; November 15, 2016)



Northwest Palace at Nimrud in the throne room looking towards Room C (Al Harith Al Shwely; November 15, 2016)



Inside of throne room looking towards shrine that has been damaged (Courtesy of Max Delaney, AFP; November 15, 2016)



Damage to stone reliefs at Nimrud from the Northwest Palace (Al Harith Al Shwely; November 15, 2016)



Damage to stone reliefs at Nimrud from the Northwest Palace (Al Harith Al Shwely; November 15, 2016)



Damage to stone reliefs at Nimrud from the Northwest Palace (Al Harith Al Shwely; November 15, 2016)



Damage to stone reliefs at Nimrud from the Northwest Palace, with Room ED/EA in background (Al Harith Al Shwely; November 15, 2016)



Damage to stone reliefs at Nimrud from the Northwest Palace (Al Harith Al Shwely; November 15, 2016)



Damage to stone reliefs at Nimrud from the Northwest Palace (Al Harith Al Shwely; November 15, 2016)



Damage to stone reliefs at Nimrud from the Northwest Palace (Al Harith Al Shwely; November 15, 2016)



Nabu Temple at Nimrud showing debris in the courtyard (Courtesy of Max Delaney, AFP; November 15, 2016)



Nabu Temple at Nimrud showing debris in the courtyard (Courtesy of Max Delaney, AFP; November 15, 2016)



The columned facade at the Nabu Temple (Courtesy of Max Delaney, AFP; November 15, 2016)



The Northwest Shrine in the Nabu Temple at Nimrud (Courtesy of Max Delaney, AFP; November 15, 2016)



The Nabu Temple at Nimrud (Courtesy of Max Delaney, AFP; November 15, 2016)



The Nabu or Tashmetum Shrine in the Nabu Temple at Nimrud (Courtesy of Max Delaney, AFP; November 15, 2016)



Courtyard of the Nabu Temple (Courtesy of Max Delaney, AFP; November 15, 2016)



Courtyard of the Nabu Temple leading to the Nabu and Tashmetum Shrines (Courtesy of Max Delaney, AFP; November 15, 2016)



Nabu Temple at Nimrud (Courtesy of Max Delaney, AFP; November 15, 2016)



Nabu Temple looking towards the Nabu Shrine (Courtesy of Max Delaney, AFP; November 15, 2016)



Nabu Temple looking towards the Nabu Shrine (Courtesy of Max Delaney, AFP; November 15, 2016)