

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

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Weekly Report 119–120 — November 16 - 30, 2016

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Executive Summary

During the reporting period, intense aerial bombardment continued over opposition-held areas of Aleppo, as Russian and SARG forces continued their push to retake the entire city. As a result of the intense aerial bombardment, SARG and pro-regime forces extended their control to approximately one third of the eastern opposition-held territory of the city. Members of the UN Security Council, as well as the UN Human Rights Committee, have stated their concerns about the rapid escalation of violence and the implications for the civilian population. Aerial bombardment continued in other opposition-held areas of the country, leading to extensive destruction and high civilian casualties. In areas of northern Aleppo Governorate, Turkish and Western-backed Syrian and Kurdish opposition groups continued their efforts to isolate Raqqa and expand their offensives on key ISIL-held territory. Meanwhile, newly released reports from a local Tadmor organization have documented new evidence of ongoing looting at the ancient site of Palmyra.

In Iraq, US-led Coalition Press Operations and other sources announced that airstrikes had rendered inoperable four of the five bridges spanning the Tigris River.^{2 3} In the Nineveh Plains, residents of villages displaced by ISIL have begun to return home and inspect the resultant damage caused by ISIL occupation, despite the threat of remaining ISIL-planted IEDs and booby traps. Iraqi forces uncovered two more mass Yezidi gravesites, bringing the total known number of such sites to 29. As the offensive to take Mosul progresses, more evidence of cultural cleansing by ISIL militants is being discovered in recently liberated villages, particularly in areas of dense ethnic and religious minority populations. During this reporting period, more photographs from the villages of Bakhdida (Qaraqosh) and Bashiqa show deliberate destruction and vandalism of Christian and Yezidi religious sites, as well as further evidence of damage to Mar Gewargis Church in Bartella and Mar Behnam Monastery outside Mosul has been published.

Key Points

- Newly published video footage shows evidence of militarization and intentional destruction at Mar Gewargis Church in Bartella, Ninawa Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0035 UPDATE**).

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.

² <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2016/11/mosul-campaign-day-44-nov-29-2016.html>

³ <http://www.defense.gov/News/Transcripts/Transcript-View/Article/1016840/departement-of-defense-press-briefing-by-british-maj-gen-jones-via-teleconferenc>

- New video footage and photographic evidence show tunneling at Mart Barbara Church in Karamlish, Ninawa Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0038 UPDATE**).
- New video and photographs shows additional evidence of intentional destruction to religious sites in Bakhdida, Ninawa Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0043 UPDATE**).
- New video footage and photographs show damage to sites in Bashiqa and Bahzani, Ninawa Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0046**).
- New video footage and photographs have been published of Mar Behnam Monastery following the recapturing of the area by Iraqi forces in Mosul, Ninawa Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0047**).
- An airstrike damaged a mosque in Tayyibat al-Imam, Hama Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0169**).
- Alleged SARG airstrikes damaged two mosques near Damascus, Damascus Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0170**).
- Alleged SARG and Russian airstrikes damaged four mosques in Aleppo, Aleppo Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0171**).
- An alleged Russian airstrike severely damaged a mosque in Anadan, Aleppo Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0172**).
- An alleged SARG airstrike damaged a mosque in Binnish, Idlib Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0173**).
- New photographs show evidence of ongoing looting at Palmyra, Homs Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0174**).

Heritage Timeline

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|-------------------|--|
| November 30, 2016 | <i>LeMonde</i> published an article titled “ Irak: dans Nimroud libérée, un patrimoine en ruine (Iraq: In Nimrud liberated, a heritage in ruins) ,” (by Louis Imbert). This article discusses the damage to Nimrud and the retaking of the site by the Iraqi Army.
http://www.lemonde.fr/proche-orient/article/2016/11/30/en-irak-dans-l-antique-nimroud-liberee-un-patrimoine-en-ruine_5040594_3218.html |
| November 29, 2016 | Heritage for Peace published its bi-weekly newsletter titled “ Damage to Syria’s Heritage. ”
http://www.heritageforpeace.org/syria-culture-and-heritage/damage-to-cultural-heritage/previous-damage-newsletters/ |
| November 28, 2016 | <i>BBC</i> published an article titled “ In pictures: The crown jewel of Iraq's railway. ” This article discusses and provides photographs of Baghdad Central Station, much of which has fallen into disrepair.
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/in-pictures-37838597 |

- *Apollo Magazine* published an article titled “**Is the destruction of cultural property a war crime?**” (by Brian Daniels & Helen Walasek). Two scholars argue that the destruction of cultural property must be considered a war crime.
<http://www.apollo-magazine.com/is-the-destruction-of-cultural-property-a-war-crime/>
- November 27, 2016 Ruptly published a video titled “نمرود شاهد تاريخي على همجية "داعش" (**Nimrud witnesses the historic barbaric "Daesh"**)”. This video discusses the damage to Nimrud under ISIL.
<https://arabic.rt.com/features/851700-نمرود-شاهد-تاريخي-على-همجية-داعش/>
- November 25, 2016 UNESCO published a press release titled “**UNESCO Director-General welcomes the liberation of Nimrud and renews the call for the protection of heritage in Iraq.**” Following the liberation of the archaeological site of Nimrud, the Director-General of UNESCO reiterated her support to the people of Iraq and the need to unite for the protection of heritage in the country.
<http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1597>
- *The Syria Times* published an article titled “**Children rebuild Aleppo city by fine arts.**” Over 1200 paintings by 40 children aged 4-12 years have been featured in an exhibition titled ‘By Fine Arts We Build Aleppo’ at the Fine Arts Faculty building in Aleppo.
<http://syriatimes.sy/index.php/culturt/27669-children-rebuild-aleppo-city-by-fine-arts>
- *The National* published an article titled “**Upcoming Abu Dhabi conference aims to protect cultural heritage in armed conflict.**” The “Safeguarding Endangered Cultural Heritage” conference is an initiative by UNESCO, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed (Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces), and French President Francois Hollande. The conference will be held at the Emirates Palace on December 2-3, 2016.
<http://www.thenational.ae/uae/heritage/upcoming-abu-dhabi-conference-aims-to-protect-cultural-heritage-in-armed-conflict>
- November 24, 2016 UNESCO Beirut Office published a video titled “The Value of Heritage.” The video was produced by Unite4Heritage and highlights the importance of safeguarding cultural heritage for future generations.
<http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1592>

- November 22, 2016 **SNHR** published a post titled “**Suspected Russian forces shelled Fatima Aqeel Mosque in Al Sukari neighborhood in Aleppo city, November 21.**” A mosque was damaged in an airstrike.
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/11/22/suspected-russian-forces-shelled-fatima-aqeel-mosque-al-sukari-neighborhood-aleppo-city-november-21/>
- November 21, 2016 *Al Bawaba* published an article titled “**UAE, France partner to safeguard cultural heritage during conflicts.**” The UAE and French governments will announce a new partnership initiative aimed at protecting cultural heritage during armed conflicts at the UNESCO Safeguarding Endangered Cultural Heritage conference that will take place on December 2-3, 2016 at Emirates Palace in Abu Dhabi.
<http://www.albawaba.com/business/uae-france-partner-safeguard-cultural-heritage-during-conflicts-906606>
- *Al Jazeera* published an article titled “**Sulaimania: Saving the dream city of a Kurdish prince**” (by Tanya Goudsouzian). Efforts are underway to salvage what remains of old Sulaimania, once a bastion of diversity and cosmopolitanism. Much of the older historic town, founded in the 18th-century, has fallen into disrepair.
<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2016/11/sulaimania-saving-dream-city-kurdish-prince-161120120029235.html>
 - *The Syria Times* published an article titled “**113 researchers document Syria’s civilization.**” Yousef Kanjou and Akira Tsuneki have published a book titled *A History of Syria in One Hundred Sites*.
<http://syriatimes.sy/index.php/culturt/27682-113-researchers-document-syria-s-civilization>
 - *Reuters* published an article titled “**Christian heritage found ransacked as monastery retaken from Islamic State**” (by Stephen Kalin). Intentional destruction and damage to Mar Behnam Monastery, recently recaptured from ISIL militants, is examined.
<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-mosul-christians-idUSKBN13G24R>
- November 20, 2016 *Reuters* published an article titled “**Church in northern Iraq reopened after two years under IS control**” (by Mohammad al-Ramahi & Azad Lashkari). Mar Kurkees Syrian Orthodox Church in Bashiqa has reopened and repairs have begun following the area’s recent recapture from ISIL militants by Peshmerga forces.
<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-bashiqa-church-idUSKBN13F0FI>

- **SNHR published a post titled “Government forces shelled Mashatiya Mosque in Al Jaloom neighborhood in Aleppo city, November 19.”** A mosque was damaged in an airstrike.
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/11/20/government-forces-shelled-mashatiya-mosque-al-jaloom-neighborhood-aleppo-city-november-19/>
 - **SNHR published a post titled “Government forces targeted Al Hussein Mosque in Binnesh city in Idlib governorate in November 20.”** A mosque was damaged in an airstrike.
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/11/20/government-forces-targeted-al-hussein-mosque-binnesh-city-idlib-governorate-november-20/>
- November 18, 2016
- PR Newswire* published an article titled “**Antiquities Coalition Launches New Think Tank Promoting Innovative Solutions To Combat Cultural Racketeering.**” The Antiquities Coalition launched a Cultural Heritage Think Tank to explore solutions to pressing challenges in cultural heritage. Ricardo St. Hilaire authored a paper titled “How to End Impunity for Antiquities Traffickers: Assemble a Cultural Heritage Crimes Prosecution Team,” the first in a series of policy briefs by specialists from the public and private sectors.
<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/antiquities-coalition-launches-new-think-tank-promoting-innovative-solutions-to-combat-cultural-racketeering-300365901.html>
- **SNHR published a post titled “Government forces targeted Al Qadeem Mosque in Kafr Batna city in Damascus suburbs in November 18.”** A mosque was damaged in an airstrike.
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/11/18/government-forces-targeted-al-qadeem-mosque-kafr-batna-city-damascus-suburbs-november-18/>
 - **SNHR published a post titled “Suspected Russian forces targeted on Barseen Mosque in Al Ma’adi neighborhood in Aleppo city, November 17.”** A mosque was damaged in an airstrike.
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/11/18/suspected-russian-forces-targeted-barseen-mosque-al-maadi-neighborhood-aleppo-city-november-17/>
 - **SNHR published a post titled “Suspected Russian forces targeted Hamza Mosque in Anadan city in Aleppo governorate, November 17.”** A mosque was damaged in an airstrike.
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/11/18/suspected-russian-forces-targeted-hamza-mosque-anadan-city-aleppo-governorate-november-17/>

- **SNHR** published a post titled “**Government forces targeted Al Kabir Mosque in Jisreen town in Damascus suburbs in November 18.**” A mosque was damaged in an airstrike.
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/11/18/government-forces-targeted-al-kabir-mosque-jisreen-town-damascus-suburbs-november-18/>
 - *Le Figaro* published an article titled “**Les chrétiens d'Irak retrouvent leurs églises (Iraqi Christians return to their churches)**” (by Sylvain Tesson). Christians in Qaraqosh were recently able to celebrate their first Mass in two years, following the recapture of the area from ISIL militants.
<http://www.lefigaro.fr/international/2016/11/18/01003-20161118ARTFIG00078-les-chretiens-d-irak-retrouvent-leurs-eglises.php>
 - *Le Figaro* published an article titled “**Les chrétiens d'Orient en mode survie (The Eastern Christians in survival mode)**” (by Jean-François Colosimo). Current threats to Eastern Christians in the Middle East, especially terrorism and sectarian violence, are discussed. Photographs of damage to sites in Qaraqosh accompany the report.
<http://www.lefigaro.fr/international/2016/11/18/01003-20161118ARTFIG00080-les-chretiens-d-orient-en-mode-survie.php>
- November 17, 2016
- *CNN* published an article titled “**Teen hits back at ISIS by sculpting Nimrud’s ruined artifacts**” (by Basma Atassi). A young Iraqi artist sculpts statues based on artifacts destroyed by ISIL militants at Nimrud.
<http://edition.cnn.com/2016/11/17/middleeast/nimrud-iraq-mosul-artifacts/index.html>
 - *MESH* published an article titled “**Nimrud assessment after liberation.**” Before and after photos of Nimrud are analyzed to assess damage at the site.
<https://meshheritage.wordpress.com/2016/11/17/nimrud-assessment-after-liberation/>
 - *DGAM* published an article titled “**Mr. Luis Monreal, General Manager of Aga Khan Trust for Culture in the National Museum of Damascus.**” The General Manager of Aga Khan Trust for Culture visited the National Museum of Damascus to discuss procedures for protecting Syrian cultural heritage.
<http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=2105>

- **DGAM** published an article titled “**Meeting on the first aid support for Damascus old city had concluded in Beirut.**” The DGAM met with UNESCO officials and others to discuss emergency safeguarding of Syrian cultural heritage, with a focus on Old Damascus, where fighting has recently escalated.
<http://dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2101>
- **DGAM** published an article titled “**An exhibition titled The Battle of Syria to Defend Its History at National Center for Visual Arts.**” The exhibition includes a number of artifacts confiscated by Syrian authorities and Lebanese General Security.
<http://dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2103>

November 16, 2016

Multiple news agencies published articles discussing **recent looting and destruction of the Ziggurat at Nimrud by ISIL militants.**

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-nimrud-idUSKBN13B1HD>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/11/16/it-feels-worse-than-our-soldiers-dying-iraqi-forces-return-to-an/>

<http://www.bbc.com/arabic/media-38001612>

<http://www.newsweek.com/nimrud-destruction-islamic-state-palmyra-521776>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/mosul-offensive-latest-isis-destruction-ancient-city-of-mesopotamia-nimrud-a7421036.html>

http://www.thenational.scot/world/14911350.Iraq_Historical_site_gone_as_toll_of_Daesh_rule_rises_further/

<http://www.christiandaily.com/article/assyrian-christians-decry-worlds-failure-to-protect-them-after-discovering-isis-destruction-of-ancient-pyramid/59464.htm>

<http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/photos-nimrud-archeological-city-damage/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/nov/17/rebuilding-nimrud-at-one-sins-west-isis-destruction>

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20161122-daesh-destroyed-70-of-historical-sites-in-nimrud/>

<http://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/barbara-hollingsworth/isis-destruction-3000-year-old-assyrian-city-worse-we-thought>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/nov/24/piecing-back-together-iraqi-archeological-gem-blown-sky-high-by-isis>

<http://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2016/11/26/503275429/in-northern-iraq-isis-leaves-behind-an-archaeological-treasure-in-ruins>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dMV4FPqAm6Q> (Reuters)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kxMBST2BdDM> (France 24)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=23tICjMilRk> (CNN)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RcJuhKFfvEA> (Wall Street Journal)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wusHBYZlknq> (Mosul TV)

- *Medmak* published an article titled “ مدير عام الآثار السورية: 99% من التراث “بخير” واقتراح هولاند مرفوض **Director General of Syrian Antiquities: 99% of Syrian heritage "fine" and Hollande's proposal is rejected**.” According to Maamoun Abdulkarim, 99% of Syrian cultural heritage is safe and the DGAM refuses French President Hollande's recent proposal to move artifacts to France for safekeeping.
<http://medmak.org/ar/-/اخبار-مدير-عام-الآثار-السورية-99-من-التراث-السوري-بخير-واقترح-هولاند-مرفوض>
- The **ASOR Annual Meeting** took place on November 16-19, 2016 in San Antonio, Texas. Topics included “From Prosperity to Austerity: Cultural Heritage Management in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq” (ASOR CHI’s Allison Cuneo), “Ghabrestan-i Topzawa: An Achaemenid Tomb in Iraqi Kurdistan” (ASOR CHI’s Kyra Kaercher), and “Introduction to Hasanlu VII Period” (ASOR CHI’s Michael Danti). Michael Danti was also a discussant for the “Archaeology in Kurdistan” Session.
<http://www.asor.org/am/2016/approved.html>
- *Now Toronto* published an article titled “**The challenges of protecting Syrian heritage in crisis**” (by Fran Schechter). The exhibit “Syria: A Living History” at the Aga Khan Museum in Toronto explores Syrian art from prehistory to the present day.
<https://nowtoronto.com/art-and-books/art/the-challenges-of-protecting-syrian-heritage-in-crisis/>

- *Artnet* published an article titled “**Art Recovery International Launches Global Database to Protect Cultural Heritage**” (by Caroline Elbaor). Art Recovery International (ARI) announced the launch of Artive, a new non-profit organization formed with the aim of protecting and preserving the world’s cultural heritage through technological means.
<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/art-recovery-international-artive-non-profit-cultural-heritage-749840>

Military and Political Context

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

1. Aleppo Governorate:
 - On November 16, Kurdish YPG forces announced that they had finished training local security units in the city of Manbij, and would withdraw to the east of the Euphrates River. Turkey has repeatedly called for Kurdish forces to withdraw from any territory west of the river.⁴
 - On November 16, SARG aerial bombardment over opposition-held areas of the city of Aleppo killed at least 27 people and struck hospitals, blood banks, and areas near schools.⁵
 - On November 16, Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) advanced west from the city of Manbij towards al-Bab, capturing at least eight villages.⁶
 - On November 18, airstrikes and artillery shelling over Aleppo continued for a fourth consecutive day. According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), at least 18 neighborhoods in the eastern areas of the city had been hit.⁷
 - On November 19, airstrikes severely damaged Aleppo’s last fully operating hospital and killed 68 civilians in opposition-held areas of eastern Aleppo.⁸
 - On November 24, a suspected SARG airstrike killed three Turkish soldiers in northern Aleppo governorate.⁹
 - On November 25, Turkish airstrikes destroyed four ISIL targets in the region of Anifah.¹⁰
 - On November 26, a suicide bombing struck the town of al-Rai, killing several people and wounding a dozen more.¹¹

⁴ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37998746>

⁵ <http://www.cnn.com/2016/11/16/middleeast/syria-aleppo-bombardment/>; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37998751>; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-aleppo-idUSKBN13C1ZE>

⁶ <http://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/syria-situation-report-november-10-18-2016>

⁷ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-38023368>

⁸ <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/11/19/middleeast/syria-aleppo-airstrikes-hospitals/>

⁹ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-turkey-idUSKBN13M05N>

¹⁰ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-turkey-idUSKBN13M05N>

¹¹ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-turkey-idUSKBN13M05N>

- On November 26-27, pro-regime forces supported by heavy airstrikes captured the districts of Masakin Hanano, Sakhur, Jabal Badro, and Haydariyah, which made up approximately a third of opposition-held urban areas. On the same dates, Syrian Kurdish YPG forces captured positions in the opposition-held districts of Bustan al-Pasha, Hukuk, Ayn al-Tal, Ba'edin, and Sheikh Fares.¹²
- On November 27, SARG and pro-regime forces recaptured the opposition-held districts of Jabal Badro and Baaden, just one day after capturing the neighborhood of Hanano.¹³
- On November 27, ISIL militants reportedly struck Turkish-backed Syrian opposition forces with chemical weapons near the town of al-Rai.¹⁴
- On November 28, SARG forces announced that they had recaptured a third of opposition-held territory in eastern Aleppo city, including the district of Sakhour. Aerial bombardment in opposition-held districts killed dozens of civilians.¹⁵
- On November 28, ISIL militants launched an offensive on the recently liberated city of Manbij, attacking the town of Hawdan. SDF fighters repelled the attack.¹⁶
- On November 29, UN Humanitarian Chief Stephen O'Brien stated that 16,000 civilians had been displaced in Aleppo city over the last few days as SARG and pro-regime forces continued to advance on opposition-held areas.¹⁷
- On November 29, Turkish military officials announced that they had lost contact with two of their soldiers in northern Syria. ISIL-affiliated Amaq News Agency then reported that the militants had captured two Turkish soldiers in the village of al-Dana, near the strategic town of al-Bab.¹⁸
- On November 30, SARG forces announced that they had captured the Aleppo city district of Sheikh Saeed. Opposition forces denied the claim and vowed to continue fighting pro-regime and SARG forces in the city. SARG artillery bombardment and airstrikes in opposition-held areas reportedly killed more than 45 people, including many women and children. Meanwhile, opposition shelling on SARG-held neighborhoods reportedly killed eight people.¹⁹

¹² <http://post.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/aleppo-campaign-update-pro-regime-forces-advance-eastern-aleppo-city>

¹³ <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/11/syrian-army-captures-rebel-district-aleppo-161127135516405.html> ; https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/in-syrias-aleppo-shiite-militias-point-to-irans-unparalleled-influence/2016/11/20/2f1a47c2-92cd-11e6-bc00-1a9756d4111b_story.html

¹⁴ <https://www.yahoo.com/news/22-syria-rebels-hit-chemical-attack-turkey-army-080517404.html>

¹⁵ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-38128370> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-38143187> ; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/nov/28/pro-assad-forces-seize-third-of-east-aleppo-in-rapid-advance-syria> ; <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/11/29/massacre-due-government-forces-shelling-jub-al-quba-neighborhood-aleppo-city-november-29/> ; <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/aleppo-syria-1696447766>

¹⁶ <http://aranews.net/2016/11/syrian-democratic-forces-repel-a-renewed-isis-offensive-on-manbij/>

¹⁷ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-38143187> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-idUSKBN1301SU> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-aleppo-idUSKBN13N0H4> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-aleppo-idUSKBN13M0NA>

¹⁸ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-38148930>

¹⁹ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-idUSKBN13P1UN> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-sheikhsaeed-idUSKBN13P1SO> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-airstrikes-idUSKBN13015S> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-38155936>

2. Raqqa Governorate:

- On November 16, a US-led coalition airstrike in the city of Raqqa killed ISIL senior leader Abdul Basit al-Iraqi. Al-Iraqi directed “ISIL’s Middle East external networks” including American, European, and Turkish targets.²⁰
- On November 16, Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) cleared the key town of Hisha from ISIL, allowing recently displaced civilians to return.²¹
- On November 17, US-led coalition airstrikes struck ISIL headquarters in Raqqa. According to a local media activist, the strikes targeted ISIL security centers in the city’s northern suburbs and military installations in the towns of Allou and Mashada.²²

3. Deir ez Zor Governorate:

- On November 27 Russian airstrikes targeted ISIL positions in the city of Abu Kamal and the town of Susa, killing around 30 militants.²³
- On November 28, ISIL militants and SARG forces “exchanged shelling” in the SARG-held neighborhoods of al-Qusur and al-Jour, as well as the ISIL-held districts of al-Hamidiya and Sheikh Yasin. Damage to residential areas and civilian casualties were reported.²⁴

4. Rif Dimashq Governorate:

- On November 20, opposition groups Jaish al-Islam and Faylaq al-Rahman agreed to a ‘deconfliction deal’ in opposition-held areas of Eastern Ghouta.²⁵
- On November 26, two evacuation deals were reached between the Syrian opposition and the regime that would allow opposition forces to leave the town of Khan al-Sheih, to the southwest of Damascus, and the town of al-Tal, located northwest of the capital.²⁶
- On November 27, Syrian opposition forces in the besieged town of Khan al-Sheih turned over their heavy weapons as part of a deal made with the Syrian regime allowing members of opposition forces to safely leave the town for opposition-controlled areas. Evacuations were anticipated to start on November 28.²⁷
- On November 28, hundreds of people, including opposition forces and civilians, left the town of Khan al-Sheih. The evacuees boarded buses for opposition-held Idlib Governorate, while others were expected to be transported to SARG-controlled areas. Thousands are expected to eventually leave the area.²⁸

5. Idlib Governorate:

- On November 25, SARG airstrikes struck a women’s hospital in the village of Termanin, rendering the hospital inoperable.²⁹

²⁰ <http://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1006384/oir-spokesman-top-isil-operative-killed-in-coalition-airstrike-in-syria>

²¹ <http://aranews.net/2016/11/syrian-democratic-forces-expel-isis-key-town-north-raqqa-displaced-civilians-return-home/>

²² <http://aranews.net/2016/11/us-led-coalition-strikes-isis-headquarters-raqqa-amid-sdf-advance/>

²³ <http://aranews.net/2016/11/islamic-state-and-syrian-army-exchange-fire-as-tension-escalates-in-deir-ez-zor/>

²⁴ <http://aranews.net/2016/11/islamic-state-and-syrian-army-exchange-fire-as-tension-escalates-in-deir-ez-zor/>; <https://jfldz.org/?p=4064>

²⁵ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/12/syria-situation-report-november-19.html>

²⁶ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-damascus-idUSKBN13L0ER>

²⁷ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-damascus-idUSKBN13M0G1>

²⁸ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-damascus-idUSKBN13N1RA>

²⁹ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-hospital-idUSKBN13K25A>

6. Damascus Governorate:
 - On November 22, a Russian delegation including Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin met with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, the Syrian Prime Minister, and the Syrian Foreign Minister in Damascus. The two parties met in Damascus to discuss the ongoing conflict and the Syrian delegation asked for further economic assistance from its Russian counterparts.³⁰
7. Quneitra Governorate:
 - On November 28, the Israeli Air Force targeted members of the ISIL-linked Khaled Ibn al-Walid Brigade in the Syrian-controlled Golan Heights, after the group fired on Israeli positions in the Golan Heights.³¹

Other Key Points:

- During the reporting period, the US-led coalition conducted airstrikes in the areas of Abu Kamal, Ayn Isa, Deir ez Zor, Manbij, Palmyra, Raqqa, Shaddadi, al-Tanf, and Tamakh.³²
- During the reporting period, Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) reported an increasing number of casualties in the governorates of Damascus and Homs as a result of ongoing aerial bombardment and indiscriminate shelling.³³
- On November 17, the UN Security Council approved a one-year extension of chemical weapons inspectors mandate in Syria.³⁴
- On November 17, the Russian Defense Ministry stated that it had launched its first attacks against militant targets in Syria using aircraft from both Russian and Syrian air bases as well as a Russian aircraft carrier.³⁵
- On November 22, US forces carried out an airstrike that killed senior al-Qaeda leader Abu Ayyub al-Masri.³⁶
- On November 22, the Syrian army announced that it had formed a “new volunteer corps” to bolster its forces. Syria already has mandatory army conscription for men 18 years and older.³⁷
- On November 24, an IED blast killed an American service member near Ayn Issa in northern Syria.³⁸

³⁰ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/12/syria-situation-report-november-19.html>

³¹ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-38129683> ; <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.755717> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/12/syria-situation-report-november-19.html>

³² See: “US DOD News Release Military Strikes Hit ISIL in Syria, Iraq”. *Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve*. News Release No: [1007374](#), [1008281](#), [1009355](#), [1009587](#), [1010781](#), [1011859](#), [1013015](#), [1013133](#), [1013178](#), [1013395](#), [1015582](#), [1017556](#)

³³ <http://www.msf.org/en/article/syria-alarm-bells-ringing-mass-casualty-numbers-damascus-and-homs-regions>

³⁴ https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/france-inspectors-to-keep-seeking-blame-for-syria-attacks/2016/11/17/d15e6b2a-ad22-11e6-8f19-21a1c65d2043_story.html

³⁵ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-russia-syria-idUSKBN13C26P>

³⁶ <http://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1011549/us-airstrike-in-syria-kills-senior-al-qaida-leader>

³⁷ https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/syrian-army-announces-new-volunteer-force-to-fight-terrorism/2016/11/22/d7a8aea2-b0bd-11e6-bc2d-19b3d759cfe7_story.html

³⁸ <http://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1013144/dod-identifies-fallen-us-service-member-in-syria> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-38101914>

- On November 28, lawyers in Germany submitted a criminal case against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. The lawyers are accusing Assad of war crimes, focusing on acts committed in Aleppo between April-November 2016 and citing individual accounts by Syrian asylum seekers in Germany as well as reports and studies by Amnesty International.³⁹
- On November 29, the US-led Coalition confirmed that faulty information led to an airstrike that mistakenly targeted pro-regime forces in Deir ez Zor in September 2016.⁴⁰
- On November 29, Turkish President Erdogan expressed, in a speech, his condemnation of Syria's President Assad and called for his ouster.⁴¹

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

1. Ninawa Governorate:
 - During the reporting period, US-led coalition airstrikes targeted several bridges in Mosul.⁴²
 - On November 16, Iraqi Shia militias announced that they had captured an airbase near Tal Afar, west of the city of Mosul.⁴³
 - On November 16, Kurdish President Massoud Barzani announced the defeat of ISIL in the city of Bashiqa, and vowed not to negotiate over territories “liberated by Peshmerga before the Mosul offensive.”⁴⁴
 - On November 17, Human Rights Watch reported that the bodies found in a mass grave in Hammam al-Alil were likely those of 300 former Iraqi police.⁴⁵
 - On November 18, Iraqi counter-terrorism forces entered the Tahrir district on the northeastern edge of Mosul.⁴⁶
 - On November 19, Iraqi Federal Police announced that they had “completed operations on Mosul’s southern axis.”⁴⁷
 - On November 19, Iraqi forces recaptured the “modern town” of Nimrud from ISIL, construed here as nearby rural villages.⁴⁸
 - On November 23, Shia Popular Mobilization Front forces announced that they had captured the road between ISIL-held Tal Afar and Mosul.⁴⁹
 - On November 25, ISIL militants reportedly executed 27 civilians in Mosul’s Mohandiseen Park.⁵⁰

³⁹ <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/war-crimes-case-launched-against-assad-amid-claims-genocide-1593882>

⁴⁰ <http://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1015010/us-air-forces-central-command-completes-dayr-az-zawr-investigation>

⁴¹ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-turkey-idUSKBN13029M>

⁴² <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-38079602>

⁴³ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-idUSKBN13B2CP> ; <http://aranews.net/2016/11/iraqi-forces-capture-tel-afar-airbase-cut-off-key-isis-supply-route/>

⁴⁴ <http://aranews.net/2016/11/kurdish-president-announces-peshmerga-victory-in-bashiqa-rejects-return-to-pre-isis-borders/>

⁴⁵ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-grave-idUSKBN13C0ML> ; <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/11/16/iraq-hundreds-police-isis-mass-grave>

⁴⁶ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-idUSKBN13D1G4>

⁴⁷ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/11/the-campaign-for-mosul-november-16-21.html>

⁴⁸ <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/11/19/middleeast/iraq-retakes-nimrud/index.html>

⁴⁹ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-38079602>

⁵⁰ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-38147078> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-mosul-un-idUSKBN13015F>

- On November 27, Peshmerga forces discovered two mass graves believed to hold the remains of Iraq's Yezidi minority near the Shababit junction in northwestern Iraq. The discovery increased the number of known Yezidi mass graves to 29.⁵¹
 - On November 29, the UN Commission for Human Rights reported that ISIL militants were continuing to shoot civilians in Mosul, including an incident in which the militants shot dead 12 civilians who tried to prevent ISIL from using their homes as firing positions.⁵²
2. Al Anbar Governorate:
 - On November 17, a suicide car bombing targeted the wedding of a police officer in the city of Amiriyat al-Fallujah, killing at least 40 people and wounding more than 60. ISIL later claimed responsibility for the attack.⁵³
 3. Babil Governorate:
 - On November 25, a suicide truck bomb targeted a petrol station in the city of Hilla killing about 100 people, the majority of whom were Iranian Shia pilgrims returning from the holy city of Karbala. ISIL claimed responsibility for the attack.⁵⁴

Other Key Points:

- During the reporting period, the US-led coalition conducted airstrikes in the areas of Asad, Baiji, Bashir, Haditha, Huwayjah, Kisik, Mosul, Qaim, Qayyarah, Rawah, Sinjar, Sultan Abdullah, and Tal Afar.⁵⁵
- On November 26, the Iraqi parliament voted to legalize "state-sanctioned" Shia militias, raising concerns among many Sunnis in Iraq. Also legalized by the vote are militias created by minorities such as Christians and Turkmen to fight ISIL.⁵⁶

Other significant political and military events during the reporting period:

- On November 21, ISIL militants carried out a suicide bombing attack at a Shia mosque in Kabul, killing at least 27 people and wounding dozens more.⁵⁷
- On November 21, IHS Conflict Monitor reported that ISIL had used chemical weapons "including chlorine and sulfur mustard gas" a minimum of 52 times in Syria and Iraq since 2014.⁵⁸

⁵¹ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-idUSKBN13M0PI>

⁵² <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-38147078> ; <http://www.newsweek.com/isis-abuses-and-militia-revenge-attacks-risk-continuing-cycle-injustice-after-525934> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-mosul-un-idUSKBN13O15F>

⁵³ <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/11/iraq-bomb-blast-kills-dozens-amiriyat-al-fallujah-161117192804285.html> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-idUSKBN13C1LI> ; <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/dozens-dead-iraq-car-bombing-targeting-wedding-349396922>

⁵⁴ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-blast-idUSKBN13J1DA>

⁵⁵ See: "US DOD News Release Military Strikes Hit ISIL in Syria, Iraq". *Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve*. News Release No: [1007374](#), [1008281](#), [1009355](#), [1009587](#), [1010781](#), [1011859](#), [1013015](#), [1013133](#), [1013178](#), [1013395](#), [1014495](#), [1015582](#), [1017556](#)

⁵⁶ <http://bigstory.ap.org/38d21400b14444b08d8169ca03ecdb1b> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-idUSKBN13M0PI>

⁵⁷ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-38048604>

⁵⁸ <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/21/world/middleeast/isis-chemical-weapons-syria-iraq-mosul.html> ; <http://www.newsweek.com/isis-abuses-and-militia-revenge-attacks-risk-continuing-cycle-injustice-after-525934>

Syrian Network For Human Rights Videos

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

1. al-Huda Mosque damaged by alleged SARG shelling on November 13, 2016. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0045** in **Weekly Report 87-88**, **SHI 16-0072** in **Weekly Report 95-96**, **SHI 16-0133** in **Weekly Report 107-108**, and **SHI 16-0167** in **Weekly Report 117-118**.⁵⁹
2. Basreen Mosque damaged by alleged Russian shelling on November 17, 2016. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0171** in **Weekly Report 119-120**.
3. Ammar bin Yasser Mosque damaged by alleged SARG shelling on September 30, 2016 and October 1, 2016.⁶⁰
4. Qebtan Mosque damaged by an alleged Russian shelling or airstrikes on October 5, 2016.⁶¹ **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0159** in **Weekly Report 115-116**.

Satellite Imagery and Geospatial Analysis

As Iraqi and Peshmerga forces continue to push into Mosul, more information has emerged about the creation and use of tunnels by ISIL. These tunnels were used by ISIL fighters as living quarters and as a way to escape ongoing air strikes, as seen in multiple news reports as well as an ISIL video.⁶² Satellite images of Mosul and its surrounding areas have captured the spoil heaps of these tunnels. While ASOR CHI has attributed some of these tunnels to looting, it is also likely that these were used as bunkers and storage areas.⁶³ Previously, it was unclear how these tunnels had been dug so quickly. However, new videos show the multiple types of machines being used to create these tunnels.⁶⁴ The large metal heads on these machines churn up and destroy any artifacts in their path and thus would not be useful for illegal excavations. If these machines are being used to dig the tunnels that ASOR CHI has noted on the site of Nineveh, then little archaeological material is being looted. It is instead being destroyed in the process of digging these large tunnels.

For previous reports on looting tunnels at archaeological sites around Mosul, see **Weekly Report 85-86**. For more information about previously identified tunnels at Nineveh see **IHI 16-0010** in **Weekly Report 91-92** and **IHI 16-0010 UPDATE** in **Weekly Report 103-104**.

⁵⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pYSXIERPp8E> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pYSXIERPp8E>

⁶⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jw22QlbB7qA> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CwZ0tlq1ulc>

⁶¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Fxd7Rpl0Q>

⁶² https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cXAq_Mlsg44; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G-VS5Z9MCMA>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dmxjPIXDaYw>

⁶³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PVVfOeYlq30>

⁶⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7qOB9pV2wel>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YEjeq5Ns578>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-AQ3FIfoyXE>



Video still of a smaller tunneling machine found by the Peshmerga (Kurdistan24; October 30, 2016)



Video still of a smaller tunneling machine found by the Peshmerga (Kurdistan24; October 30, 2016)



Video still of large tunneling machine found by Iraqi forces outside of Mosul (Defense Ministry of Iraq, November 4, 2016)



Video still of the head of the large tunneling machine used by ISIL (Kunal Kund; November 4, 2016)



Example of the spoil heap from a tunnel dug into the mound of Nineveh (DigitalGlobe; May 2, 2016)



Visible spoil heaps from tunneling into the mound of Qara Tepe (DigitalGlobe; February 26, 2016)

Incident Reports: Syria

SHI 16-0170

Report Date: November 16, 2016

Site Name: al-Imam Mosque (مسجد الإمام; al-Meqam Mosque; جامع المقام)

Date of Incident: November 4, 2016

Location: Tayyibat al-Imam, Hama Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: 1594 CE (minaret)

Incident Summary: An airstrike allegedly damaged a mosque in Hama Governorate.

Incident Source and Description: On November 15, 2016 the Association for the Protection of Syrian Archaeology (APSA) reported that an airstrike on November 5, 2016 severely damaged a mosque in Tayyibat al-Imam.⁶⁵ Before and after photographs of the damage provided by APSA indicate that the mosque's 16th-century CE minaret has collapsed, and further damage has occurred to the mosque's building.

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor damage to al-Imam 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:

APSA:

https://www.facebook.com/pg/apsa2011/photos/?tab=album&album_id=1753223424784761

⁶⁵ https://www.facebook.com/pg/apsa2011/photos/?tab=album&album_id=1753223424784761



Pre-damage photograph of al-Imam Mosque (APSA/Facebook; November 15, 2016)



Destruction of the minaret of al-Imam Mosque (APSA/Facebook; November 15, 2016)



Destruction of the minaret and damage to al-Imam Mosque (APSA/Facebook; November 15, 2016)



Destruction of the minaret and damage to al-Imam Mosque (APSA/Facebook; November 15, 2016)



Severe damage to al-Imam Mosque (APSA/Facebook; November 15, 2016)



Severe damage to al-Imam Mosque (APSA/Facebook; November 15, 2016)

SHI 16-0171

Report Date: November 18, 2016

Site Name: al-Qadim Mosque (مسجد القديم); al-Kabir Mosque (مسجد الكبير)

Date of Incident: November 18, 2016

Location: Kafr Batna, Rif Dimashq Governorate Syria
Jisreen, Rif Dimashq Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosques in Rif Dimashq Governorate.

Site Date: Unknown.

Incident Summary: Alleged SARG airstrikes damage mosques near Damascus.

Incident Source and Description: On November 18, 2016 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that SARG airstrikes damaged al-Qadeem Mosque in Kafr Batna and al-Kabir Mosque in Jisreen.⁶⁶ Photographs provided by SNHR shows broken glass and debris in the interiors of both mosques.

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor damage to al-Qadeem Mosque and 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/2016/11/18/government-forces-targeted-al-qadeem-mosque-kafr-batna-city-damascus-suburbs-november-18/>; <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/11/18/government-forces-targeted-al-kabir-mosque-jisreen-town-damascus-suburbs-november-18/>

⁶⁶ <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/11/18/government-forces-targeted-al-qadeem-mosque-kafr-batna-city-damascus-suburbs-november-18/>; <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/11/18/government-forces-targeted-al-kabir-mosque-jisreen-town-damascus-suburbs-november-18/>



Debris in the interior of al-Qadeem Mosque (SNHR; November 18, 2016)



Interior damage to al-Kabir Mosque in Jisreen (SNHR; November 18, 2016)

SHI 16-0172

Report Date: November 18-21, 2016

Site Name:

- Barsin Mosque (مسجد برسین)
- al-Mashatiya Mosque (مسجد المشاطية)
- al-Hussein Mosque (جامع الحسين)
- Fatima Aqil Mosque (مسجد فاطمة عقيل)

Date of Incident: November 17-21, 2016

Location:

- Barsin Mosque - al-Maadi neighborhood, Aleppo, Aleppo Governorate, Syria
- al-Mashatiya Mosque - al-Jaloom neighborhood, Aleppo, Aleppo Governorate, Syria
- al-Hussein Mosque - al-Qaterji neighborhood, Aleppo, Aleppo Governorate, Syria
- Fatima Aqil Mosque - Sukkari neighborhood, Aleppo, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosques in Aleppo city.

Site Date: al-Mashatiya Mosque: ca. 1718 CE

Incident Summary: Alleged Russian and SARG airstrikes damage four mosques in Aleppo.

Incident Source and Description:

- Barsin Mosque (مسجد برسین) - On November 18, 2016 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that a Russian airstrike severely damaged Barsin Mosque in Aleppo on November 17, 2016, “damaging its building and furniture, destroying its minaret and rendering it inoperable.”⁶⁷ A photograph provided by SNHR shows a great deal of the mosque and a neighboring building has collapsed. The top portion of the mosque’s minaret also appears to have collapsed. A video posted on Youtube shows the immediate aftermath of the airstrike and the damage to the mosque.⁶⁸
- al-Mashatiya Mosque (مسجد المشاطية) - On November 20, 2016 SNHR reported that SARG helicopters dropped a barrel bomb near al-Mashatiya Mosque on November 19, 2016 “destroying its building and dome and damaging its furniture partially.”⁶⁹ A photograph provided by SNHR shows damage and rubble in the interior of the mosque. Previously, the crown of the mosque’s minaret was destroyed. For further information on previous damage to al-Mashatiya Mosque see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0099** in **Weekly Report 46**.

⁶⁷ <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/11/18/suspected-russian-forces-targeted-barseen-mosque-al-maadi-neighborhood-aleppo-city-november-17/>

⁶⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aW4RgDEEnp0>

⁶⁹ <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/11/20/government-forces-shelled-mashatiya-mosque-al-jaloom-neighborhood-aleppo-city-november-19/>

- al-Hussein Mosque (جامع الحسين) - On November 21, 2016 Syria News reported that an airstrike damaged al-Hussein Mosque, causing the collapse of its minaret.⁷⁰ A photograph, allegedly of the destroyed minaret, was first posted on Twitter on November 17, 2016. For further information on previous damage to al-Hussein mosque, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0060** in **Weekly Report 91-92**.
- Fatima Aqil Mosque (مسجد فاطمة عقيل) - On November 22, 2016 SNHR reported that a SARG airstrike damaged Fatima Aqil Mosque on November 21, 2016 “damaging its building and furniture partially.”⁷¹ No photographs of the damage were available at the time of publication.

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor damage to mosques in Aleppo, 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:

November 17, 2016: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aW4RgDEEnp0>

November 18, 2016: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/11/18/suspected-russian-forces-targeted-barseen-mosque-al-maadi-neighborhood-aleppo-city-november-17/>

November 20, 2016: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/11/20/government-forces-shelled-mashatiya-mosque-al-jaloom-neighborhood-aleppo-city-november-19/>

November 21, 2016: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/11/22/suspected-russian-forces-shelled-fatima-aqeel-mosque-al-sukari-neighborhood-aleppo-city-november-21/>

November 22, 2016: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-qga09LYMyg>

Syria News: http://www.syria.news/mob_n2.php?n=95d3ff8b-21111612

⁷⁰ http://www.syria.news/mob_n2.php?n=95d3ff8b-21111612

⁷¹ <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/11/22/suspected-russian-forces-shelled-fatima-aqeel-mosque-al-sukari-neighborhood-aleppo-city-november-21/>

Barsin Mosque (مسجد برسین)



Severe damage to Barsin Mosque (SNHR; November 18, 2016)



Video still of damage to interior of Barsin Mosque (SNHR/Youtube; November 17, 2016)



Video still of damage to the interior of Barsin Mosque (SNHR/Youtube; November 17, 2016)



Video still of damage to the exterior of Barsin Mosque and surrounding area (SNHR/Youtube; November 17, 2016)



Video still of damage to an exterior wall of Barsin Mosque and surrounding area (SNHR/Youtube; November 17, 2016)

al-Mashatiya Mosque (مسجد المشاطية)



Damage to the interior of al-Mashatiya Mosque (SNHR; November 20, 2016)



al-Mashatiya Mosque with partial collapse of the minaret visible (DigitalGlobe; October 19, 2016)



al-Mashatiya Mosque with dome collapsed (DigitalGlobe; November 27, 2016)

al-Hussein Mosque (جامع الحسين)



Collapse of the minaret of al-Hussein Mosque (November 17, 2016)



al-Hussein Mosque prior to damage to minaret. Note the previously damaged buildings on the south side (DigitalGlobe; October 19, 2016)



al-Hussein Mosque with collapsed minaret (DigitalGlobe; November 19, 2016)

SHI 16-0173

Report Date: November 18, 2016

Site Name: al-Hamza Bin Abd al-Muttaleb Mosque (مسجد الحمزة ; مسجد حمزة بن عبد المطلب)

Date of Incident: November 17, 2016

Location: Anadan, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: An airstrike severely damages a mosque in Anadan.

Incident Source and Description: On November 18, 2016 the Syrian Network for Human Rights reported that a Russian airstrike severely damaged al-Hamza Bin Abd al-Muttaleb Mosque on the previous day.⁷² A photograph accompanying the report showed that the southeast corner of the mosque and part of its dome have collapsed.

This mosque has been damaged on at least two prior occasions. On May 31, 2016 SNHR reported that SARG missiles struck the mosque, resulting in a large hole in the mosque's dome and damage to the interior.⁷³ An airstrike on February 3, 2016 damaged the mosque's fence.⁷⁴ For more information on previous damage to al-Hamza Bin Abd al-Muttaleb Mosque, see **SHI 16-0019** in **Weekly Report 79-80** and **ASOR CHI Incident Reports SHI 16-0075** in **Weekly Report 95-96**.

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor damage to Hamza Bin Abd al-Muttaleb 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:

Anadan Media Center: <https://www.facebook.com/Anadan.Media.Center3/posts/1435133983168226> ; <https://www.facebook.com/Anadan.Media.Center3/videos/1435261269822164/>

SNHR:

November 18, 2016: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/11/18/suspected-russian-forces-targeted-hamza-mosque-anadan-city-aleppo-governorate-november-17/>

⁷² <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/11/18/suspected-russian-forces-targeted-hamza-mosque-anadan-city-aleppo-governorate-november-17/>

⁷³ <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/05/31/government-forces-targeted-hamza-bin-abdul-muttaleb-mosque-anadan-city-aleppo-governorate-may-31/>

⁷⁴ <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/02/03/17845/>

May 31, 2016: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/05/31/government-forces-targeted-hamza-bin-abdul-muttaleb-mosque-anadan-city-aleppo-governorate-may-31/>
February 3, 2016: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/02/03/17845/>



Collapse of the southeast corner of al-Hamza Bin Abd al-Muttaleb Mosque (SNHR; November 18, 2016)

SHI 16-0174

Report Date: November 20, 2016

Site Name: al-Hussein Mosque (مسجد الحسين)

Date of Incident: November 20, 2016

Location: Binnish, Idlib Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: An alleged SARG airstrike damages mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On November 20, 2016 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that a SARG airstrike struck al-Hussein Mosque in Binnish, causing partial damage.⁷⁵ A photograph provided by SNHR shows debris in the mosque's interior.

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor damage to al-Hussein 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/2016/11/20/government-forces-targeted-al-hussein-mosque-binnesh-city-idlib-governorate-november-20/>

⁷⁵ <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/11/20/government-forces-targeted-al-hussein-mosque-binnesh-city-idlib-governorate-november-20/>



Debris in the interior of al-Hussein Mosque (SNHR; November 20, 2016)

SHI 16-0178

Report Date: November 30, 2016

Site Name: Palmyra including:

- Temple of Allat
- Southeast Necropolis
- Temple of Bel
- Temple of Nabu
- Hellenistic City
- Nymphaeum
- Western Necropolis/Valley of the Tombs

Date of Incident: March 2016-Present

Location: Palmyra, Tadmor, Homs Governorate, Syria

Site Description: From UNESCO:

First mentioned in the archives of Mari in the 2nd millennium BC, Palmyra was an established caravan oasis when it came under Roman control in the mid-first century AD as part of the Roman province of Syria. It grew steadily in importance as a city on the trade route linking Persia, India and China with the Roman Empire, marking the crossroads of several civilisations in the ancient world. A grand, colonnaded street of 1100 metres' length forms the monumental axis of the city, which together with secondary colonnaded cross streets links the major public monuments including the Temple of Ba'al, Diocletian's Camp, the Agora, Theatre, other temples and urban quarters. Architectural ornament including unique examples of funerary sculpture unites the forms of Greco-roman art with indigenous elements and Persian influences in a strongly original style. Outside the city's walls are remains of a Roman aqueduct and immense necropolises.⁷⁶ An oasis in the Syrian desert, north-east of Damascus, Palmyra contains the monumental ruins of a great city that was one of the most important cultural centres of the ancient world. From the 1st to the 2nd century, the art and architecture of Palmyra, standing at the crossroads of several civilizations, married Graeco-Roman techniques with local traditions and Persian influences.⁷⁷

- Temple of Allat - A temple to the goddess Al-lat, consort to Belshamin.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/23>

⁷⁷ <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/23>

⁷⁸ Burns 1999: 209

- Southeast Necropolis - The Southeast Necropolis lies over a kilometer southeast of the Temple of Bel, on the other side of the Orchards area from the rest of the necropolis.⁷⁹ This area consists of hypogea and funerary towers, many of which have never been systematically excavated. The construction of the first dated hypogeum dates to 83 CE, and the last to 138 CE. Only two dated funerary temples have been found, with construction dates of 143 and 184 CE. These should not serve termini ante quem for the construction of hypogea funerary temples in this area as, again, many foundation inscriptions are missing and much of the area is not yet excavated. Around 46 tombs and funerary temples have been discovered in this area of the necropolis.⁸⁰
- Temple of Bel - The Temple of Bel (broadly oriented towards the compass points) stands in its enormous compound at the eastern end of the main colonnaded street. The temple is certainly the most important religious building of the first century AD in the Middle East and is one of the few early imperial projects in the region to survive. The complex was built in several stages:
 - Hellenistic temple (probably built on a Bronze Age site)- only fragments survive
 - Central shrine or cella dedicated AD 32 but probably under construction since AD 17 or 19 in AD 80-120- temenos enlarged, surrounded by double colonnaded portico on north, east, south
 - Late second century- west portico and propylaeum. The undertaking of such a project on a truly imperial scale and to a high standard of craftsmanship reflects both the ubiquity of the Hellenistic tradition which inspired its architecture as well as the prosperity of the late Augustine period and the early years of his successor, Tiberius (r AD 14-37), which provided the wherewithal to construct it.⁸¹
- Temple of Nabu - The remains of the Temple of Nabu consist only of the temple podium and the bases of the columns that formed the porticos of the temple cella and temenos. The cella opened south onto an outdoor altar.⁸²
- Hellenistic City - This is located southwest along the main colonnade, an area of habitation, but not much archaeological exploration has occurred.
- Nymphaeum - This was set off the main columned avenue, between the Temple of Bel and the Nebu Temple. A Nymphaeum was constructed to celebrate the Nymphs, usually arranged to supply water to an area.⁸³

⁷⁹Burns 1999: 211

⁸⁰ Burns 1999: 211

⁸¹ Burns 1999: 210

⁸² Burns 1999: 211

⁸³ Burns 1999: 210

- Western Necropolis - The Valley of the Tombs is an area of the Palmyra necropolis located west of the city's ancient walls where around 100 tower tombs, hypogea (underground tombs), and funerary temples (tombs built to look like small temples or houses) have been discovered.⁸⁴ The most eye-catching monuments in this area are the tower tombs. Often several stories high, each floor of a tower had multiple chambers containing loculi, or small spaces for individual remains. Some towers could thus hold the remains of over 100 people, who were all theoretically relatives or clients of the tomb's founder. Though many were looted in antiquity or more recently, it is clear that these were often highly decorated with murals, intricate architectural features and reliefs, often portraying the tomb founder and his family or characters from myth. Many of these towers are now missing their foundation inscriptions and cannot be dated precisely, however the earliest dated tower was erected in 9 BCE. Changes in construction techniques and architectural features have allowed scholars to group undated towers according to several phases and narrow down a date range for their foundation. The construction of tower tombs continued until around the mid-2nd-century CE (the last dated tower was constructed in 128 CE, though some were used well into the 3rd-century), after which only hypogea and funerary temples were built in this section of Palmyra's necropolis. Hypogea were used concurrently with tower tombs (which often also included a hypogeum chamber below), but independent, dated hypogea range from 108-232 CE, and dated funerary temples range from 148-171 CE in the Valley of the Tombs.⁸⁵

Site Date:

- Palmyra - Mainly Roman/Byzantine
- Temple of Allat - Pre-Islamic, probably 1st to 3rd centuries CE
- Southeast Necropolis - 1st to 3rd centuries CE
- Temple of Bel - 17-35 CE, enlarged 80-120 CE
- Temple of Nabu - 75-100 CE
- Hellenistic City - Hellenistic
- Nymphaeum - Roman/Byzantine
- Western Necropolis - 108-232 CE

Incident Summary: New photos released show looting occurring within the archaeological site.

Incident Source and Description: New photographs released by the Palmyra Coordination Committee show illegal excavations occurring at Palmyra, notably around the Temple of Allat, Southeast Necropolis, Temple of Bel, Temple of Nabu, the Hellenistic City, Nymphaeum, and the Western Necropolis. The description of the photographs states that the excavations have been occurring since March 2016 and are still ongoing. For previous reports on looting in Palmyra please see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 14-0027** in **Weekly Report 3**, **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0043** in **Weekly Report 99-100**, and Special Reports on Palmyra released June 2, 2015, June 29, 2015, September 3, 2015, and March 2016.⁸⁶

Pattern: Illegal excavation.

⁸⁴ Burns 1999: 213

⁸⁵ Burns 1999: 213

⁸⁶ <http://www.asor-syrianheritage.org/4290-2/>

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor reports of damage to Palmyra and the surrounding area, as well as the condition of other heritage sites located in regions subject to intense illegal excavation.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Palmyra Coordination Committee:

https://www.facebook.com/pg/revo.palmyra3/photos/?tab=album&album_id=602621739862769

Scholarly:

Ball, Warwick. 2007. *Syria: A historical and architectural guide*. Second edition. Northampton, Massachusetts: Interlink.

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

Carter, Terry, Lara Dunston, and Amelia Thomas. 2008. *Syria & Lebanon*. 3rd ed. Oakland, California: Lonely Planet.

Darke, Diana. 2010. *Syria*. 2nd ed. Guilford, Connecticut: Bradt Travel Guides Ltd.

Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums. 2014. *State Party Report: State of Conservation of the Syrian Cultural Heritage Sites*.

———. 2015. *State Party Report: On the State of Conservation of The Syrian Cultural Heritage Sites*.

UNITAR. 2014. Satellite-Based Damage Assessment to Cultural Heritage Sites in Syria.

<http://www.unitar.org/unosat/tbc>

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



Illegal excavation pits at Palmyra (Palmyra Coordination Committee; November 24, 2016)



Illegal excavation and damage to a structure at Palmyra (Palmyra Coordination Committee; November 24, 2016)



Illegal excavation at Palmyra (Palmyra Coordination Committee; November 24, 2016)



Illegal excavation at Palmyra (Palmyra Coordination Committee; November 24, 2016)



Illegal excavation under pavement at Palmyra (Palmyra Coordination Committee; November 24, 2016)



Illegal excavation at Palmyra (Palmyra Coordination Committee; November 24, 2016)



Illegal excavation and damage to a structure at Palmyra (Palmyra Coordination Committee; November 24, 2016)



Illegal excavation at Palmyra (Palmyra Coordination Committee; November 24, 2016)



Illegal excavation and damage to a structure at Palmyra (Palmyra Coordination Committee; November 24, 2016)

Incident Reports: Iraq

IHI 16-0035 UPDATE

Report Date: November 21, 2016

Site Name: Mar Gewargis Church (كنيسة مار كوركييس)

Date of Incident: Ongoing

Location: Bartella, Ninawa Governorate, Iraq

Site Description: Syriac Orthodox Church

Site Date: built circa 1939 CE.⁸⁷

Incident Summary: New video footage from Bartella shows an alleged ISIL execution site at Mar Gewargis Church.

Incident Source and Description: Video footage released by the Iraqi Ministry of Defense showed what is reported by an Iraqi forces member to be an ISIL execution site.⁸⁸ Located outside the church, possibly on what is a front gate, a noose is hung where, according to the speaker, ISIL militants carried out executions of those arrested by the group. According to the speaker, upon the arrival of Iraqi security forces bodies of executed individuals remained at the site. Additional video footage, as well as photographs, have continued to depict additional damage to Mar Gewargis Church in Bartella, including evidence of intentional destruction and religious defacement.⁸⁹

Pattern: Military activity: occupation/militarization, intentional destruction.

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:

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

Iraqi Ministry of Defense: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oRWs1uSRns4>

Thomas Goisque:

<http://www.thomasgoisque-photo.com/site.php?page=reportages&spec=report&id=169#>

⁸⁷ <http://www.chaldeansonline.org/village/bartilla.html>

⁸⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oRWs1uSRns4>

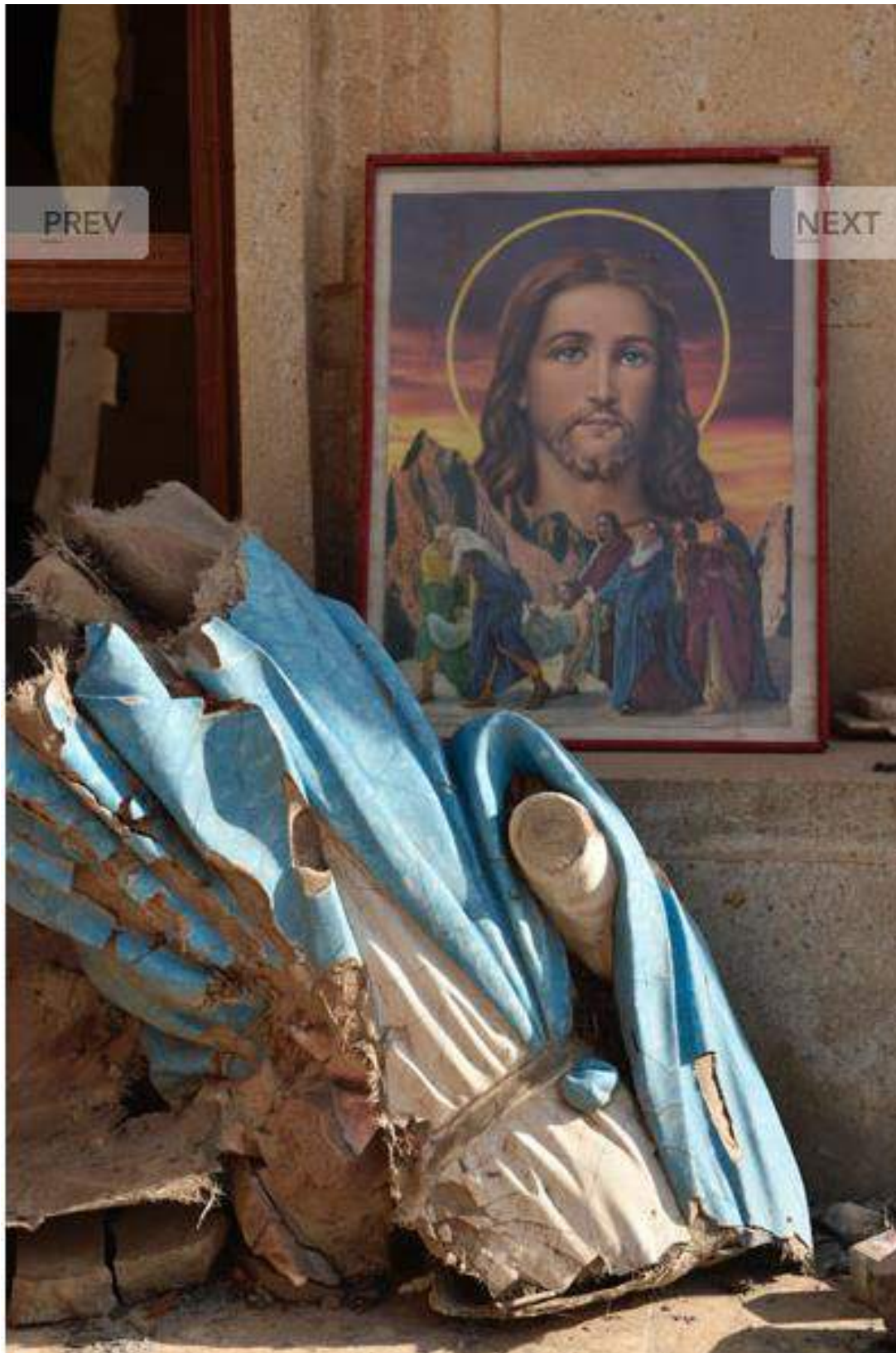
⁸⁹ <http://www.thomasgoisque-photo.com/site.php?page=reportages&spec=report&id=169#>



A reporter gestures to a makeshift noose hanging outside Mar Gewargis Church in Bartella (Iraqi Ministry of Defense; November 16, 2016)



Priests returning to Mar Gewargis Church in Bartella (Thomas Goisque; November 20, 2016)



A smashed statue of Mary at Mar Gewargis Church in Bartella (Thomas Goisque; November 20, 2016)



A nun returning to Mar Gewargis Church in Bartella with debris in the background (Thomas Goisque; November 20, 2016)



A priest at Mar Gewargis Church in Bartella with a rescued cross on the front table (Thomas Goisque; November 20, 2016)



A broken door at Mar Gewargis Church in Bartella (Thomas Goisque; November 20, 2016)

IHI 16-0038 UPDATE

Report Date: November 30, 2016

Site Name: Karamlish, including Mart Barbara Church (كنيسة مار بربارة)

Date of Incident: August 2014 – October 2016

Location: Karamlish, Nineveh Governorate, Iraq

Site Description: Mart Barbara Church was built on the ruins of an Assyrian temple on top of a mound known as Tel Barbara, to the west of Karamlish.⁹⁰ The earth soil covers a Ziggurat that was built by the Assyrians to serve as a temple.⁹¹ According to Wilmshurt: “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.”⁹² Other sources claim that the church was heavily damaged in 1734 CE. Locals rebuilt the church in 1798 CE.⁹³ It is located on the northern side of the village and is adjacent to a cemetery.

Site Date: Exact date of construction is unknown. Church was rebuilt in the mid-late 18th century CE after it was attacked by Nadir Shah.

Incident Summary: New video and photographic footage shows more evidence of tunneling at the site.

Incident Source and Description: New photographs released on November 20, 2016 show damage to Mart Barbara Church in Karamlish. These images provide additional evidence of militarization and video footage shows intentional destruction inside Mart Barbara Church in Karamlish, including damage to the grave of Mart Barbara.

Pattern: Military activity: militarization/occupation, intentional destruction.

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.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Ishtar TV: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X-i5pTNsJbM>

Thomas Goisque:

<http://www.thomasgoisque-photo.com/site.php?page=reportages&spec=report&id=169#>

⁹⁰ <http://www.ishartv.com/en/viewarticle.35768.html>

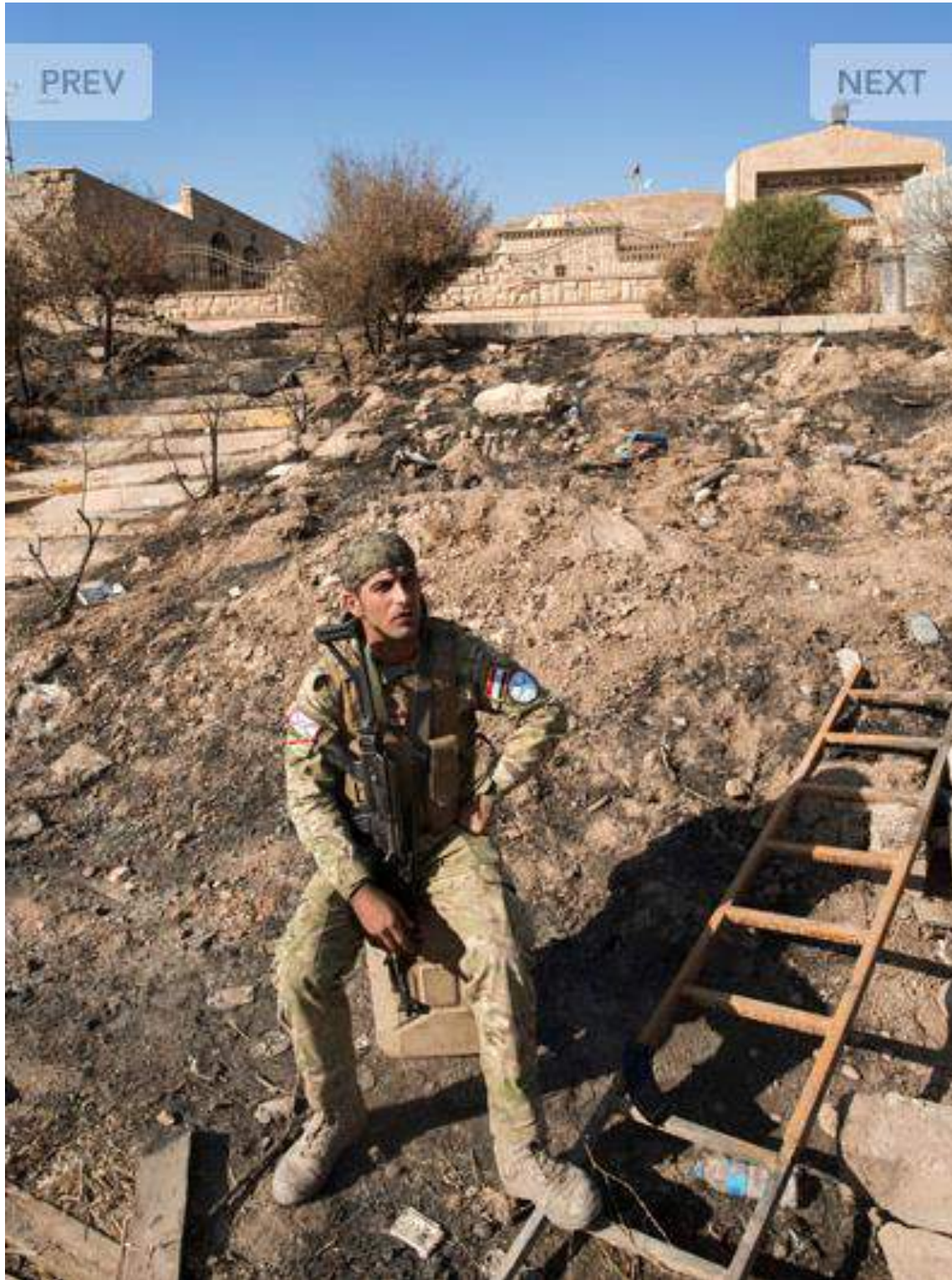
⁹¹ <http://www.atour.com/education/20040819c.html>

⁹² Wilmshurst 2000: 218

⁹³ <http://www.chaldeansonline.org/village/karamles.html>

Scholarly:

Wilmhurst, David (200). *The Ecclesiastical Organisation of the Church of the East, 1318-1913*. Peeters Publishers.



Damage seen surrounding Mart Barbara Church in Karamlish (Thomas Goisque; November 20, 2016)



Tunneling activity in courtyard of Mart Barbara Church in Karamlish (Thomas Goisque; November 20, 2016)



Tunneling activity in courtyard of Mart Barbara Church in Karamlish (Thomas Goisque; November 20, 2016)



A Nineveh Plain Protection Unit (NPU) flag on a bridge over the highway looking on Mart Barbara Church in Karamlish (Thomas Goisque; November 20, 2016)



Damage to the grave of Mart Barbara (Ishtar TV; November 25, 2016)

IHI 16-0043 UPDATE

Report Date: November 17, 2016

Site Name: Bakhdida (Qaraqosh) including:

- al-Tahira Church (كنيسة الطاهرة)
- al-Tahira Convent
- Dar Mar Polis (دار مار بولس الخدمات الكنيسة)
- Mar Yohanna Church (كنيسة مار يوحنا)
- Mar Gerges Church (كنيسة مار گورگيس)
- Mart Shmone (Mart Shmoni/y)
- Naqurtaya Monastery (دير ناقورتايا) (Monastery of Saint John of Dailam)

Date of Incident: November 13, 2016

Location: Bakhdida (Qaraqosh), Ninawa Governorate, Iraq

Site Description: Bakhdida is considered to be Iraq’s largest and oldest Christian town.⁹⁴ It “is one of a string of settlements in the Nineveh plains near Mosul that trace their origins back to the dawn of Christianity.”⁹⁵ 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.⁹⁶

- al-Tahira Church - Syriac Catholic Church. According the The Daily Beast, al-Tahira Church is Iraq’s largest church with capacity for 3,000 people.⁹⁷ A “spacious courtyard” lies next to the church that is used for religious festivals.⁹⁸
- al-Tahira Convent - There is a convent for the Dominican sisters of Saint Catherine de Sienne attached to the church.
- 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.⁹⁹ The center includes a hall used as both a cinema and theater.¹⁰⁰
- Mar Yohanna Church- Church dedicated to Mart Yohanna.
- Mart Shmone Church - A church and monastery built in the 8th century to celebrate the life of Mart Shmone and her 7 children.
- Naqurtaya Monastery - Syriac Orthodox monastery and pilgrimage site.

⁹⁴ <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>

⁹⁵ <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2016/10/26/the-painful-liberation-of-iraq-s-christian-heartland.html>

⁹⁶ <http://www.ishartv.com/en/viewarticle.35746.html>

⁹⁷ <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2016/10/26/the-painful-liberation-of-iraq-s-christian-heartland.html> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xchzEyFMyw>

⁹⁸ <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2016/10/26/the-painful-liberation-of-iraq-s-christian-heartland.html>

⁹⁹ <http://www.zowaa.org/Arabic/bakhdeda%20branch/news/bakh%20news%20290511.htm>

¹⁰⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ZCRgreDntQ>

Site Date:

- 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 1948.¹⁰¹
- Al-Tahira Convent - Likely dates to around the same time as al-Tahira Church.
- Dar Mar Polis Church Services - Construction began November 6, 1995 CE and was completed on June 29, 2000.¹⁰²
- Mar Yohanna - Built prior to 1748 CE.¹⁰³
- Mar Gerges - Built in the 17th century, reconstructed in 1955.¹⁰⁴
- Mart Shmone - This church was built prior to the 8th century, and rebuilt in 791.¹⁰⁵

Incident Summary: New video and photographic footage shows more evidence of intentional destruction to religious sites in Bakhdida.

Incident Source and Description: Video released by the AP on November 17, 2016 shows four people returning to the al-Tahira church and discussing the damage.¹⁰⁶ The video shows damage to the sculptures, portraits, and books that were in the church under ISIL control. New photographs also show damage to the attached convent. The National Catholic Reporter states that ISIL fighters were living in the convent.¹⁰⁷

- Dar Mar Polis Church Services - Additional photographs of the damage to Dar Mar Polis Church Services show damage to the interior of the building, including defacement of a cross and a broken statue on a stairwell.¹⁰⁸
- Mar Yohanna Church - Recent photographs showing damage to the roof, the bell tower, and a statue, as well as efforts to raise the cross on the roof by Iraqi forces.
- Mar Gerges Church - Recent video footage published by Ishtar TV of Mar Gerges Church in Bakhdida show slight damage to the interior of the church.¹⁰⁹
- Mart Shmone Church - Recent video footage published by Ishtar TV of Mart Shmone Church in Bakhdida show significant damage to the interior of the church, including fire damage.¹¹⁰
- Naqurtaya Monastery - Recent video footage published by Ishtar TV of Naqurtaya Monastery shows damage to crosses and the outside of the building, as well as tunneling inside the building.¹¹¹

Pattern: Military activity: intentional destruction.

¹⁰¹ <http://www.ishtartv.com/en/viewarticle,35746.html> ; <http://bakhdida.ca/Museum/churchesE.htm>

¹⁰² <http://www.zowaa.org/Arabic/bakhdeda%20branch/news/bakh%20news%20290511.htm>

¹⁰³ <http://bakhdida.ca/Museum/churchesE.htm>

¹⁰⁴ <http://www.chaldeansonline.org/village/bakhdida.html>

¹⁰⁵ <http://www.chaldeansonline.org/village/bakhdida.html>

¹⁰⁶ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g1tKfNo_ARU

¹⁰⁷ <https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/dominican-sisters-recount-their-flight-isis>

¹⁰⁸ <http://www.thomasgoisque-photo.com/site.php?page=reportages&spec=report&id=169#>

¹⁰⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WRT6bTuCG74>

¹¹⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WRT6bTuCG74>

¹¹¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WRT6bTuCG74>

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:

Associated Press: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g1tKfNo_ARU

Catholic World Report:

<http://www.catholicworldreport.com/Blog/3337/prioress-of-dominican-sisters-in-iraq-chronicle-s-isis-takeover-expresses-fears-and-frustrations.aspx>

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

Ishtar TV:

November 23, 2016: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WRt6bTuCG74>

November 28, 2016: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cZQYMn-G_XE

Macleans: <http://www.macleans.ca/news/return-to-qaraqosh-a-city-of-ruins/>

National Catholic Reporter: <https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/dominican-sisters-recount-their-flight-isis>

Reuters:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-christians-idUSKBN1301C5>

Thomas Goisque: <http://www.thomasgoisque-photo.com/site.php?page=reportages&spec=report&id=169#>

al-Tahira Church (كنيسة الطاهرة)



Video still of damage to the inside of al-Tahira Church (AP; November 17, 2016)



Video still of damage to the inside of al-Tahira Church (AP; November 17, 2016)



Video still of the area where ISIL reportedly burned books from the church (AP; November 17, 2016)



Video still of pieces of burned and damaged books in the courtyard of al-Tahira Church (AP; November 17, 2016)



Video still of damage to a relief of Jesus Christ inside al-Tahira Church (AP; November 17, 2016)



Video still of damage to a statue of Jesus Christ inside al-Tahira Church (AP; November 17, 2016)



Video still of damage to a portrait of Jesus Christ in al-Tahira Church (AP; November 17, 2016)



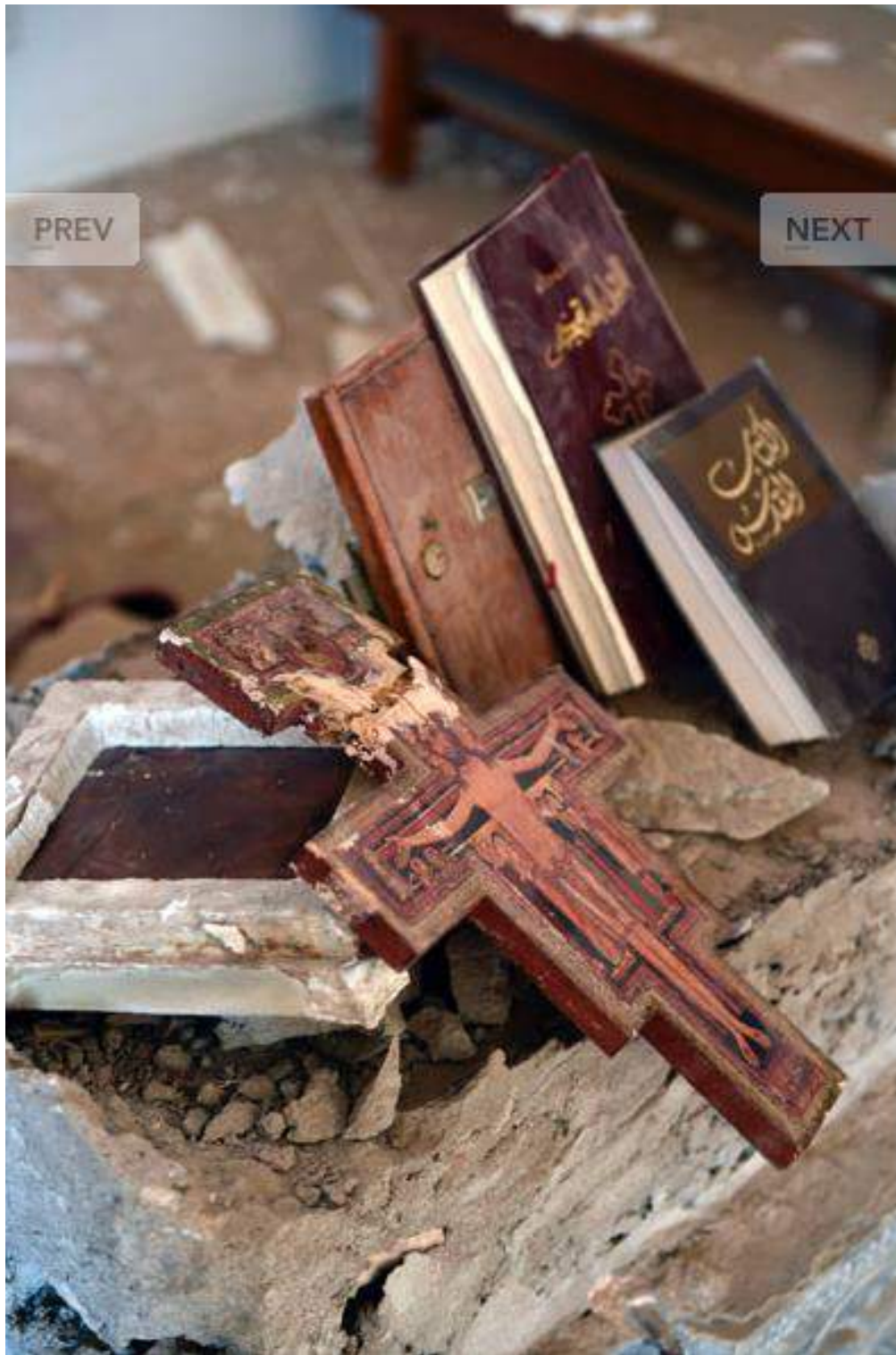
Dominican sisters of Saint Catherine de Sienne return to their convent attached to al-Tahira Church (Thomas Goisque; November 20, 2016)



Dominican sisters of Saint Catherine de Sienne return to their convent (Thomas Goisque; November 20, 2016)



Dominican sisters of Saint Catherine de Sienne look through the damage to their convent (Thomas Goisque; November 20, 2016)



Damage to books and a wooden cross in the convent (Thomas Goisque; November 20, 2016)



Dominican sisters of Saint Catherine de Sienne look through the damage to their convent (Thomas Goisque; November 20, 2016)



Dominican sisters of Saint Catherine look through debris left by ISIL (Thomas Goisque; November 20, 2016)

Dar Mar Polis Church Services (دار مار بولس الخدمات الكنيسة)



Iraqi soldiers and a priest inspect the damage to Dar Mar Polis Church Services (Thomas Goisque; November 20, 2016)



Damage to a cross and religious icon on the wall at Dar Mar Polis Church Services (Thomas Goisque; November 20, 2016)



Damage to a statue at Dar Mar Polis Church Services (Thomas Goisque; November 20, 2016)

Mar Yohanna Church (كنيسة مار يوحنا)



Damage to the bell tower at Mar Yohanna Church (Thomas Goisque; November 20, 2016)



Damage seen on the roof of Mar Yohanna Church (Thomas Goisque; November 20, 2016)



Damage to the bell tower at Mar Yohanna Church (Thomas Goisque; November 20, 2016)



Iraqi forces helping to stabilize the bell tower at Mar Yohanna Church (Thomas Goisque; November 20, 2016)



Damage to the front of Mar Yohanna Church and the bell tower (Thomas Goisque; November 20, 2016)



Damage to the front of Mar Yohanna Church and the bell tower (Thomas Goisque; November 20, 2016)



Iraqi security forces looking across Bakhdida from the roof of Mar Yohanna Church (Thomas Goisque; November 20, 2016)



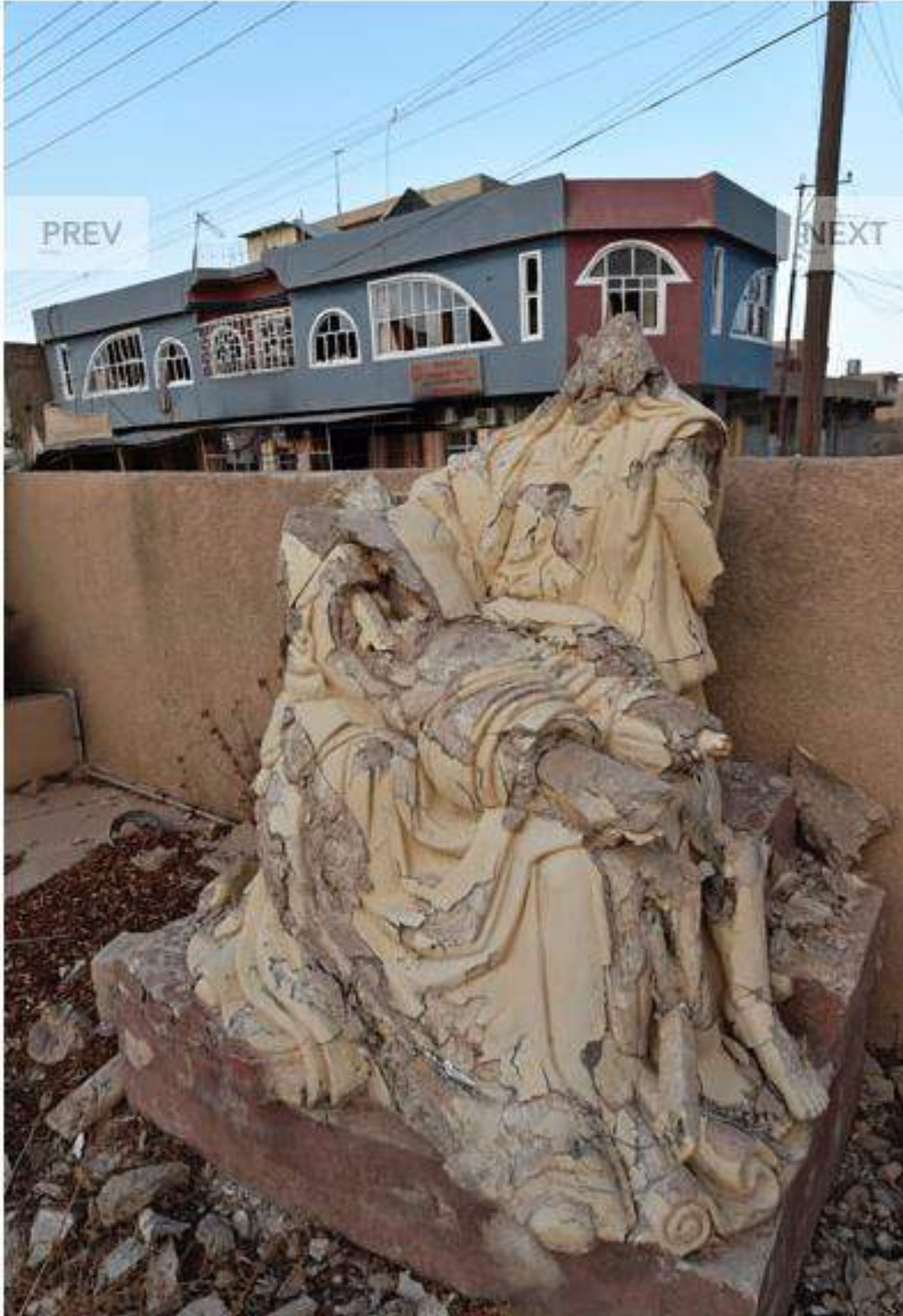
Damage to the inside of Mar Yohanna Church (Thomas Goisque; November 20, 2016)



Limited damage to Mar Yohanna Church looking towards the nave (Thomas Goisque; November 20, 2016)



Limited damage to the nave of Mar Yohanna Church (Thomas Goisque; November 20, 2016)



Severe damage to a statue located in the courtyard of Mar Yohanna Church (Thomas Goisque; November 20, 2016)



A stone relief in Mar Yohanna Church with the face removed (Thomas Goisque; November 20, 2016)



Damage to the inside of Mar Yohanna Church (Thomas Goisque; November 20, 2016)



Books and papers spread over the floor of Mar Yohanna Church (Thomas Goisque; November 20, 2016)



Graffiti on the columns inside Mar Yohanna Church (Thomas Goisque; November 20, 2016)



A priest inspects the damage to the inside Mar Yohanna Church (Thomas Goisque; November 20, 2016)

Mar Gerges Church (كنيسة مار گورگيس)



Video still of damage inside of Mar Gerges Church in Bakhdida (IshtarTV; November 23, 2016)



Video still of inside of Mar Gerges Church in Bakhdida (IshtarTV; November 23, 2016)



Video still of stairs leading down to a crypt at Mar Gerges Church in Bakhdida (IshtarTV; November 23, 2016)

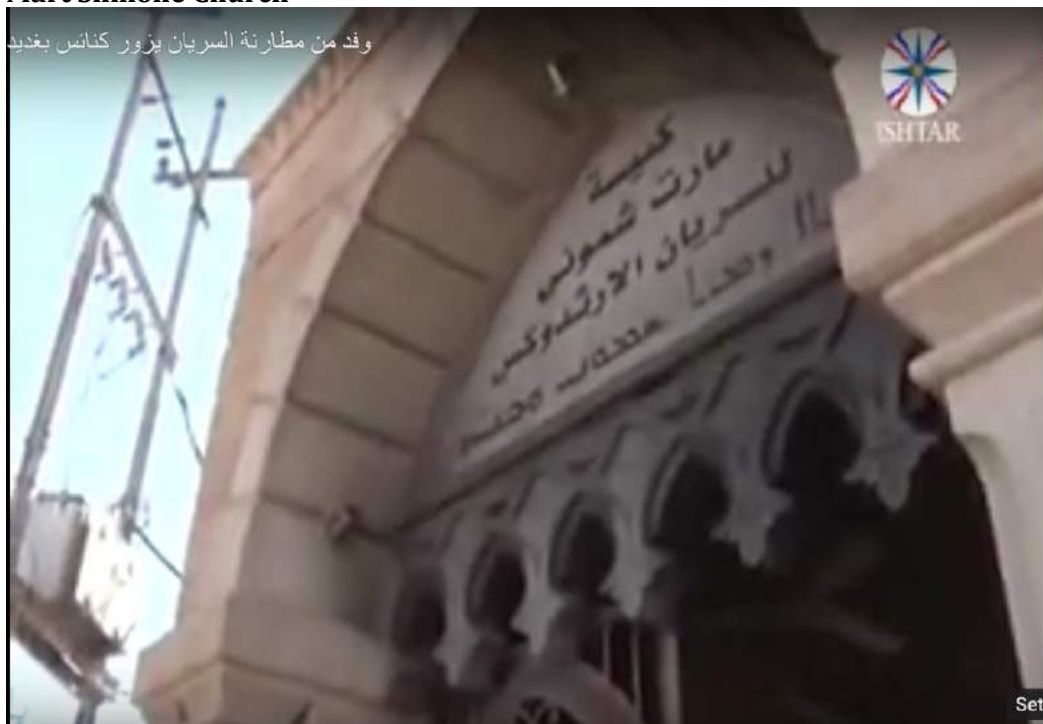


Video still of the exterior of Mar Gerges Church in Bakhdida with debris and graffiti present (IshtarTV; November 23, 2016)



Video still of the outside of Mar Gerges Church in Bakhdida showing damage to the words on the outside wall (IshtarTV; November 23, 2016)

Mart Shmone Church



Video still of a door to Mart Shmone Church in Bakhdida (IshtarTV; November 23, 2016)



Video still of damage to the interior of Mart Shmone Church in Bakhdida (IshtarTV; November 23, 2016)



Video still of damage to the altar inside Mart Shmone Church in Bakhdida (IshtarTV; November 23, 2016)



Video still of Mart Shmone Church in Bakhdida as it appears today (IshtarTV; November 23, 2016)

Naqurtaya Monastery (دير ناقورتايا)



Video still of the entrance of Naqurtaya Monastery (IshtarTV; November 23, 2016)



Video still of damage to a cross at Naqurtaya Monastery (IshtarTV; November 23, 2016)



Video still of a tunnel dug inside Mart Shmone Church (IshtarTV; November 23, 2016)



Video still of a tunnel dug inside Mart Shmone Church (IshtarTV; November 23, 2016)

IHI 16-0046

Report Date: November 21, 2016

Site Name: Shrines of Bashiq

- Shrine of Sheikh Bakir
- Shrine of Sheikh Babik
- The Three Domes:
 - Shrine of Sheikh Muhammad (مزار شيخ مهمد (محمد) (Sheikh Muhammad)
 - Shrine of Sitt Habibi
 - Shrine of Sitt Hecici (مزار ست خجيحي)
- Shrine of Sheikh Shams (مزار الشيخ شمس)
- Shrine of Mar Sicadin (مزار شيخ سجادين)
- Shrine of Sheikh Zein al Din (مزار سجادين)
- Shrine of Sheikh Mand Pasha
- Shrine of Pir Bub (مزار بيروب)
- Shrine of Said wa Mesud
- Shrine of Meleke Miran Sadiq (مزار ملك ميران)
- Shrine of Sheikh Nasr al Din (مزار شيخ ناسر دين)
- Shrine of Shehid Abd al Aziz
- Shrine of Sheikh Sharaf al Din
- Unnamed Yezidi Shrine
- Unidentified Yezidi Shrine
- Abu al-Barakat Hall (قاعة أبو البركات)
- Yezidi Cemetery
- Statue of Sheikh Ezidi Mirza
- Mart Shmone Church (كنيسة مارت شموني)
- Mart Mariam Church (كنيسة مريم العذراء)
- Mar Gerges Church (كنيسة مار كوركييس)
- Mar Gerges Cemetery

Date of Incident: Between August 2014 - November 2016

Location: Bashiq and Bahzani (بعشيقه وبحزاني), Ninawa Governorate, Iraq

Site Description:

- Shrines of Bashiq - Damaged by ISIL in August 2014. There were a reported 17 Yezidi shrines in Bashiq and Bahzani.¹¹²
- The Three Domes - Yezidi religious site in the center of Bashiq consisting of shrines to Sheikh Muhammad, Sitt Habibi, Sitt Hecici.¹¹³
- Yezidi Cemetery - Located in the center of town, near three Yezidi Shrines.
- Mart Shmone Church - Syriac Orthodox Church in Bashiq adjacent to Mar Mariam Church.
- Mart Mariam Church - Syriac Catholic Church in Bashiq adjacent to Mar Mariam Church.
- Mar Gerges Church - Assyrian Church in Bahzani.
- Mar Gerges Cemetery - adjacent to Mar Gerges Church.

¹¹² <http://www.lalishduhok.com/ezidi/post/126766>

¹¹³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fRUadnS6WbM>

Site Date:

- Shrine of Sheikh Babik - 14th-century CE
- Shrine of Sheikh Muhammad - 14th-century CE
- Shrine of Sitt Habibi - 14th-century CE
- Shrine of Sitt Hecici - 14th-century CE
- Shrine of Sheikh Shams - 14th-century CE
- Shrine of Mar Sicadin - 14th-century CE
- Mart Shmone Church - 1890 CE
- Mart Mariam Church - 1856 CE
- Mar Gerges Church - Est. 1884 CE, Renovated 2006 CE
- Yezidi Local Cemetery - est. 1261 CE (Yezidi Calendar 6010)

Incident Summary: New video footage and photographs show damage to sites in Bashiqa and Bahzani.

Incident Source and Description: ISIL militants captured the town of Bashiqa in August 2014.¹¹⁴ Kurdish fighters began efforts to retake the town, encircling it on October 23, 2016.¹¹⁵ In early November 2016, Iraqi Peshmerga Forces recaptured the town and began clearing operations. According to a local Yezidi policeman, half of the town is now destroyed and all of the Yezidi shrines were desecrated by ISIL.¹¹⁶ Much of the town has been damaged by aerial bombardment.¹¹⁷

- Shrines of Bashiqa - Several video reports released after the recapturing of Bashiqa and Bahzani show damage to several Yezidi shrines including the shrines to Sheikh Bakir and Sheikh Babik. At least one other still unidentified shrine has been heavily damaged. According to several Yezidis interviewed in the reports, ISIL militants destroyed all Yezidi sites in the area. Much of the damage, including the destruction of the Three Domes (Shrine of Shekih Muhammad, Shrine of Sitt Habibi, Shrine of Sitt Hecici) and the Shrine of Sheikh Babik was carried out by ISIL in August 2014.¹¹⁸ On November 12, 2016 Lalish Duhok released a series of photographs of a Yezidi religious ceremony taking place at the heavily damaged Shrine of Pir Bub.¹¹⁹ The shrine of Sheikh Nasr al-Din was reported by Ankawa to have been the last shrine intentionally destroyed by ISIL in October 2014.¹²⁰ Several video reports also show a Yezidi shrine, possibly located near Abu al-Barakat Hall, that has been heavily damaged. Remnants of what was likely a green roof over the shrine lie on the ground. Areas of the wall have been damaged, with many stones from the walls littering the ground.
- Yezidi Cemeteries - Several video reports released after the recapturing of Bashiqa and Bahzani show damage to area's Yezidi cemeteries. Evidence of intentional destruction is present with many graves appearing to have been smashed open, while others have had their epitaphs defaced.¹²¹

¹¹⁴ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-kurds-Yezidi-idUSKBN13C0GC>

¹¹⁵ <http://aranews.net/2016/10/peshmerga-forces-break-isis-defense-lines-surround-bashiqa-town/>

¹¹⁶ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-kurds-Yezidi-idUSKBN13C0GC>

¹¹⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XrBKiqBLrRc>

¹¹⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fRUadnS6WbM>

¹¹⁹ <http://www.lalishduhok.com/ezidi/post/126766> ; <http://www.iraq-ori.com/read/6452/>

¹²⁰ <http://www.ankawa.com/forum/index.php?topic=756441.0> ; <http://www.alqurtasnews.com/news/56142/alqurtasnews-news/ar>

¹²¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W5vNY4Mq9vY>

- Mart Mariam Church (كنيسة مريم العذراء) - Video footage taken following the recapturing of Bashliqa and Bahzani show extensive damage to Mart Mariam Church in Bashliqa; a large hole is present on the exterior of the church towards the chapel, the bell has been removed, and religious imagery has been defaced.¹²² Photographs taken after the liberation of the area show Kurdish Peshmerga forces replacing a cross atop the church.
- Mart Shmone Church (كنيسة مارت شموني) - Video footage taken following the recapturing of Bashliqa and Bahzani shows interior damage at Mart Shmone in Bashliqa, including material damage to religious artifacts.¹²³ Religious icons on the walls of the church have been defaced. According to an Al Jazeera report, the church has been “ransacked...the altar has been smashed, the pews broken, hymn books lie among the rubble.”¹²⁴
- Mar Gerges Church (كنيسة مار كوركييس) - Several video reports released after the recapturing of Bashliqa and Bahzani shows extensive damage and evidence of militarization at Mar Gerges Church in Bahzani. Present in the video footage is the defacement of religious icons and extensive damage to the church altar.¹²⁵ The symbol of the cross above the door to the church has also been damaged, and the cross atop the church removed.¹²⁶ In a hall adjacent to the church the ceiling has also been heavily damaged. In photographs taken for Getty Images, the church is described as having been turned into a base by ISIL militants.¹²⁷ Tunneling is evident in the floors of the church compound and holes have been created between the walls of the rooms to allow for ISIL militants to move about the church grounds without being seen by US-led coalition aircraft. It also appears that parts of the church building were used for weapons manufacturing. Video footage shows engineers searching for IEDs in the church, as well as unexploded IEDs and suicide belts.¹²⁸ The cemetery adjacent to the church has been heavily damaged. The covers of underground tombs have been pulled up, exposing the remains, and some graves appear to have been intentionally damaged. One week after the church was liberated, the church was reopened and a new crucifix was erected above the church.
- Mar Gerges Cemetery - Several video reports released after the recapturing of Bashliqa and Bahzani show extensive damage to and vandalism at Mar Gerges Cemetery. According to one report, ISIL militants broke into tombs located within the cemetery in an attempt to look for “money, valuables, jewelry.”¹²⁹ Individual gravesites show vandalism, with the names and religious symbols being defaced by what appears to be black paint as well as bullet holes. Some video footage shows that tombs have been opened and burials disturbed.¹³⁰

Pattern: Military activity; intentional destruction, explosives; Vandalism.

¹²² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gCExIRbwEpE>

¹²³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gCExIRbwEpE>

¹²⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FlMf7ceVWr8>

¹²⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gCExIRbwEpE>

¹²⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FlMf7ceVWr8>

¹²⁷ <http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/church-bell-is-replaced-with-the-new-one-as-christian-news-photo/624352296>

¹²⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W7YjWJ2jNrY> ; <http://thekurdishproject.org/latest-news/church-northern-iraq-reopened-two-years-control/> ;

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t_uCP0KmVUs ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iPx8Vyzf2W8>

¹²⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FlMf7ceVWr8>

¹³⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=52wcZtZi5Zo>

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.

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Shrines of Bashiqa



Video still of the destruction of the Shrine of Sheikh Babik (Yezidi/Twitter: November 10, 2016)



Video still of a Yezidi fighter examining damage to Shrine of Sheikh Babik (Mosul Channel TV; November 11, 2016)



Video still of a Yezidi fighter examining damage to Shrine of Sheikh Babik (Mosul Channel TV; November 11, 2016)



Shrine of Sheikh Mand Pasha prior to destruction (DigitalGlobe; August 21, 2014)



Shrine of Sheikh Mand Pasha post destruction (DigitalGlobe; September 28, 2014)



Yezidi Cemeteries and Shrines located in the center of Bashiqa and Bahzani prior to intentional destructions (DigitalGlobe; July 17, 2014)



Intentionally destroyed shrines and cemeteries (DigitalGlobe; November 29, 2016)



Shrine of Sheikh Bakir prior to destruction (DigitalGlobe; August 21, 2014)



Shrine of Sheikh Bakir post intentional destruction (DigitalGlobe; November 29, 2016)



Video still of damage to the Shrine of Sheikh Bakir (Ishtar TV; November 19, 2016)



Damage to the Shrine of Pir Bub (Lalish Duhok; November 12, 2016)



Damage to the Shrine of Pir Bub (Lalish Duhok; November 12, 2016)



Damage to the Shrine of Pir Bub (Lalish Duhok; November 12, 2016)



Damage to the Shrine of Pir Bub (Lalish Duhok; November 12, 2016)



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Damage to the Shrine of Pir Bub (Lalish Duhok; November 12, 2016)



Damage to the Shrine of Pir Bub (Lalish Duhok; November 12, 2016)



Damage to the Shrine of Pir Bub (Lalish Duhok; November 12, 2016)



Video still of a gate in Bashiqa that most probably surrounds a Yezidi Shrine, graffiti is present on the walls (Kurdistan24; November 10, 2016)



Shrine of Said u Mesud prior to destruction
(DigitalGlobe; August 21, 2014)



Shrine of Said u Mesud post destruction
(DigitalGlobe; September 28, 2014)



Shrine of Meleke Miran Sadiq prior to
destruction (DigitalGlobe; August 21, 2014)



Shrine of Meleke Miran Sadiq post destruction
with some of the structure still intact
(DigitalGlobe; September 28, 2014)



Shrine of Sheikh Nasr al Din prior to destruction (DigitalGlobe; August 21, 2014)



Shrine of Sheikh Nasr al Din post destruction with some of the structure still intact (DigitalGlobe; March 7, 2015)



Shrine of Shehid Abd al Aziz and Shrine of Sheikh Sharaf al Din prior to destruction (DigitalGlobe; August 21, 2014)



Shrine of Shehid Abd al Aziz and Shrine of Sheikh Sharaf al Din post destruction. The Shrine of Shehid Abd al Aziz appears to be intact (DigitalGlobe; september 28, 2014)



Video still of a door at al-Barikat Hall (NRT English; November 11, 2016)



Video still of detail of the door to Abu al-Barikat Hall (Al Arabiya; November 15, 2016)



Video still of damage at a hall in Bashiqa leading to an unidentified Yezidi shrine (NRT English; November 11, 2016)



Video still of a damaged Yezidi shrine in Bashiqa (Al Jazeera; November 28, 2016)



Video still of a damaged Yezidi shrine in Bashiqa (Kurdistan 24; November 10, 2016)



A Yezidi man inspects damage to a Yezidi shrine in Bashiqa (Reuters; November 17, 2016)



Video still of detail of the damaged Yezidi shrine seen above (Al Arabiya; November 15, 2016)



Yezidi women inspect a damaged Yezidi shrine (Daily Mail/Reuters; November 11, 2016)



Damage to a Yezidi Shrine (Yezidi/Twitter; November 15, 2016)



Damage to a Yezidi Shrine (Yezidi/Twitter: November 10, 2016)

Yezidi Cemetery



Video still of a Yezidi cemetery as it stands today (Mosul Channel TV; November 11, 2016)



Yezidi cemetery as it stands today (Lalish Duhok; November 12, 2016)



Video still of the entrance to a Yezidi cemetery (Mosul Channel TV; November 11, 2016)



Video still of a damaged Yezidi cemetery (Mosul Channel TV; November 11, 2016)



Video still of a damaged Yezidi cemetery (Mosul Channel TV; November 11, 2016)



Video still of a damaged grave inside a Yezidi cemetery (Mosul Channel TV; November 11, 2016)



Video still of a damaged grave inside a Yezidi cemetery (Mosul Channel TV; November 11, 2016)



Video still of a damaged graves inside a Yezidi cemetery (Mosul Channel TV; November 11, 2016)



Video still of damaged graves inside a Yezidi cemetery (Mosul Channel TV; November 11, 2016)

Statue of Sheikh Ezidi Mirza



Statue of Sheikh Ezidi Mirza, a Yezidi hero (d. 1651) (Ezidi Press; November 12, 2016)



Statue of Sheikh Ezidi Mirza as it stands today (Bashiqa; November 9, 2016)

Mart Shmone Church (كنيسة مارت شموني)



Video still of Mart Shmone Church in Bashiqa as it stands today (AP; November 18, 2016)



Video still of Mart Shmone Church in Bashiqa as it stands today (AP; November 18, 2016)



Video still of damage to a cross at Mart Shmone Church in Bashiqa (Kurdistan 24; November 10, 2016)



Video still of damage to Mart Shmone Church in Bashiqa (Kurdistan 24; November 10, 2016)



Damage to the interior of Mart Shmone Church in Bashiq (Stripes; November 9, 2016)



Video still of damage to an altar inside Mart Shmone Church in Bashiq (AP; November 18, 2016)



Video still of damage to the interior of Mart Shmone Church in Bashiqa (AP; November 18, 2016)



Video still of religious defacement inside Mart Shmone Church in Bashiqa (AP; November 18, 2016)



Video still of damage to the interior of Mart Shmone Church in Bashiqa (AP; November 18, 2016)



Video still of material damage at Mart Shmone Church in Bashiqa (AP; November 18, 2016)



Video still of bullet casings on the floor of Mart Shmone Church in Bashiqa (AP; November 18, 2016)



Video still of damage to an altar inside Mart Shmone Church in Bashiqa (Al Jazeera, November 21, 2016)



Video still of damage to the interior of Mart Shmone Church in Bashiqa (Al Jazeera, November 21, 2016)



Video still of damage to the interior of Mart Shmone Church in Bashiqa (Al Jazeera, November 21, 2016)



Video still of damage to the interior of Mart Shmone Church in Bashiqa (Al Jazeera, November 21, 2016)



Video still of damage inside Mart Shmone Church in Bashiqa (Ishtar TV; November 11, 2016)



Video still of material damage inside Mart Shmone Church in Bashiqa (Ishtar TV; November 11, 2016)



Video still of material damage inside Mart Shmone Church in Bashiqa (Ishtar TV; November 11, 2016)

Mart Mariam Church (كنيسة مريم العذراء)



Video still of damage to the exterior of Mart Mariam Church in Bashiqa (Mosul Channel TV; November 11, 2016)



Damage to Mart Mariam Church in Bashiqa (Mosul Channel TV; November 11, 2016)



Video still of exterior damage to Mart Mariam Church in Bashiqa (Al Jazeera; November 28, 2016)



Video still of religious defacement at Mart Mariam Church in Bashiqa (Ishtar TV; November 11, 2016)



A cross is carried near Mart Mariam Church in Bashiqa (Bas News; November 12, 2016)



A cross is raised atop Mart Mariam Church in Bashiqa (Bas News; November 12, 2016)

Mar Gerges Church (كنيسة مار كوركيس)



Video still of Mar Gerges Church in Bahzani as it appears today (Al Jazeera; November 21, 2016)



Video still of Mar Gerges Church in Bahzani as it stands today (RT; November 19, 2016)



Video still of a defaced cross at Mar Gerges Church in Bahzani (Ishtar TV; November 11, 2016)



Video still of broken cross outside Mar Gerges Church in Bahzani (Al Jazeera; November 21, 2016)



Video still of cross erected over Mar Gerges Church in Bahzani (Al Jazeera; November 21, 2016)



Video still of a Kurdish flag being raised over Mar Gerges Church in Bahzani (Kurdistan 24; November 10, 2016)



Video still of damage to the altar inside Mar Gerges Church in Bahzani (Al Jazeera; November 21, 2016)



Video still of damage to the interior of Mar Gerges Church (Al Jazeera; November 21, 2016)



Video still of religious defacement inside Mar Gerges Church in Bahzani (Al Jazeera; November 21, 2016)



Video still of a blackened cross at Mar Gerges Church in Bahzani (Sky News; November 13, 2016)



Video still of engineers clearing Mar Gerges Church in Bahzani (Sky News; November 13, 2016)



Video still of engineers inspecting the ceilings and floor of Mar Gerges Church in Bahzani for explosives (Sky News; November 13, 2016)



Video still of IEDs on the ground at Mar Gerges Church in Bahzani (Sky News; November 13, 2016)



Video still of half finished suicide belts in Mar Gerges Church in Bahzani November 13, 2016)



Video still of a tunnel dug at Mar Gerges Church in Bahzani (Ishtar TV; November 11, 2016)



Video still of an ISIL flag inside Mar Gerges Church in Bahzani (Ishtar TV; November 11, 2016)



Video still of graffiti inside Mar Gerges Church in Bahzani (Ishtar TV; November 11, 2016)



Video still of holes created in between walls by ISIL inside Mar Gerges Church in Bahzani (Ishtar TV; November 11, 2016)

Mar Gerges Cemetery



Video still of opened vaults at a Mar Gerges Cemetery (Al Jazeera; November 21, 2016)



Video still of damaged graves at Mar Gerges Cemetery (Al Jazeera; November 21, 2016)



Video still of damaged grave detail at Mar Gerges Cemetery (Al Jazeera; November 21, 2016)



Video still of damaged grave detail at Mar Gerges Cemetery (Al Jazeera; November 21, 2016)



Video still of damaged graves at Mar Gerges Cemetery (Sky News; November 13, 2016)



Video still of an opened tomb at Mar Gerges Cemetery (Sky News; November 13, 2016)



Video still of the director of Mar Gerges Church inspecting the damage to the cemetery (Sky News; November 13, 2016)

IHI 16-0047

Report Date: November 30, 2016

Site Name: Mar Behnam Monastery

Date of Incident: November 20, 2016

Location: Mar Behnam Monastery, Mosul, Ninawa Governorate, Iraq

Site Description: Syriac Catholic monastery dedicated to the martyrs Mar Behnam and Mart Sarah, children of the Assyrian King Sennacherib II of Asuristan. Mar Behnam was converted to Christianity and was baptized by Mar Mattai (St. Matthew), later bringing his sister Sarah to be cured of leprosy. Following her healing, Mart Sarah and forty companions of Mar Behnam were also baptized. Sennacherib had Mar Behnam and Mart Sarah and the forty companions killed for converting, but he later was baptized and built the monastery where Sarah was healed out of regret for their deaths. The church on the site was originally founded by the Assyrian Church of the East, but in the 7th century CE it became part of the Syriac Orthodox Church. In the 19th century CE, the complex then transitioned to a Syriac Catholic Church.

Site Date: The complex originates in the 4th century CE, with renovations in the 12th and 13th centuries CE as well as a modern restoration in 1986.

Incident Summary: New photos and video have been published of Mar Behnam Monastery after the retaking of the area by Iraqi Forces.

Incident Source and Description: Photographs and video have been released by various news sources showing the state of Mar Behnam Monastery.¹³¹ The monastery was recaptured from ISIL by Iraqi forces on November 20, 2016. The monastery and tombs of Mar Behnam and Mart Sarah were intentionally damaged by ISIL on March 19, 2015 (see **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 15-0075** in **Weekly Report 33** and an update in **Weekly Report 41**). The photographs show damage to the tombs as well as the monastery itself.

Pattern: Military Activity: Intentional Destruction.

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

¹³¹ <https://twitter.com/iraqichristian/status/801309795609440257> ; <https://twitter.com/iraqichristian/status/801310452366118912> ; <https://www.facebook.com/shlamafoundation/posts/1040518516059240> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-mosul-christians-idUSKBN13G24R> ; <http://uk.mobile.reuters.com/article/idUKKBN13G24T>

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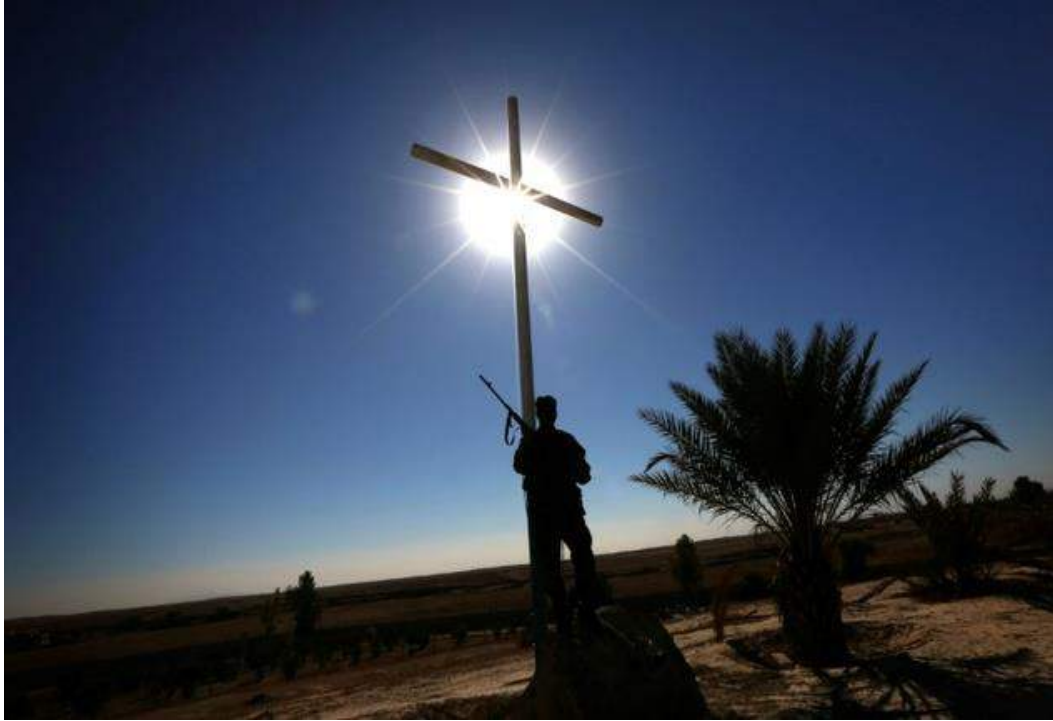
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A soldier standing guard near Mar Behnam Monastery (AFP; November 23, 2016)



Damage to outer face of Mar Behnam Monastery (Shlama Foundation; November 20, 2016)



Damage to a cross on the outer face of Mar Behnam Monastery (Reuters; November 21, 2016)



Damage to crosses on the outer face of Mar Behnam Monastery (Reuters; November 21, 2016)



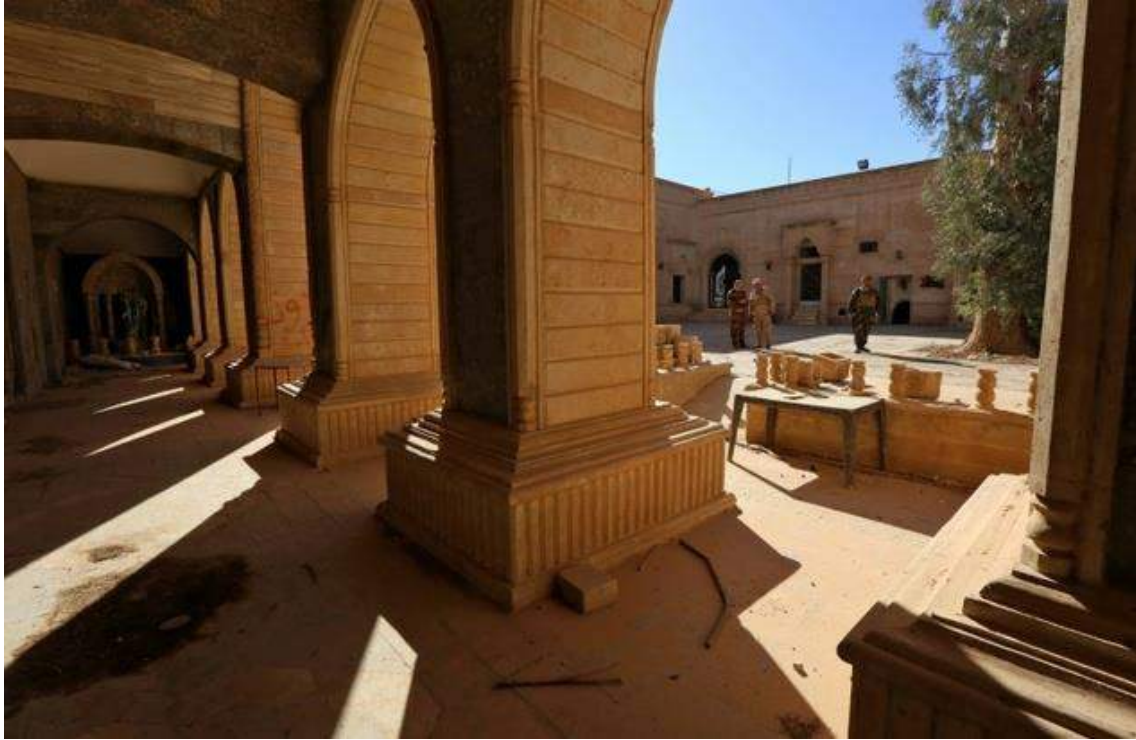
Graffiti and damage to Mar Behnam Monastery (Reuters; November 21, 2016)



Graffiti and damage to the outer face of Mar Behnam Monastery (November 21, 2016)



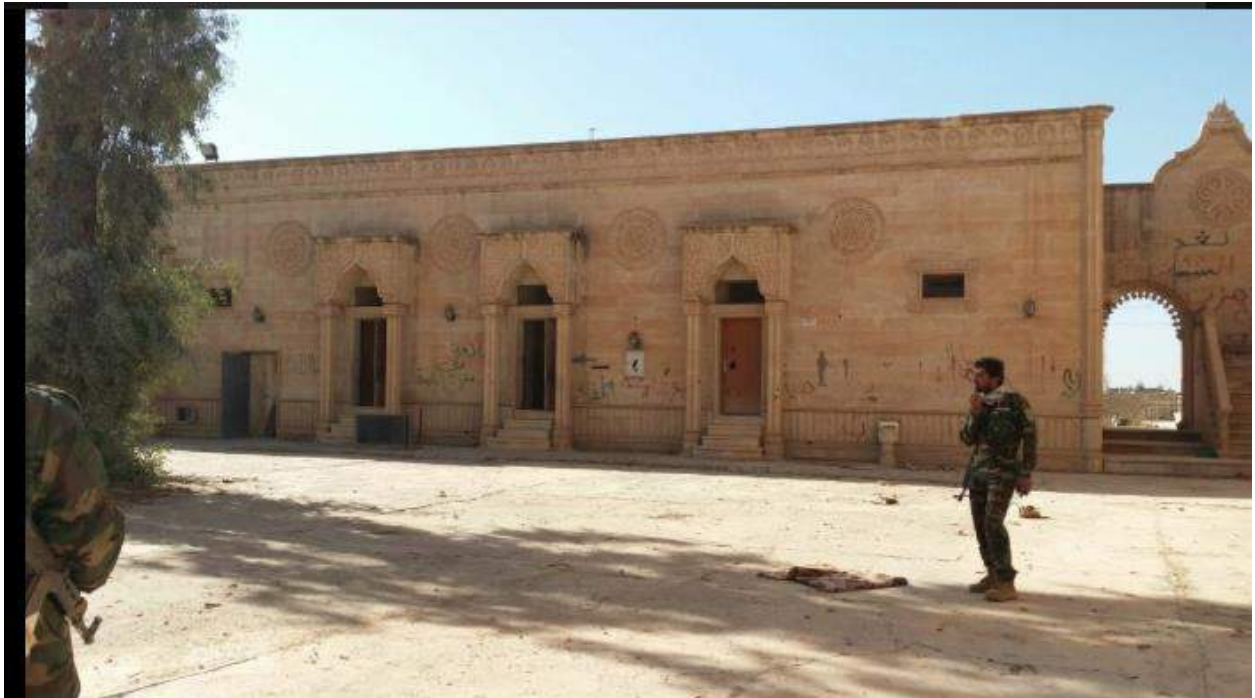
Graffiti on a wall of Mar Behnam Monastery (Reuters; November 21, 2016)



Inner courtyard of Mar Behnam Monastery (AFP; November 23, 2016)



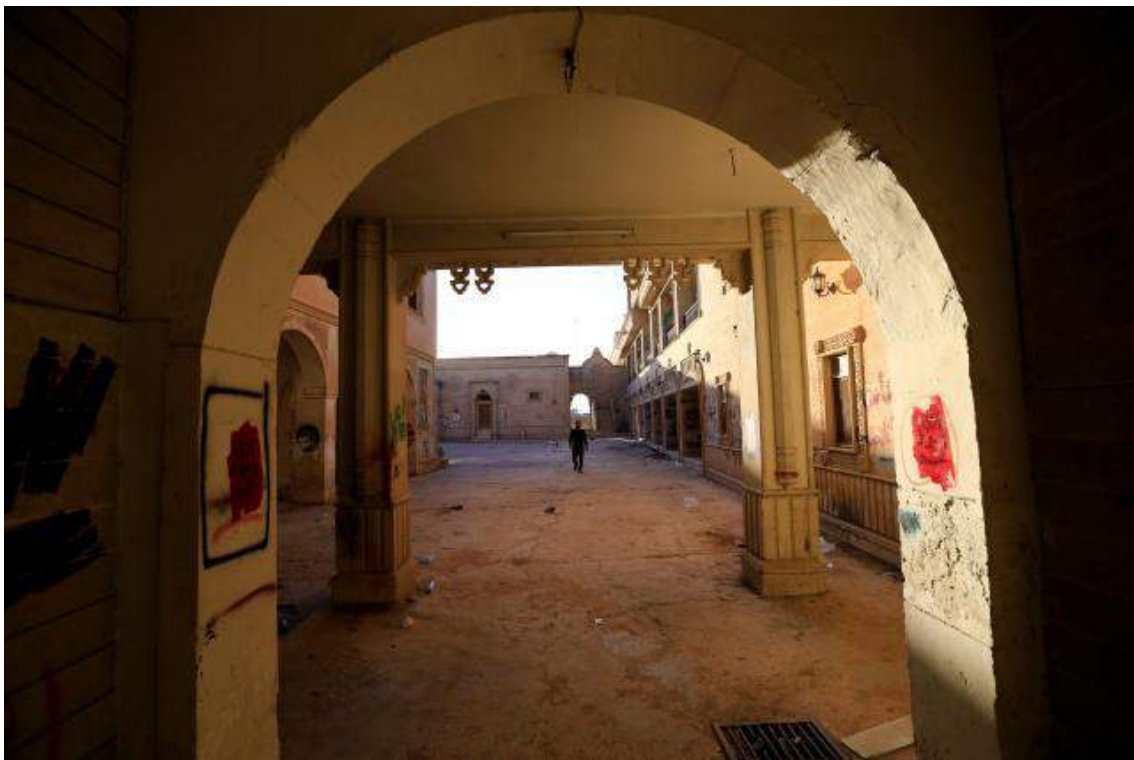
Inner courtyard of Mar Behnam Monastery from the roof (Reuters; November 21, 2016)



Inner courtyard of Mar Behnam Monastery (Haider Sumari/Twitter; November 21, 2016)



Inner courtyard of Mar Behnam Monastery with graffiti (Reuters; November 21, 2016)



Graffiti at Mar Behnam Monastery (Reuters; November 21, 2016)



Iraqi forces at Mar Behnam Monastery (Haider Sumari/Twitter; November 21, 2016)



Damage at Mar Behnam Monastery (Reuters; November 21, 2016)



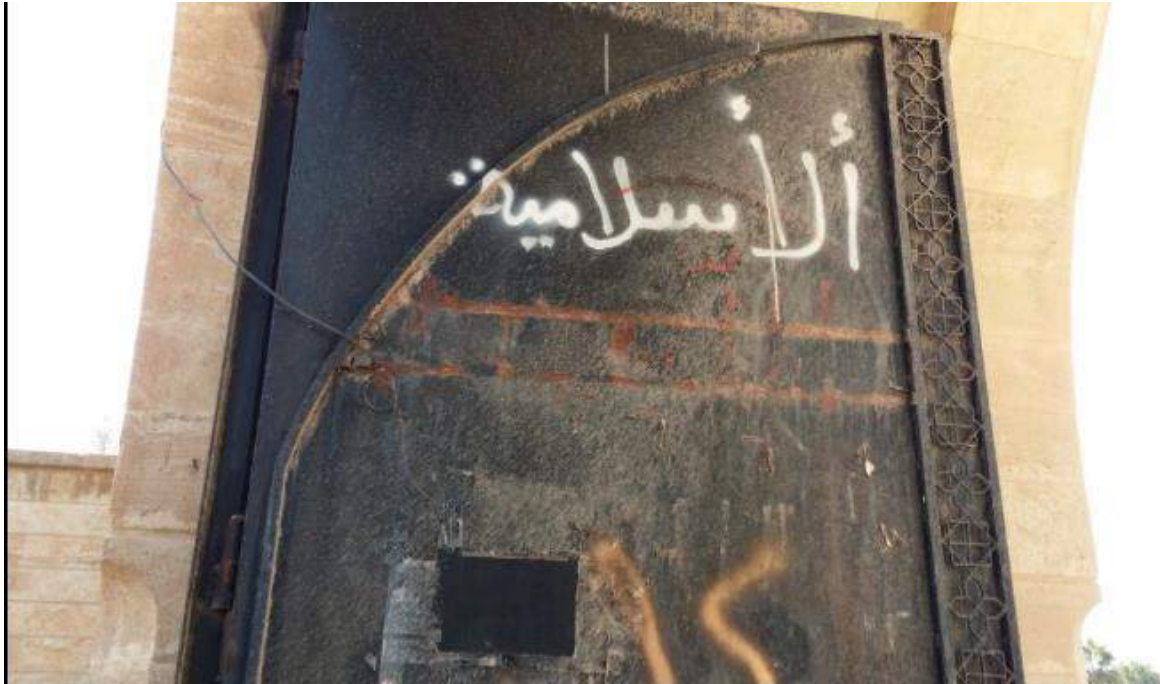
Damage at Mar Behnam Monastery (Christians of Iraq/Twitter; November 23, 2016)



A sentry stands guard on top of Mar Behnam Monastery (Reuters; November 21, 2016)



Iraqi forces on top of Mar Behnam Monastery (Reuters; November 21, 2016)



Graffiti on a door to Mar Behnam Monastery (Haider Sumari/Twitter; November 21, 2016)



Damage and graffiti on the inside of Mar Behnam Monastery (Reuters; November 21, 2016)



Damage and graffiti on the inside of Mar Behnam Monastery (Reuters; November 21, 2016)



Damage and graffiti on the inside of Mar Behnam Monastery (Reuters; November 21, 2016)



A relief of Mart Sarah being baptized by Mar Mattai before and after damage (Christians of Iraq/Twitter; November 23, 2016)



A soldier picking through the rubble of Mar Behnam and Mart Sarah's tombs (Max Delany/Twitter; November 23, 2016)



Collapsed roof of the Mar Behnam and Mart Sarah's Tombs (Christians of Iraq/Twitter; November 23, 2016)



Collapse of the roof of Mar Behnam and Mart Sarah's Tombs (Christians of Iraq/Twitter; November 23, 2016)