

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

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Executive Summary

During the reporting period, the primary heritage concern in the conflict zone of Syria and northern Iraq continued to be the elevated risk of deliberate heritage destruction by ISIL at the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Palmyra. Since ISIL's capture of Tadmor on May 20, 2015, cultural assets in this region have been under high risk of intentional destruction and looting as well as continued combat damage. ISIL leadership in Tadmor has claimed that the organization will engage in such destructions, as well as loot archaeological sites in the area, actions reminiscent of recent war crimes at the Mosul Museum, Hatra, Nineveh, and Nimrud in Iraq. Reports on combat damage also continued to be posted by in-country sources in Syria. Patterns evinced in previous months continued with Aleppo, Bosra, and Jisr al-Shughour sustaining moderate to severe damage.

In Iraq, in-country and media sources provided information on several severe damage incidents, including ISIL intentional destruction at the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Assur (Qal'at Sherqat), the religious capital of Assyria and one of its political capitals, as well as destructions of religious heritage in Mosul and Fallujah. ISIL strategy in Syria and Iraq continues to center on conducting attacks on multiple fronts to disperse opposing forces. ISIL offensives also targeted the few remaining border crossings controlled by SARG and the Syrian Opposition. As ISIL tightens its grip on Syria, we predict increased emphasis on systematic and organized looting and antiquities trafficking, as evidenced by the opening of antiquities offices in some ISIL controlled areas in northern Syria and the issuing of permits to loot archaeological sites.

The international cultural heritage community continues to coordinate joint actions against ISIL and other extremist groups in terms of cultural property protection, specifically implementing measures to curb antiquities trafficking, to reduce market space for illicit antiquities sales, and to raise public awareness of the importance of cultural property protection for conflict resolution, sustaining peace initiatives, humanitarian efforts, counter-terrorism measures, and global security. The U.S. Department of State and UNESCO held a Stakeholders Roundtable entitled *Despoiled and Destroyed: Ancient Civilizations of Iraq and Syria* in Paris at UNESCO Headquarters on June 1, 2015, which was attended by U.S. Department of State Under Secretary Richard Stengel (Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs), U.S. Department of State Assistant Secretary Evan Ryan (Educational and Cultural Affairs), UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova, and UNESCO Assistant Director-General

¹ This report is based on research conducted by the "Syria Preservation Initiative: Planning for Safeguarding Heritage Sites in Syria." 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.

for Culture Alfredo Perez de Armiñan. UNESCO used this opportunity to promote further its important #UNITE4HERITAGE initiative <http://www.unite4heritage.org>. On the same day, the International Council of Museums (ICOM) announced the re-launch of the Emergency Red List of Iraqi Cultural Objects at Risk 2015 Update <http://icom.museum/resources/red-lists-database/red-list/iraq/> at the Louvre.

Key Points

- On June 1, 2015, the U.S. House 114th Congress (2015–2016) passed/agreed to by voice vote H.R. 1493 Protect and Preserve International Cultural Property Act. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/1493> <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/1493/text> (full text)
- On June 1, 2015, the U.S. Department of State and UNESCO held a Stakeholders Roundtable entitled *Despoiled and Destroyed: Ancient Civilizations of Iraq and Syria* in Paris at UNESCO Headquarters.
- On June 1, 2015, the International Council of Museums (ICOM) announced the re-launch of the Emergency Red List of Iraqi Cultural Objects at Risk 2015 Update at the Louvre. <http://icom.museum/resources/red-lists-database/red-list/iraq/>
- On May 28, 2015, reports surfaced of ISIL intentional destructions at the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Ashur (Qal'at Sherqat) in Iraq (See ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 15-0082). (pp. 65–66)
- On May 20, 2015, ISIL captured the Syrian city of Tadmor and the immediately adjacent UNESCO World Heritage Site of Palmyra, jeopardizing the safety and welfare of thousands of Syrians and placing an alarming number of cultural assets at high risk of destruction and looting (See ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0086 Update). (pp. 18–37)
- Reports on severe combat damage continued to emerge for the main theaters of military action in Syria (See ASOR CHI Incident Reports SHI 15-0089–93) and Iraq (See ASOR CHI Incident Reports IHI 15-0081 and 0082). (pp. 39–63, 64–66)

Heritage Timeline

June 2, 2015

National Geographic published an article titled “**Baghdad’s Reopened Museum Battles Bombs, Sparse Attendance**” (by Peter Schwartzstein). <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2015/06/150602-baghdad-iraq-national-museum-reopens/>

- The DGAM posted a series of images showing damage to the **Aleppo Citadel** in the **UNESCO World Heritage Site Ancient City of Aleppo**. ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0093. <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1717>

June 1, 2015

The U.S. House 114th Congress (2015–2016) passed/agreed to by voice vote H.R. 1493 Protect and Preserve International Cultural Property Act

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/1493>
with full text available here

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/1493/text>

- Mosul Eye posted photographs on Facebook showing the **Syriac Orthodox Archdiocese in Mosul topped with an ISIL flag**. The group claims that the building is being used as a “store to sell all stolen and looted goods from the Christians and the Yazidies, later it transferred it to an armory depot and one of the Treasury bureau offices.”
https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=739792359475602&id=552514844870022
- The program has been posted for a workshop on “**Strategies for Restoration and Reconstruction: Museums, Heritage Sites and Archaeological Parks in Post-War Countries**” at the *61st Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale* on June 25. The workshop, which will focus on the situation in Syria and Northern Iraq, has been organized by **shirīn** and the **Institute of Archaeological Sciences of the University of Bern**.
<http://rai.unibe.ch/gb/strategies-for-restoration-and-reconstruction/>
- *Al Monitor* published an article titled “**Congress deals blow to IS looting in Syria**” (by Julian Pecquet).
<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/06/congress-illegal-isis-looting-syria-artifacts.html#>
- *The Independent* published an article titled “**There’s method in the madness of Isis’s cultural vandalism**” (by Robert Fisk).
<http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/theres-method-in-the-madness-of-isis-cultural-vandalism-10287718.html>
- *France 24* posted an article titled “**Why have IS militants spared ancient Palmyra?**” (by France 24).
<http://www.france24.com/en/20150601-syria-islamic-state-isis-ancient-palmyra-site-unesco-pr>

May 31, 2015

APSA posted a series of images and a video documenting the destruction of the **al-Sawas Mosque** in the Jub al-Quba neighborhood of the **UNESCO World Heritage Site Ancient City of Aleppo** (Aleppo Governorate, Syria) by regime aerial bombardments. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0090**.
<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.1364874456952995.1073741903.324869057620212&type=1>

https://youtu.be/TYgcw_r2xR4

May 30, 2015

The Telegraph published an article titled “**Islamic State sets up 'ministry of antiquities' to reap the profits of pillaging**” (by Louisa Loveluck).
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/islamic-state/11640670/Islamic-State-sets-up-ministry-of-antiquities-to-reap-the-profits-of-pillaging.html>

- Images documenting the destruction of an **unidentified church** in the Khabur area of **Hasakah Governorate** were posted to Twitter. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0092**.
<https://twitter.com/IraqiSuryani/status/604756916560994304>

May 29, 2015

MEDMAK published a blog post titled “**Syria: Europeans block it from UN culture protection measure.**”
<https://medmakblog.wordpress.com/2015/05/29/syria-europeans-block-it-from-un-culture-protection-measure/>

- *The Washington Post* published an article titled “**Why the Islamic State’s annihilation of ancient cultures matters**” (by Michael Danti). In the article, **Michael Danti** (Academic Director, ASOR Cultural Heritage Initiatives) discusses ISIL’s recent capture of the site of Palmyra and responds to those who suggest that cultural heritage experts have been placing “ancient stones” ahead of human lives.
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2015/05/29/the-islamic-states-threat-to-cultural-heritage>
- The *U.S. Department of State* posted a press release titled “**Under Secretary Richard Stengel Travel to Paris.**” The press release describes a trip by **Richard Stengel** (Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs) and **Evan Ryan** (Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs) to Paris on June 1–3 to meet with international partners in order to discuss the **trafficking of looted antiquities**. They will also participate in a press conference announcing the release of a new **Emergency Red List of Iraqi Cultural Objects at Risk**.
<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/05/243004.htm#.VWnR9nRM2So.twitter>

- *The New York Times* published an article titled “**Selling Private Collection of Artifacts Requires Special Care**” (by Paul Sullivan). <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/30/your-money/selling-private-collection-of-artifacts-requires-special-care.html>
- May 28, 2015 *BBC News* published an article titled “**Palmyra: IS ‘kills 20 men’ at ancient theatre.**” <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32920614>
- *Reuters* published an article titled “**Islamic State photos purport to show unharmed Palmyra ruins.**” <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/05/28/us-mideast-crisis-syria-idUSKBN00D0YU20150528>
- *Science* published an article titled “**In Syria, Islamic State group apparently spares Palmyra’s stunning ruins – for now**” (by Zach Zorich). The article includes commentary by **Michael Danti** (Academic Director, ASOR Cultural Heritage Initiatives) about the current situation at the site of Palmyra and ISIL’s broader campaign of cultural cleansing. <http://news.sciencemag.org/archaeology/2015/05/syria-isis-apparently-s pares-palmyra-s-stunning-ruins-now>
- *The New York Times* published an article titled “**U.N. Resolves to Combat Plundering of Antiquities by ISIS**” (by Rick Gladstone). <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/29/world/middleeast/un-resolves-to-combat-plundering-of-antiquities-by-isis.html>
- *Foreign Policy* published an article titled “**A How-To Guide To Buying Artifacts Looted by the Islamic State**” (by David Francis). <http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/05/28/a-how-to-guide-to-buying-artifacts-looted-by-the-islamic-state/>
- On the Protect Syrian Archaeology Facebook page, **APSA** posted images of the **UNESCO World Heritage Site Ancient City of Aleppo** (Aleppo Governorate, Syria), showing the “bombardment of the Bab al-Na[s]r by the Syrian military.” **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0089.** <https://www.facebook.com/apsa2011/photos/a.1363112233795884.1073741902.324869057620212/1363112250462549/?type=1>
<https://www.facebook.com/apsa2011/photos/a.1363112233795884.1073741902.324869057620212/1363112247129216/?type=1&theater>

- *World Archaeology* published an article titled “**Prophet and profit.**” The article includes a report by **Michael Danti** (Academic Director, ASOR Cultural Heritage Initiatives) and **John MacGinnis** (University of Cambridge) on ISIL’s campaign of looting and destruction in Syria and Iraq, a report by **Tina Greenfield** (University of Manitoba) on the Assyrian palaces in Iraq, and a statement by **Robert Jenrick** (Member of Parliament) on the role that governments can play. <http://www.world-archaeology.com/world/asia/iraq/prophet-and-profit.htm>
 - *The International Business Times* published an article titled “**Iraq: Isis ‘blows up Unesco world heritage Assyrian site of Ashur’ near Tikrit**” (by Gianluca Mezzofiore and Arij Limam). <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/isis-blows-unesco-world-heritage-assyrian-site-ashur-near-tikrit-1503367>
 - *VICE News* published an article titled “**Ancient Sites in Palmyra Unharmed, Islamic State Shows in Photo Essay**” (by VICE News). <https://news.vice.com/article/ancient-sites-in-palmyra-unharmed-islamic-state-shows-in-photo-essay>
 - *The International Business Times* published an article titled “**Isis in Palmyra: Syrian antiquities director denies reports of Islamic State destruction**” (by Gianluca Mezzofiore). <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/isis-palmyra-syrian-antiquities-director-denies-reports-islamic-state-destruction-1503290>
 - The **Iraqi Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities** published a press release announcing that **security forces seized 25 artifacts** from antiquities traffickers. <http://www.mta.gov.iq/index.php?name=News&file=article&sid=145>
- May 27, 2015
- FOX News* published an article titled “**Archaeology’s victims of war**” (by Peter Suci). <http://www.foxnews.com/science/2015/05/27/archaeologys-victims-war/>
- On the Protect Syrian Archaeology Facebook page, **APSA** published **photos that were originally published online by ISIL, showing various architectural monuments within the site of Palmyra as well as the site museum.** The photos include images of the Roman amphitheater, shown with a black ISIL flag posted atop the monument. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0086 Update.** <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.1362975580476216.1073741901.324869057620212&type=1>

- *The Washington Post* published an article titled “**Islamic State says ‘historical monuments’ of Palmyra are safe – except for the statues**” (by Adam Taylor).
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2015/05/27/islamic-state-says-historical-monuments-of-palmyra-are-safe-except-for-the-statues>
 - The *International Business Times* published an article titled “**Syria: Isis Palmyra demolition has begun with ancient God Lion statue destroyed**” (by Nour al-Rafee). The DGAM later (May 29, 2015) reported that they had no confirmation of the destruction of this statue. *ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0086 Update*.
<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/syria-isis-palmyra-demolition-has-begun-ancient-god-lion-statue-destroyed-1503192>
 - *The Guardian* published an article titled “**Syria: Isis releases footage of Palmyra ruins intact and ‘will not destroy them’.**” (by Kareem Shaheen).
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/may/27/isis-releases-footage-of-palmyra-ruins-intact>
 - The *International Business Times* published an article titled “**Palmyra: Isis ‘vows to destroy statues’ but preserve ruins in radio statement**” (by Gianluca Mezzofiore).
<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/palmyra-isis-vows-destroy-statues-preserve-ruins-radio-statement-1503165>
 - The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported that the “**Roman archaeological theater in the city of Palmyra**” has been used by ISIL for executions of captured Shiite and Alawite regime soldiers and militiamen. These reports have not been confirmed.
<http://www.syriahr.com/en/2015/05/for-the-first-time-the-roman-archaeological-theater-witnesses-executions-carried-out-by-isis-against-20-members-of-the-regime-forces-and-allied-militiamen/>
- May 26, 2015
- In an audio clip released on Twitter, a purported **ISIL** representative made a **statement** claiming that the group will “pulverize statues that the miscreants used to pray for” but will not bulldoze other historical monuments at the **UNESCO World Heritage Site of Palmyra**.
<https://twitter.com/antissa/status/603352338275766273>
- **APSA** posted a YouTube video (attributed to ISIL) showing the archaeological remains that are now under ISIL control at the **UNESCO World Heritage Site of Palmyra** (Homs Governorate, Syria). *ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0086 Update*.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OHCACFD0pOY&feature=youtu.be>

- May 25, 2015 *The New York Review of Books* published a blog post titled “**The Venice of the Sands in Peril**” (by G. W. Bowersock).
<http://www.nybooks.com/blogs/nyrblog/2015/may/25/palmyra-is-is-arab-tragedy/>
- May 24, 2015 *RCI* posted an audio clip and a brief summary of an interview with **Clemens Reichel** (University of Toronto; Royal Ontario Museum) titled “**Palmyra a tragic loss to the world: ROM archaeologist**” (by Carmel Kilkenny).
<http://www.rcinet.ca/en/2015/05/24/palmyra-a-tragic-loss-to-the-world-rom-archaeologist/>
- May 23, 2015 *The New York Times* published an article titled “**The Ancient Ruins Terror Can’t Destroy**” (by Patrick Symmes).
<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/24/opinion/sunday/the-ancient-ruins-terror-cant-destroy.html>
- *BBC News* published an article titled “**Palmyra: Islamic State locks down ancient city’s museum.**”
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32859347>
 - *CTV News* published an article titled “**Palmyra artifacts are safe, despite ISIS museum break-in, Syrian official says**” (by Albert Aji and Sarah El Deeb, AP).
<http://www.ctvnews.ca/world/palmyra-artifacts-are-safe-despite-isis-museum-break-in-syrian-official-says-1.2387513>
 - *The Middle East Eye* published an article titled “**IS enters Palmyra museum: Syria antiquities chief.**”
<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/enters-palmyra-museum-syria-antiquities-chief-1695883387>
 - *The Guardian* published an article titled “**Religious teaching that drives Isis to threaten the ancient ruins of Palmyra**” (by Hassan Hassan).
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/may/24/palmyra-syria-isis-destruction-of-treasures-feared>
 - The Facebook page “Mosul Eye” posted pictures of defaced modern concrete decorations of *lamassu* from the Almutanna and Yarmook bridge in Mosul.
https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=735465819908256&id=552514844870022

May 22, 2015

The Globe and Mail published an article titled “**World Heritage sites at Palmyra at risk as ISIS advances agenda**” (by Patrick Martin).
<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/ancient-sites-at-risk-as-isis-advances/article24573636/>

- *CBC News* posted a video clip of an interview with **Clemens Reichel** (University of Toronto; Royal Ontario Museum) titled “**Palmyra Ruins: Cultural Significance.**”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=II4YvjpMWn0&feature=youtu.be>
- *USA Today* published an article titled “**Palmyra may be off limits to U.S. airstrikes**” (by Tom Vanden Brook).
<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2015/05/22/isil-palmyra/27797491/>
- *WBEZ's Worldview* aired an interview with **Patty Gerstenblith** (Director of the Center for Art, Museum, and Cultural Heritage Law, Depaul University) and **McGuire Gibson** (Professor of Mesopotamian Archaeology, Oriental Institute, University of Chicago) titled “**Ancient Syrian city threatened by ISIS.**”
<https://soundcloud.com/wbez-worldview/ancient-city-of-palmyra-among>
- *The Financial Times* published an article titled “**Is it time to rethink our ideas about preserving world heritage?**” (by Jonathan Foyle).
<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2/545458d4-fae9-11e4-9aed-00144feab7de.html>
- *Le Figaro* published an article titled “**Du tombeau de Jonas à la cité d'Hatra : les destructions de Daech**” (by Eugénie Bastié).
<http://www.lefigaro.fr/international/2015/05/22/01003-20150522ARTFIG00134-du-tombeau-de-jonas-a-la-cite-d-hatra-les-destructi- ons-de-l-etat-islamique.php>
- *Business Insider UK* published an article titled “**ISIS is about to make A LOT of money off 'the archaeological equivalent of a beheading'**” (by Pamela Engel).
<http://uk.businessinsider.com/isis-will-make-money-from-antiquities-in-palmyra-syria-2015-5>
- *The Guardian* published an article titled “**Isis's murderous rampage continues. So why is it the lost artefacts that make the headlines?**” (by Deborah Orr).
<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/may/22/isis-murderous-rampage-palmyra>

May 21, 2015

Le Monde published the transcript of an interview with **Michel Al-Maqdissi** (Musée du Louvre) titled “**Le perte de Palmyre, une catastrophe à la fois culturelle et humanitaire.**”
http://www.lemonde.fr/arts/article/2015/05/21/la-perte-de-palmyre-une-catastrophe-a-la-fois-culturelle-et-humanitaire_4638189_1655012.html

- *CNN* published an article titled “**Resident: ISIS is ‘everywhere,’ in full control of ancient Syrian city of Palmyra**” (by Greg Botelho and Khushbu Shah).
<http://www.cnn.com/2015/05/21/middleeast/isis-syria-iraq/index.html>
- *The Daily Beast* published an article titled “**Inside Palmyra, the Ancient City ISIS Just Sacked**” (by Michael Weiss).
<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/05/21/inside-palmyra-the-ancient-city-isis-just-sacked.html>
- *The Independent* published an article titled “**Remembering Palmyra: World mourns fall of ancient city by sharing photos and memories**” (by Heather Saul).
<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/remembering-palmyra-world-mourns-fall-of-ancient-city-by-sharing-photos-and-memories-10267502.html>
- *The LA Times* published an article titled “**Fabled ruins, artifacts of Palmyra, Syria, fall into hands of Islamic State**” (by Nabih Bulos and Patrick J. McDonnell).
<http://www.latimes.com/world/middleeast/la-fg-palmyra-islamic-state-syria-20150521-story.html>
- *The LA Times* published an article titled “**The city that makes Rome blush: 5 reasons why Palmyra's ruins are so important**” (by Carolina A. Miranda).
<http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/miranda/la-et-cam-five-reasons-why-palmyra-matters-as-archaeological-ruins-site-20150520-column.html>
- *The National* published an article titled “**Our shared values are lost amid the ruins of Palmyra**” (by Michael Young).
<http://www.thenational.ae/opinion/comment/our-shared-values-are-lost-amid-the-ruins-of-palmyra>
- *CNN* posted a televised interview with **Katharyn Hanson** (Penn Cultural Heritage Center).
<http://www.cnn.com/videos/tv/2015/05/21/lead-intv-hanson-isis-destroy-art.cnn>

- *BBC News* published an article titled “**Rescuing Palmyra: History’s lesson in how to save artefacts**” (by Roland Hughes).
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32824379>
- *Buzzfeed* published an article titled “**Smugglers Say Palmyra’s Artifacts Will Be ‘Good Business’**” (by Munzer al-Awad and Mike Giglio).
<http://www.buzzfeed.com/munzeralawad/smugglers-say-syrias-palmyras-artifacts-will-be-good-busines>
- Images posted on Twitter documented the apparent destruction of the **Tomb of Sheikh Sayyedna al-Khudr** in **Jisr al-Shughour** (Idlib Governorate, Syria). *ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0091*.
https://twitter.com/Terror_Monitor/status/601328882256490496
https://twitter.com/joshua_landis/status/604612082026225665
- The Facebook page “Mosul Eye” posted pictures of schoolbooks burned by ISIL militants in the Alkhousar neighborhood on the eastern bank of Mosul.
https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=734801576641347&id=552514844870022

May 20, 2015

The modern city of **Palmyra/Tadmor** and the **UNESCO World Heritage Site of Palmyra** were seized by ISIL from Syrian regime forces.

- *BBC News* published an article titled “**Islamic State ‘seizes part of Syria’s Palmyra.’**”
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32807858>
- *The Telegraph* published an article titled “**Ancient statues removed from Palmyra as Isil ‘infiltrates’ the city**” (by Andrew Marszal and Raziye Akkoc).
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/islamic-state/11617909/Isil-seizes-parts-of-ancient-Syrian-city-of-Palmyra-live.html>
- *BBC News* published a Breaking News report titled “**IS ‘in control’ of Syria’s Palmyra.**”
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32820857>
- *The New York Times* published an article titled “**ISIS Fighters Seize Control of Syrian City of Palmyra, and Ancient Ruins**” (by Anne Barnard and Hwaida Saad).
<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/21/world/middleeast/syria-isis-fighters-enter-ancient-city-of-palmyra.html>

- *The Daily Star (Lebanon)* published an article titled “**UNESCO chief 'deeply concerned' about Palmyra, urges cease-fire.**”
<https://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2015/May-20/298706-unesco-chief-deeply-concerned-about-palmyra-urges-cessate-fire.ashx>
 - *Hyperallergic* published a blog post titled “**Open Source Software to Catalogue Cultural Heritage Before a Crisis**” (by Allison Meier).
<http://hyperallergic.com/207495/open-source-software-to-catalogue-cultural-heritage-before-a-crisis/>
- May 19, 2015
- PBS Newshour* posted a story titled “**How war has robbed Syria of its history.**”
<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/war-robbed-syria-history/>
- *DNA India* published an article titled “**Iraq writes to Mumbai police about stolen idols**” (by Divyesh Nair)
<http://www.dnaindia.com/mumbai/report-iraq-writes-to-mumbai-police-about-stolen-idols-2087054>
 - The NYU School of Professional Studies is hosting a symposium titled “**Art Crime and Cultural Heritage: Fakes, Forgeries, and Looted and Stolen Art**” on June 4–6 at the NYU Law School.
<http://www.scps.nyu.edu/academics/departments/humanities-arts-and-writing/events/special-events.html>
 - **APSA** posted a Youtube video (dated May 7, 2015) showing damage to the interior of the **Abi al-Fida madrasa in Bosra** (Daraa Governorate, Syria). **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0088.**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wRj3tt31D3o>
- May 18, 2015
- The *London Evening Standard* published an article titled “**London must lead battle to save ancient sites from destruction by ISIS**” (by Benedict Moore-Bridger and Anna Dubuis).
<http://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/london-must-lead-battle-to-save-ancient-sites-from-destruction-by-isis-10258692.html>
- May 11, 2015
- The Chronicle of Philanthropy* published an article titled “**Cultural Preservation in Disasters, War Zones Presents Big Challenges**” (by Eden Stiffman).
<https://philanthropy.com/article/Cultural-Preservation-in/230055>
- May 2015
- UNESCO* published an infographic detailing the activities undertaken during the first year of their **Emergency Safeguarding of the Syrian Cultural Heritage** project.
http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CLT/pdf/UNESCO_Safeguarding_Syrian_Cultural_Heritage.pdf

- ISIL released the 9th issue of its magazine *Dabiq*, titled “They Plot and Allah Plots.”

Military and Political Context

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

1. Palmyra Area, Homs Governorate
 - On May 20, ISIL seized complete control of Palmyra – including, reportedly, the ancient ruins southwest of the town – from the Syrian government after government troops left the town. In the following days, while ISIL fighters reportedly executed a large number of government troops and loyalists still in Palmyra, the Syrian government conducted a series of airstrikes in and around the town.² In addition, the U.S. Department of Defense announced that coalition aircraft attacked an ISIL position near Palmyra and destroyed six anti-aircraft artillery systems as well as an artillery piece; this event marks the first coalition strike around Palmyra.³
 - On May 30, ISIL blew up Palmyra’s prison, which was infamous for holding political prisoners; all prisoners had reportedly been relocated before ISIL’s takeover of the city.⁴ ISIL has remained firmly in control of Palmyra since May 20.
2. Al-Tanf Border Crossing, Homs Governorate
 - During the reporting period, ISIL reportedly seized control of the al-Tanf border crossing, the last crossing with Iraq under Syrian government control, from

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<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/21/world/middleeast/syria-isis-fighters-enter-ancient-city-of-palmyra.html>;

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/05/20/us-mideast-crisis-syria-northeast-idUSKBN0050PB20150520>; AP, <http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2015/05/20/world/middleeast/ap-ml-islamic-state.html>;

http://www.lemonde.fr/proche-orient/article/2015/05/20/l-ei-entre-a-nouveau-dans-palmyre_4637005_3218.html#xtor=AL-32280270; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32820857>;

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/05/21/mideast-crisis-syria-idUSKBN0060L120150521>;

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/may/20/syrian-city-of-palmyra-falls-under-control-of-isis>; AP,

<http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2015/05/22/world/middleeast/ap-ml-islamic-state.html>;

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/05/23/us-mideast-crisis-syria-palmyra-idUSKBN00808H20150523>;

AFP, <http://news.yahoo.com/syria-regime-launches-15-air-raids-around-palmyra-080847439.html>;

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/05/25/mideast-crisis-idUSKBN00A0MJ20150525>;

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/05/25/us-mideast-crisis-syria-idUSKBN00A0CD20150525>;

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/05/25/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-idUSKBN00908J20150525>

³ AP,

<http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/syrian-official-islamic-state-militants-palmyras-museum-31252062>

⁴ AFP,

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2015/05/30/ISIS-razes-notorious-Syria-regime-jail-in-Palmyra-Monitor.html>;

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/isis-destroys-tadmur-prison-site-of-assad-regime-atrocities-1.3094338>;

<http://www.syriahr.com/en/2015/05/islamic-state-detonates-the-prison-of-tadmor/>

government forces; Iraqi government officials said that Iraqi security forces withdrew from the Iraqi al-Waleed side of the crossing in al Anbar Governorate.⁵

3. Abd al-Aziz Mountain, Hasakah Governorate
 - During the reporting period, Kurdish YPG forces, supported by allied forces and several coalition airstrikes, took control of Abd al-Aziz Mountain about 20 miles to the east of the city of Hasakah.⁶
4. Northwestern Hasakah Governorate
 - During the reporting period, Kurdish YPG fighters, supported by several coalition airstrikes, advanced against ISIL as they approached the border of Raqqa Governorate.⁷
5. Kweiris Airbase Area, Aleppo Governorate
 - On May 24, a Syrian government helicopter crashed; while ISIL supporters and the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights asserted that ISIL had shot down the aircraft, Syrian state media claimed that the helicopter had crashed due to technical problems.⁸
6. Kobani Area, Aleppo Governorate
 - During the reporting period, a number of coalition airstrikes hit ISIL positions around Kobani.⁹
7. Azaz Area, Aleppo Governorate
 - On May 31, ISIL launched an offensive against rebels in which the group approached the strategic town of Azaz and the neighboring Bab al-Salam border crossing with Turkey, taking control of villages along the way. Azaz sits on the main highway from the city of Aleppo to Turkey, and control of Azaz by ISIL would sever Aleppo rebels' supply lines from Turkey, thus dealing them a hard blow.¹⁰

⁵ <http://www.france24.com/en/20150522-islamic-state-isis-seizes-last-syria-border-post-iraq-palmyra>;
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32840508>;

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/05/21/us-mideast-crisis-syria-iraq-idUSKBN0062IA20150521>
⁶ <http://www.syriahr.com/en/2015/05/ypg-and-allied-forces-seize-wide-areas-in-abdul-aziz-mountain/>; J. Cafarella, "Syria Situation Report: May 14-20, 2015,"

<http://iswsyria.blogspot.com/2015/05/syria-situation-report-may-14-20-2015.html>;
http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2014/0814_iraq/Airstrikes6.html

⁷ AP,

<http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2015/05/28/world/middleeast/ap-ml-islamic-state-kurdish-gains.html>;
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32898914>;
<http://www.syriahr.com/en/2015/05/after-taking-control-on-4000-square-km-the-ypg-advances-again-in-ras-al-ein-countryside/>; http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2014/0814_iraq/Airstrikes6.html

⁸ AFP,

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2015/05/24/Syria-regime-helicopter-comes-down-in-Aleppo-province.html>;
<http://www.syriahr.com/en/2015/05/is-shots-down-a-helicopter-in-kweres-military-airport/>

⁹ http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2014/0814_iraq/Airstrikes6.html;
http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2014/0814_iraq/Airstrikes6.html

¹⁰

http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/islamic-state-militants-open-major-new-offensive-in-aleppo/2015/06/01/9b834f64-085c-11e5-951e-8e15090d64ae_story.html;
<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/05/31/us-mideast-crisis-syria-turkey-idUSKBN00G0HL20150531>;

8. Al-Bab, Aleppo Governorate
 - During the reporting period, Syrian government helicopters dropped barrel bombs on the ISIL-held town of al-Bab, killing dozens of civilians.¹¹
9. Mastouma Base, Idlib Governorate
 - On May 19, an alliance of Islamist rebel groups seized the Mastouma army base from the Syrian government.¹²
10. Ariha, Idlib Governorate
 - On May 28, an Islamist rebel alliance called al-Fatah Army, of which al-Qaeda affiliated al-Nusra Front is a major player, seized Ariha, the last city in Idlib Governorate under government control; clashes continued in the following days.¹³ With Ariha and Jisr al-Shughour under the control of al-Fatah Army, the rebel alliance will be able to more easily attack neighboring Lattakia Governorate, the bedrock of President Assad's support.

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

1. Ramadi Area, Al Anbar Governorate
 - On May 23, after a few days of clashes in areas to the east of Ramadi, an Iraqi government-allied offensive dominated by Shiite Popular Mobilization forces and supported by several coalition airstrikes was launched to retake Ramadi; as part of the offensive, the anti-ISIL force retook Khalidiya and surrounding towns a few miles east of Ramadi.¹⁴

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/islamic-state-advances-further-into-syrias-aleppo-province-1433164287>;
<http://www.syriahr.com/en/2015/05/is-takes-control-on-a-village-northeast-of-aleppo/>

¹¹

http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/syria-airstrikes-kill-scores-amid-government-setbacks/2015/05/30/45e9f01a-06d8-11e5-93f4-f24d4af7f97d_story.html;
<http://www.syriahr.com/en/2015/05/60-killed-by-a-massacre-by-regime-helicopters-in-al-bab-city/>;
<http://www.syriahr.com/en/2015/05/30-killed-and-wounded-by-barrels-bombardment-targeting-areas-of-al-bab-city-for-the-second-day/>

¹² <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/05/19/us-syria-crisis-base-idUSKBN0041L920150519>;
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32805235>; J. Cafarella, "Syria Situation Report: May 14-20, 2015," <http://iswsyria.blogspot.com/2015/05/syria-situation-report-may-14-20-2015.html>

¹³ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32924268>;
<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/05/29/us-mideast-crisis-syria-ariha-idUSKBN00D2LK20150529>;
<http://www.syriahr.com/en/2015/05/al-fateh-army-takes-control-over-the-whole-city-of-ariha-in-idlib/>;
 AP, <http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2015/05/29/world/middleeast/ap-ml-syria.html>;
<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/05/29/us-mideast-crisis-syria-idUSKBN00E12720150529>;
<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/29/world/middleeast/syria-insurgent-coalition-pushes-assads-forces-fr>
[om-a-stronghold.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/29/world/middleeast/syria-insurgent-coalition-pushes-assads-forces-fr-om-a-stronghold.html)

¹⁴ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/05/21/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-ramadi-idUSKBN0062BY20150521>;
 J.L. McFate, T. Bell, and P. Martin, "Iraq Situation Report: May 21-22, 2015,"
http://iswiraq.blogspot.com/2015/05/iraq-situation-report-may-21-22-2015_22.html;
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32857198>;
<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/05/24/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-ramadi-idUSKBN00805D20150524>;
<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/05/24/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-idUSKBN00908J20150524>;
<http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/isis-terror/territory-near-ramadi-seized-isis-pentagon-criticizes-iraqs>

2. Al Asad Area, Al Anbar Governorate
 - During the reporting period, several coalition airstrikes hit ISIL positions around Al Asad.¹⁵
3. Tharthar Lake Area, Al Anbar Governorate
 - On June 1, an ISIL bomb attack at an Iraqi Federal Police base near Tharthar Lake reportedly killed at least 41 policemen and allied Shiite militiamen and wounded dozens more.¹⁶
4. Fallujah Area, Al Anbar Governorate
 - On May 26, ISIL suicide bombs killed at least 17 Iraqi Army soldiers just outside of Fallujah.¹⁷
 - During the reporting period, several coalition airstrikes hit ISIL positions around Fallujah.¹⁸
5. Baghdadi Area, Al Anbar Governorate
 - During the reporting period, several coalition airstrikes hit ISIL positions around Baghdadi.¹⁹
6. Baiji Area, Salah ad Din Governorate
 - During the reporting period, Iraqi security forces (with the support of several coalition airstrikes), Shiite Popular Mobilization militias, and, reportedly, newly assertive Iranian forces continued to fight ISIL in the Baiji area.²⁰
 - During the reporting period, several coalition airstrikes hit ISIL positions around Baiji.²¹
7. Sinjar Area, Ninawa Governorate
 - During the reporting period, several coalition airstrikes hit ISIL positions around Sinjar in order to help Kurdish Peshmerga forces repel ISIL attacks.²²

[will-fight-n363911](http://www.cnn.com/2015/05/23/middleeast/isis-iraq-syria/index.html); <http://www.cnn.com/2015/05/23/middleeast/isis-iraq-syria/index.html>;
http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2014/0814_iraq/Airstrikes6.html

¹⁵ http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2014/0814_iraq/Airstrikes6.html

¹⁶ AP, <http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2015/06/01/world/middleeast/ap-ml-islamic-state.html>;

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/suicide-attack-kills-40-officers-in-iraq-1433172819>;

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32961448>;

<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/isis-suicide-bombers-kill-dozens-in-iraqs-anbar-province/>;

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/06/01/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-idUSKBN00H2IZ20150601>

¹⁷ AP,

http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/multiple-is-suicide-attacks-in-iraqs-anbar-kill-17-troops/2015/05/27/315e89e0-044d-11e5-93f4-f24d4af7f97d_story.html;

<http://www.cnn.com/2015/05/27/world/iraq-isis/index.html>;

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32898993>

¹⁸ http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2014/0814_iraq/Airstrikes6.htm

¹⁹ http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2014/0814_iraq/Airstrikes6.html

²⁰ <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=128878>; AP,

<http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2015/05/22/us/politics/ap-us-united-states-iraq.html>;

http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2014/0814_iraq/Airstrikes6.html

²¹ http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2014/0814_iraq/Airstrikes6.html

²² http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2014/0814_iraq/Airstrikes6.html

- During the reporting period, several coalition airstrikes hit ISIL positions around Sinjar.²³
- 8. Mosul Area, Ninawa Governorate
 - During the reporting period, several coalition airstrikes hit ISIL positions around Mosul.²⁴
- 9. Tal Afar Area, Ninawa Governorate
 - During the reporting period, several coalition airstrikes hit ISIL positions around Tal Afar.²⁵
- 10. Makhmour Area, Erbil Governorate
 - During the reporting period, several coalition airstrikes hit ISIL positions around Makhmour.²⁶
- 11. Baghdad
 - On May 28, twin bombs hit two luxury hotels in Baghdad, killing at least 15 people and wounding more than two dozen more; ISIL claimed responsibility for the attacks.²⁷

²³ http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2014/0814_iraq/Airstrikes6.html

²⁴ http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2014/0814_iraq/Airstrikes6.html;
http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2014/0814_iraq/Airstrikes6.html

²⁵ http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2014/0814_iraq/Airstrikes6.html

²⁶ http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2014/0814_iraq/Airstrikes6.html

²⁷

http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/islamic-state-claims-militants-carried-out-twin-blasts-at-baghdad-hotels/2015/05/29/87f52cca-0603-11e5-a428-c984eb077d4e_story.html;

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/30/world/middleeast/isis-claims-deadly-car-bombings-at-baghdad-hotels.html>; <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/iraq-hotels-in-baghdad-hit-by-car-bombs/>;

<http://www.cnn.com/2015/05/28/middleeast/iraq-violence/>;

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32925959>;

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/05/29/us-baghdad-bombs-claim-idUSKBN00E10720150529>; AP,

<http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2015/05/28/world/middleeast/ap-ml-iraq.html>

Incident Reports: Syria

SHI 15-0086 UPDATE

Report Date: May 28, 2015

Site Name: UNESCO World Heritage Site of Palmyra (SHI# 852)

Date of Incident: May 13, 2015 and ongoing

Location: Homs Governorate, Syria

Coordinates:

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.²⁸

Site Date: Primarily Hellenistic (Palmyrene), Roman, and Islamic

Source of Destruction: On May 13, 2015, news sources reported that ISIL had “launched a two-pronged attack” on the town of Palmyra and was at that time “just 5 km northeast of its Roman-era ruins.”²⁹

On May 15, 2015, APSA published images (dated May 14) and video footage (dated May 15) showing combat centered on the citadel of Palmyra.

On May 16, 2015, the DGAM reported that “[a]ccording to Department of Antiquities in Palmyra, the archaeological site has not so far been subjected to any damage, and it is still under control of the Syrian government, with [ongoing] clashes between the national security forces and the terrorist organization of ‘ISIS’ at several axes near the archaeological site.” This report also stated that the DGAM had taken a number of measures to protect the site of Palmyra since the start of the conflict in 2012, including “reinforcing the gates of tombs containing funeral scenes, then [re-burying] all the gates, transferring the museum objects to more secure places, and communicating with the various figures of the local community in order to raise awareness of the importance of preserving the cultural heritage.”³⁰

²⁸ <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/23>

²⁹ <http://syriadirect.org/news/is-launches-full-on-assault-on-palmyra/>

³⁰ <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1696>

On May 17, 2015, the DGAM reported that security forces had succeeded in forcing ISIL to withdraw eastward away from the city and archaeological site.³¹ On the same date, the BBC reported on the high casualties of the Palmyra offensive and relayed a report given by the Homs governor to state-run news agency SANA that “Palmyra is safe and the road linking Homs with Palmyra is absolutely safe.”³² On May 17, 2015, SANA also published an image of the Bel Temple at Palmyra (dated May 17), with the implication that it had not been further damaged.

On May 17, 2015, APSA posted footage to YouTube showing “damage caused to the Citadel at Palmyra.” The video footage is taken at a great distance and is somewhat unclear but seems to show major damage to the citadel architecture.

On May 18, 2015, ASOR CHI sources in Syria reported that the Palmyra museum had been hit by multiple mortar shells, but the extent of the damage is unknown.

On May 18, 2015, the DGAM published several photos taken by the Department of Antiquities of Palmyra showing the general condition of monuments at the site, including the Bel Temple and tower tombs. These images await in-depth analysis; as their intent is apparently to show that the standing monuments of Palmyra have not been severely damaged through incidental combat impact or intentional destruction, it remains to be established whether or not more localized damage was caused by the recent conflict.

On May 19, 2015, ASOR CHI sources in Syria reported that “two mortar shells” had fallen in the area of the Temple of Bel, but no images confirming this report have yet been provided.

On May 21, 2015, the DGAM reported that “hundreds of Palmyrean statues and museum objects have been transferred out from Palmyra to safe locations outside the city.”³³

On May 23, 2015, news sources reported that Islamic State fighters had broken into the Palmyra museum, “though a Syrian official said its artifacts have been removed and are safe.” However, a local resident reported that ISIL members had smashed a statue in the foyer of the museum, and the Director General of Antiquities and Museums, Mamoun Abdulkarim, said that some modern plaster statues had been destroyed by ISIL (likely the same statue referenced by the local source).

Meanwhile, a U.S.-led coalition conducted airstrikes on ISIL installations near Palmyra.³⁴ Though the location of the airstrikes was not disclosed, local informants described them as clustering around the oil fields northwest of the city.

On May 26, 2015, APSA published video footage to Youtube showing various views of the site of Palmyra and labeled “posted by Daesh.” The footage includes shots of the citadel (Qalaat Shirkuh)

³¹ <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1700>

³² <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32772894>

³³ <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1704>

³⁴

<http://www.ctvnews.ca/world/palmyra-artifacts-are-safe-despite-isis-museum-break-in-syrian-official-says-1.2387513>

filmed from within the modern city, as well as shots taken walking around the ancient site. Monuments shown include the Temple of Bel, the colonnaded street, and the amphitheatre.³⁵

On May 26, 2015, an ASOR CHI source reported that over the last several days the general region around Palmyra has been bombarded by the regime, including one strike inside the archeological site. As of May 26, 2015, the bombardment continues but not inside the archeological zone.

On May 27, 2015, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported that the “Roman archaeological theater in the city of Palmyra” has been used by ISIL for executions of captured Shiite and Alawite regime soldiers and militiamen. These reports have not been confirmed.³⁶

On May 27, 2015, APSA (Protect Syrian Archaeology) published photos that were originally published online by ISIL, showing various architectural monuments within the site of Palmyra as well as the site museum. The photos include³⁷ images of the Roman amphitheater, shown with a black ISIL flag posted atop the monument.

On May 27, 2015, the *International Business Times* and other online news outlets reported that “the destruction of Palmyra has begun” with the demolition of an ancient statue of a lion god. According to the same sources, the “Lion of al-Lat” dated from the first century AD and stood at the entrance to the Bel Temple. On May 29, 2015, however, the DGAM reported that they had so far had no confirmation of the destruction of this statue.

Pattern: Tactical/strategic use of built heritage by combatants during the Syrian conflict. Damage to sites of extraordinary historical significance due to their location in strategic or otherwise logistically important regions (in the present as in ancient periods). The site of Palmyra and, specifically, defensive positions like the Bel Temple were fortified by SARG in efforts to defend this oasis and transport hub (see for example [ASOR CHI Incident Report 14-0103](#)). Palmyra was especially vulnerable in late 2014 after ISIS captured SARG positions in Deir ez-Zor Governorate and was, therefore, provided with access to sites in Homs Governorate (see [ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 14-019](#)). Images showing the condition of the Bel Temple at Palmyra were published by the DGAM on March 20, 2015 (See [ASOR CHI Incident Report 15-0055](#)).

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI is continuing to gather data on the condition of the monuments and artifacts at Palmyra as information becomes available.

³⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OHCACFD0pOY&feature=youtu.be>

³⁶

<http://www.syriahr.com/en/2015/05/for-the-first-time-the-the-roman-archaeological-theater-witnesses-executions-carried-out-by-is-against-20-members-of-the-regime-forces-and-allied-militiamen/>

³⁷ APSA Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.1362975580476216.1073741901.324869057620212&type=1>

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Syria Direct (May 13, 2015): <http://syriadirect.org/news/is-launches-full-on-assault-on-palmyra/>

APSA (May 15, 2015):

<http://www.apsa2011.com/index.php/en/provinces/homs/palmyra/1218-palmyra-14-05-2015-a.html>

APSA (May 17, 2015): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1nEof-4Tcok>

APSA (May 26, 2015): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OHCACFD0pOY&feature=youtu.be>

APSA, Facebook page (May 27, 2015):

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.1362975580476216.1073741901.324869057620212&type=1>

DGAM (May 16, 2015): <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1696>

DGAM (May 17, 2015): <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1700>

DGAM (May 18, 2015): <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1703>

DGAM (May 21, 2015): <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1704>

DGAM (May 29, 2015): <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1711>

UNESCO World Heritage Listing for Palmyra: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/23>

BBC (May 17, 2015): <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32772894>

SANA (May 17, 2015): <http://www.sana.sy/en/?p=41056>
<http://www.sana.sy/en/?s=palmyra>

Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (May 27, 2015):

<http://www.syriahr.com/en/2015/05/for-the-first-time-the-roman-archaeological-theater-witnesses-executions-carried-out-by-is-against-20-members-of-the-regime-forces-and-allied-militiam-en/>

International Business Times (May 27, 2015):

<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/syria-isis-palmyra-demolition-has-begun-ancient-god-lion-statue-destroyed-1503192>



Bombardment in the area of the citadel, Palmyra (APSA; posted May 15, 2015)



Bombardment in the area of the citadel, Palmyra (APSA; posted May 15, 2015)



Bombardment in the area of the citadel, Palmyra (APSA; posted May 15, 2015)



Bombardment in the area of the citadel, Palmyra (APSA; posted May 15, 2015)



Bel Temple, Palmyra (SANA; published May 17, 2015, with the heading “Palmyra on 17/05/2015”)



Colonnaded Avenue, Palmyra (DGAM; posted May 18, 2015)



Bel Temple, Palmyra (DGAM; posted May 18, 2015)



Columned avenue, Palmyra (DGAM; posted May 18, 2015)



Tower Tombs, Palmyra (DGAM; posted May 18, 2015)



Palmyra (DGAM; posted May 18, 2015)



Citadel (Qalaat Shirkuh), Palmyra, from footage attributed to ISIL (APSA; posted May 26, 2015)



Bel Temple precinct, Palmyra, from footage attributed to ISIL (APSA; posted May 26, 2015)



Bel Temple precinct, Palmyra, from footage attributed to ISIL (APSA; posted May 26, 2015)



Colonnaded street, Palmyra, from footage attributed to ISIL (APSA; May 26, 2015)



Bel Temple precinct, Palmyra, from footage attributed to ISIL (APSA; May 26, 2015)



Theatre, Palmyra, from footage attributed to ISIL (APSA; May 26, 2015)



Theater, Palmyra, from footage attributed to ISIL (APSA; May 26, 2015)



Temple of Baal-Shamin, Palmyra, from footage attributed to ISIL (APSA; May 26, 2015)



Theater, Palmyra, from footage attributed to ISIL (APSA; May 26, 2015)



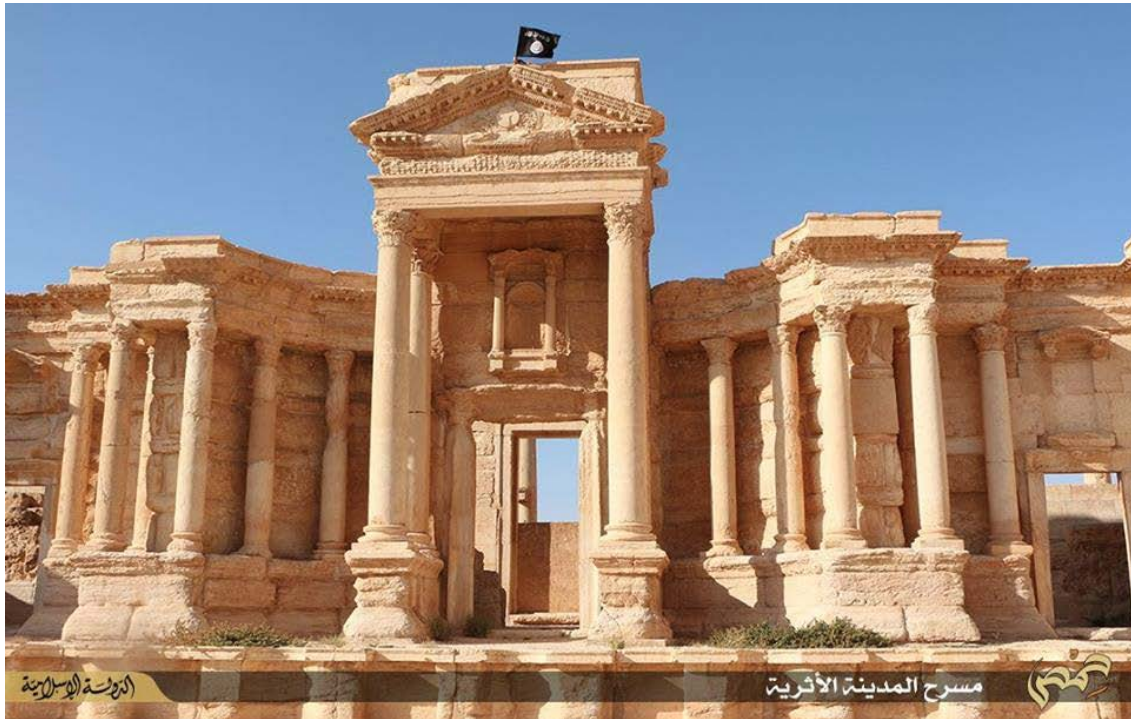
Theater, Palmyra (APSA; May 28, 2015; image originally published by ISIL on May 27, 2015)



Palmyra Archaeological Museum (APSA; May 28, 2015; image originally published by ISIL on May 27, 2015)



Theater, Palmyra (APSA; May 28, 2015; image originally published by ISIL on May 27, 2015)



Theater, Palmyra (APSA; May 28, 2015; image originally published by ISIL on May 27, 2015)



Temple of Baal-Shamin, Palmyra (APSA; May 28, 2015; image originally published by ISIL on May 27, 2015)



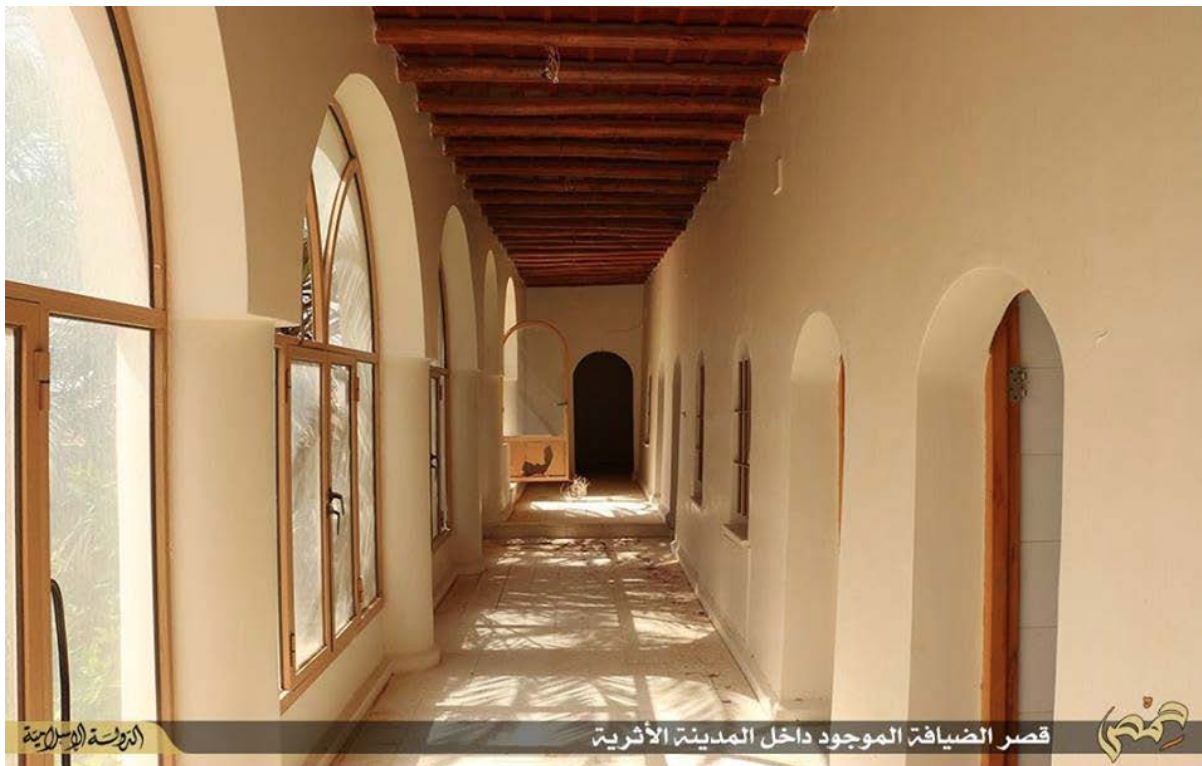
Colonnaded Avenue, Palmyra (APSA; May 28, 2015; image originally published by ISIL on May 27, 2015)



Colonnaded Avenue, Palmyra (APSA; May 28, 2015; image originally published by ISIL on May 27, 2015)



Bel Temple, Palmyra (APSA; May 28, 2015; image originally published by ISIL on May 27, 2015)



Palmyra Archaeological Museum (APSA; May 28, 2015; image originally published by ISIL on May 27, 2015)



The “lion god” statue allegedly demolished by ISIL (*International Business Times*, May 27, 2015; sourced from Wikipedia)

SHI 15-0088

Report Date: May 20, 2015

Site Name: Abi al-Fida Madrasa (Abou al-Feda Madrasa), Bosra (SHI# 3968)

Date of Incident: unknown; prior to May 7, 2015

Location: Central Old City, Bosra, Daraa Governorate, Syria

Coordinates:

Site Description: Located at the northeastern rim of the Roman cistern (Birket al-Hajj) to the east of the citadel, the Abou al-Feda Madrasa and Mosque were constructed in AD 1225.

Site Date: 1225 (Ayyubid)

Source of Destruction: On May 19, 2015, APSA posted footage to YouTube showing the interior of the “Abi al Fida madrasa,” dated May 7, 2015. The footage shows books scattered on the floor and the walls marked with smoke. Rubble fills a side tower from a large hole in the upper wall near the base of the dome. In general, the madrasa/mosque appears to have been looted and perhaps occupied during the recent period of conflict in Bosra.

Images in the ASOR CHI archives demonstrate that significant structural damage to the Abou al-Feda Mosque occurred sometime prior to September 24, 2014 (see [ASOR CHI Incident Report 15-0057](#)). This damage includes a large hole in the domed tower (visible in the video from the interior) and the destruction of the upper part of the square minaret.

Pattern: Militarization of built heritage in the Old City of Bosra and resulting damage due to combat and looting. Closely related to the rebel ousting of regime forces around March 25, 2015.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI is continuing to monitor the condition of built heritage in areas of conflict, such as the city center of Bosra and the Daraa region more generally.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

APSA: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wRj3tt31D3o>

SHI 15-0089

Report Date: May 28, 2015

Site Name: Bab al-Nasr area, UNESCO World Heritage Site Ancient City of Aleppo (CHI# 59)

Date of Incident: May 26–27, 2015

Location: Aleppo, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

Coordinates:

Site Description: One of the original gates of the UNESCO World Heritage Site Ancient City of Aleppo, the Bab al-Nasr (Victory Gate) was rebuilt in the early 13th century and was the most important northern gate of the old city.

Site Date: Byzantine through Ottoman

Source of Destruction: On May 28, 2015, the APSA Facebook page posted images of urban destruction, describing the images (dated May 26, 2015) as depictions of the “bombardment of the Bab al-Na[s]r by the Syrian military.”³⁸

According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, regime forces and allied militias have been clashing in recent days with rebel and Islamist battalions in Old Aleppo, including the use of shelling by the regime.³⁹

Pattern: Ongoing and continuous damage to the urban heritage landscape of the UNESCO World Heritage Site Ancient City of Aleppo, resulting from neighborhood occupation by militant factions, aerial bombardment, and tunnel bombing.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI is continuing to monitor the ongoing destruction of cultural heritage within the UNESCO World Heritage Site Ancient City of Aleppo.

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<https://www.facebook.com/apsa2011/photos/a.1363112233795884.1073741902.324869057620212/1363112250462549/?type=1>;
<https://www.facebook.com/apsa2011/photos/a.1363112233795884.1073741902.324869057620212/1363112247129216/?type=1&theater>

39

<http://www.syriahr.com/en/2015/05/clashes-break-out-in-the-city-of-aleppo-and-its-countryside-while-shelling-target-the-northern-countryside/>

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Syrian Observatory for Human Rights:

<http://www.syriahr.com/en/2015/05/clashes-break-out-in-the-city-of-aleppo-and-its-countryside-while-shelling-target-the-northern-countryside/>

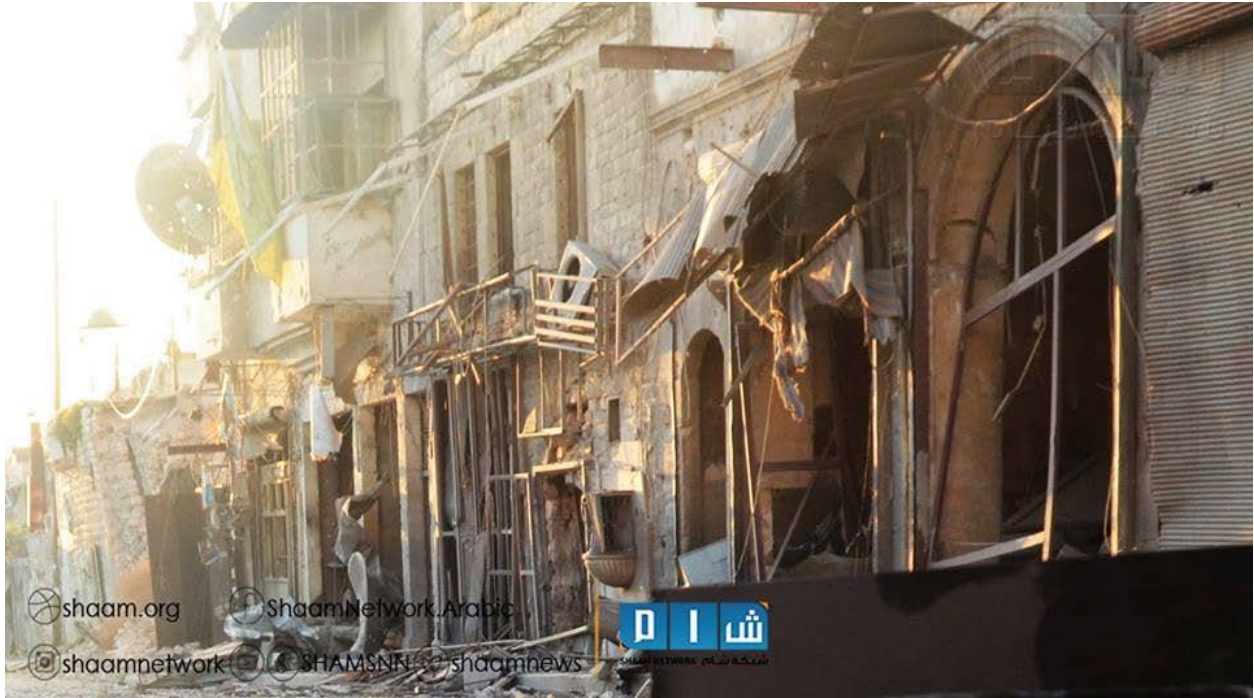
APSA, Facebook page (May 28, 2015):

<https://www.facebook.com/apsa2011/photos/a.1363112233795884.1073741902.324869057620212/1363112250462549/?type=1;>

<https://www.facebook.com/apsa2011/photos/a.1363112233795884.1073741902.324869057620212/1363112247129216/?type=1&theater>



Bab al-Nasr area, Aleppo (APSA Facebook page; posted May 28, 2015)



Bab al-Nasr area, Aleppo (APSA Facebook page; posted May 28, 2015)



Bab al-Nasr area, Aleppo (APSA Facebook page; posted May 28, 2015)

SHI 15-0090

Report Date: June 1, 2015

Site Name: al-Sawas Mosque

Date of Incident: May 31, 2015

Location: Jub al-Quba neighborhood, UNESCO World Heritage Site Ancient City of Aleppo

Coordinates:

Site Description: A small mosque on a residential street in the Jub al-Quba neighborhood

Site Date: Mamluk–Ayyubid (?)

Source of Destruction: On May 31, 2015, APSA reported on Facebook that the al-Sawas Mosque in the Jub al-Quba neighborhood had been destroyed by regime aerial bombardments. Published images show that the dome and outer wall of the small mosque have been completely destroyed.⁴⁰ APSA concurrently published footage to YouTube showing the damage to the interior and exterior of the mosque.⁴¹

Pattern: Continuing aerial bombardments within the UNESCO World Heritage Site Ancient City of Aleppo, as confrontations between regime and rebel groups shift from neighborhood to neighborhood. Online monitoring sources (ReliefWeb) claim a recent increase in regime bombardments of residential targets in Aleppo, especially since the beginning of May 2015. Prior to May 17, 2015, the Emergency Ward hospital in Jub al-Quba was also hit by regime airstrikes.⁴²

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI is continuing to monitor the ongoing destruction of cultural heritage within the UNESCO World Heritage Site Ancient City of Aleppo.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

APSA, Facebook (May 31, 2015):

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.1364874456952995.1073741903.324869057620212&type=1>

⁴⁰

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.1364874456952995.1073741903.324869057620212&type=1>

⁴¹ https://youtu.be/TYgcw_r2xR4

⁴² <http://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/new-wave-destruction-and-random-shelling-aleppo>

APSA, YouTube (May 31, 2015): https://youtu.be/TYgcw_r2xR4

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/SanaMasfaka/status/605076503609548800/photo/1>

Syrian Network For Human Rights: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2015/05/31/7508/>

ReliefWeb:

<http://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/new-wave-destruction-and-random-shelling-aleppo>



al-Sawas Mosque, Aleppo (posted to Twitter and the APSA Facebook page on May 31, 2015)



al-Sawas Mosque, Aleppo (APSA Facebook page; posted May 31, 2015)



al-Sawas Mosque, Aleppo (APSA Facebook page; posted May 31, 2015)



al-Sawas Mosque, Aleppo (APSA Facebook page; posted May 31, 2015)

SHI 15-0091

Report Date: June 1, 2015

Site Name: Tomb of Sheikh Sayyedna al-Khudr in Jisr al-Shughour

Date of Incident: reported May 21, 2015

Location: Ishtabraq, southwestern Jisr al-Shughour, Idlib Governorate, Syria

Coordinates:

Site Description: Small domed mortuary shrine located on a hill above the town of Jisr al-Shughour.

Site Date: unknown

Source of Destruction: On May 21, 2015, photos were posted to Twitter with the description “Radical Jaish Fateh Destroyed the Shrine of Alawite Sheikh Sayyedna al-Khudr in Ishtabraq Jisr Shughour.” The photos show interior and exterior views of a small shrine, as well as the shrine (apparently) being destroyed by explosives. A caption on the photo reads (in Russian): “Destruction of a place of Shirk’ (Shiite chapel).”

Pattern: In past weeks, rebel forces seized control of the town of Jisr al-Shughour, culminating in a prolonged siege of the town hospital.⁴³ A video report published by VICE News on May 27, 2015, shows Jabhat al-Nusra and other Islamist (“Jihadist”) fighters patrolling the town, engaging with snipers, handing out bread, and inspecting a cache of corpses allegedly murdered by regime troops.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI is continuing to monitor the status of built heritage and, in particular, sectarian heritage in the areas of Idlib Governorate occupied by Islamist forces.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Twitter: https://twitter.com/Terror_Monitor/status/601328882256490496

Twitter: https://twitter.com/joshua_landis/status/604612082026225665

VICE News report on Jihadist coalition occupying Jisr al-Shughour:

https://news.vice.com/video/jihadists-vs-the-assad-regime-syrias-rebel-advance?utm_source=vice_newstwitter

National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces:

<http://en.etilaf.org/all-news/local-news/rebels-fully-seize-jisr-al-shughour-hospital.html>

⁴³ <http://en.etilaf.org/all-news/local-news/rebels-fully-seize-jisr-al-shughour-hospital.html>



Tomb of Sheikh Sayyedna al-Khudr, Jisr al-Shughour (Twitter; posted May 21, 2015)



Tomb of Sheikh Sayyedna al-Khudr, Jisr al-Shughour (Twitter; posted May 21, 2015)



Tomb of Sheikh Sayyedna al-Khudr, Jisr al-Shughour (Twitter; posted May 21, 2015)



Tomb of Sheikh Sayyedna al-Khudr, Jisr al-Shughour (Twitter; posted May 21, 2015)

SHI 15-0092

Report Date: June 1, 2015

Site Name: Unidentified church in the Khabur area, Hasakah Governorate, Syria

Date of Incident: Unknown

Location: Unknown

Coordinates:

Site Description: contemporary church with double front towers

Site Date: late 20th century

Source of Destruction: On May 30, 2015, images were posted to Twitter with the description “photos of churches destroyed by ISIS in the Khabur area in Hasakah.”⁴⁴ The church appears to have been destroyed with some form of explosive, but the source of destruction has not been confirmed.

Pattern: Reports of churches destroyed in Hasakah Governorate following occupation of the area by ISIL

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to collect data on the condition of cultural heritage and, in particular, sectarian heritage in regions of Syria under ISIL control.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/IraqiSuryani/status/604756916560994304>

⁴⁴ <https://twitter.com/IraqiSuryani/status/604756916560994304>



Unidentified church in Hasakah Governorate (Twitter; posted May 30, 2015)



Unidentified church in Hasakah Governorate (Twitter; posted May 30, 2015)



Unidentified church in Hasakah Governorate (Twitter; posted May 30, 2015)

SHI 15-0093

Report Date: June 2, 2015

Site Name: Aleppo Citadel, UNESCO World Heritage Site Ancient City of Aleppo (SHI# 73), and locations within the Citadel, such as the Hittite Temple to the Storm God Adda (SHI# 3969) and the Nour Eddin Hammam and Mosque.

Date of Incident: Ongoing

Location: Old City of Aleppo, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

Coordinates:

Site Description:

From the UNESCO World Heritage Listing for the Ancient City of Aleppo:

The monumental Citadel of Aleppo, rising above the suqs, mosques and madrasas of the old walled city, is testament to Arab military might from the 12th to the 14th centuries. With evidence of past occupation by civilizations dating back to the 10th century B.C., the citadel contains the remains of mosques, palace and bath buildings...

A ring of crenellated walls and towers rises rise [sic] 50m above the city from a steep glacis, encircling a mass of ruins of every period. The nail-heads on the doors themselves are beautifully worked, the lintels have comic or enigmatic carvings on them, and there are fine Kufic inscriptions calling upon the power and the mercy of Allah. The interior of the citadel shows all too clearly how it has been ravaged by enemies (the Mongols invaded it twice) and shattered by earthquakes (that of 1822 was particularly devastating).

St George's Cathedral stands behind a labyrinth of narrow streets on a tiny square. The postern gate in the middle of the ramparts (Bab Antakia) is the Antioch Gate. Beyond there are many important monuments - the little domed Byzantine church converted into a mosque; a prison with dungeons dug into the rock; a stretch of wall 4 m thick, the base of a Syrio-Hittite temple; the remains of a great mosque built by Saladin's son; a covered building containing sculpture and objects from various periods found on the site; the tomb of Emir Zaher Ghazi (son of Saladin) in an annex to a *madrasa* founded during the Crusader period.⁴⁵

Site Date: Hittite (Bronze Age) through Ottoman

Source of Destruction: On June 2, 2015, the DGAM published a set of images acquired in cooperation with Al Khany Media agency, showing various locations within the Aleppo Citadel. The date attributed to the images is "May 2015."⁴⁶ The photos show the general status of the monuments and architecture within the Citadel precinct; as with sets of photos published previously by the DGAM, any damage shown in these images cannot be linked to a single incident. From a preliminary examination of the photos, it appears that (as has been indicated by other imagery of the Citadel – see [ASOR CHI Incident Report 15-0087](#)) the built fabric of the Aleppo Citadel has suffered from neglect as well as intensive militarization and combat.

⁴⁵ <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/21>

⁴⁶ <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1717>

Pattern: Ongoing damage to built heritage within the UNESCO World Heritage Site Ancient City of Aleppo due to prolonged, intensive urban combat and bombardment.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI is continuing to monitor the ongoing destruction of cultural heritage within the UNESCO World Heritage Site Ancient City of Aleppo

Sources:

Online Reporting:

DGAM (June 2, 2015): <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1717>



The Citadel Hammam, Aleppo Citadel (DGAM; posted June 2, 2015)



Southwestern wall of the “Windmill” tower, Aleppo Citadel (DGAM; posted June 2, 2015)



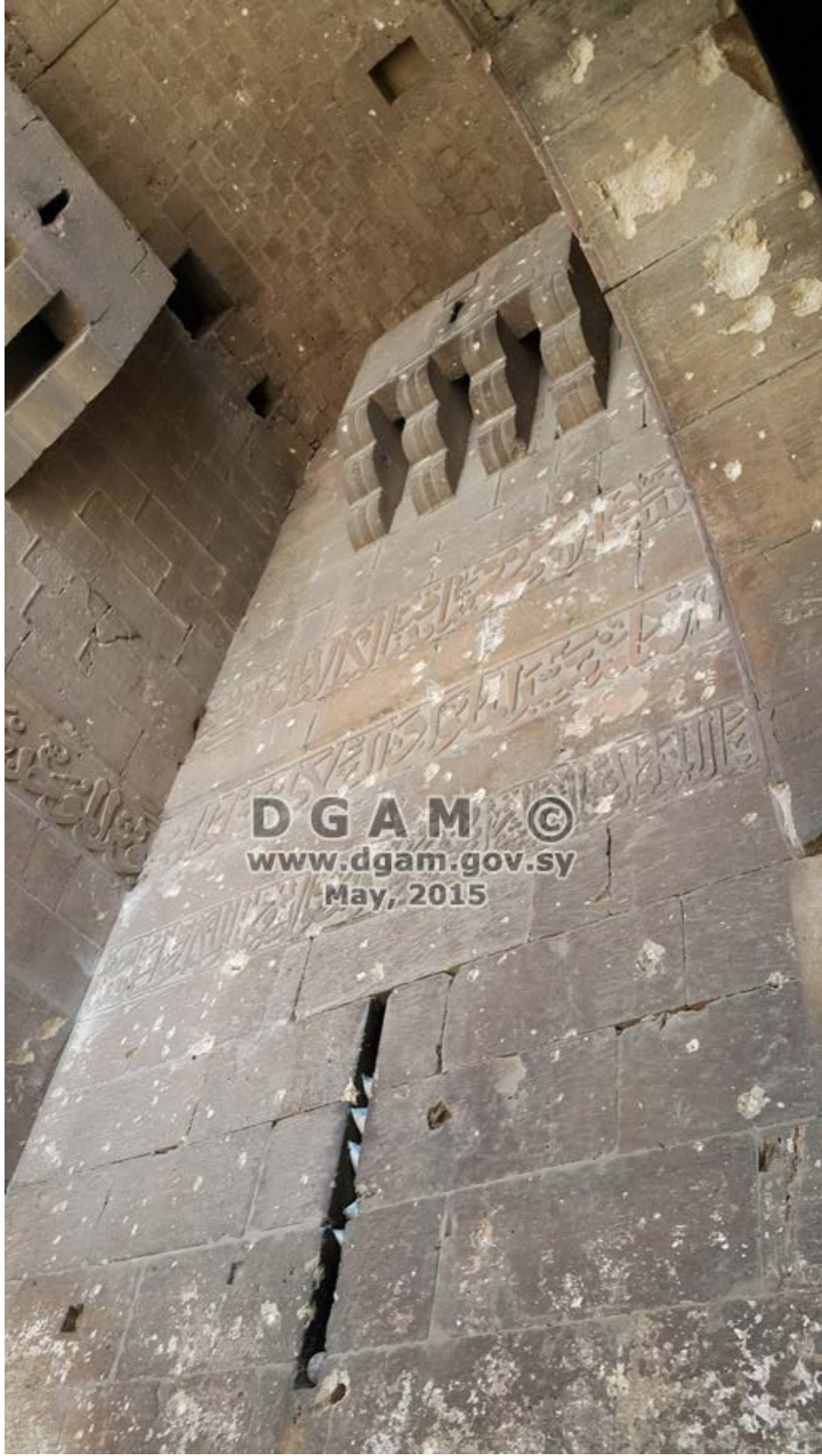
Royal Palace facade, Aleppo Citadel (DGAM; posted June 2, 2015)



Citadel site museum, Aleppo Citadel (DGAM; posted June 2, 2015)



Citadel site museum, Aleppo Citadel (DGAM; posted June 2, 2015)



Citadel main entrance, Aleppo Citadel (DGAM; posted June 2, 2015)



Nour Eddin Hammam, Aleppo Citadel (DGAM; posted June 2, 2015)



Nour Eddin Hammam, Aleppo Citadel (DGAM; posted June 2, 2015)



Passage near the museum, Aleppo Citadel (DGAM; posted June 2, 2015)



Passage near the museum, Aleppo Citadel (DGAM; posted June 2, 2015)



Nour Eddin Mosque, Aleppo Citadel (DGAM; posted June 2, 2015)



Nour Eddin Mosque, Aleppo Citadel (DGAM; posted June 2, 2015)



Eastern Citadel Wall, Aleppo Citadel (DGAM; posted June 2, 2015)



Hittite Temple of the Storm God Adda, Aleppo Citadel (DGAM; posted June 2, 2015)



Hittite Temple of the Storm God Adda, Aleppo Citadel (DGAM; posted June 2, 2015)



Near the windmill, Aleppo Citadel (DGAM; posted June 2, 2015)

Incident Reports: Iraq

IHI 15-0081

Report Date: May 28, 2015

Site Name: Bakr al-Afandi Mosque

Date of Incident: May 27, 2015

Location: Bab Al-Top neighborhood in western Mosul, Ninawa Governorate, Iraq

Coordinates:

Site Description: Early historic mosque.

Site Date: 1207 CE

Source of Destruction: ISIL deliberate destruction.

Pattern: On May 27, 2015 Rudaw reported that Kurdistan Democratic Party representatives in Mosul were claiming that the Bakr al-Afandi Mosque had been demolished by ISIL militants using improvised explosive devices, with the explanation that the mosque held shrines that were forbidden. No further details about the extent of the damage or photo/video documentation were provided.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will attempt to confirm reports via in-country sources and is continuing to monitor the condition of religious cultural heritage in Iraq.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Rudaw: <http://rudaw.net/english/middleeast/iraq/270520154>

IHI 15-0082

Report Date: May 29, 2015

Site Name: Assur (Ashur, Qal'at Sherqat and Kalah Shergat)

Date of Incident: May 28, 2015

Location: Shirqat, Salahuddin Governorate, Iraq

Coordinates:

Site Description: From UNESCO:

“Founded in the 3rd millennium BC, the most important role of Ashur was from the 14th to 9th centuries BC when it was the first capital of the Assyrian empire. Ashur was also the Assyrian religious capital and the place for crowning and burial of its kings. The excavated remains of the public and residential buildings of Ashur provide an outstanding record of the evolution of building practice from the Sumerian and Akkadian period through the Assyrian empire, as well as including the short revival during the Parthian period.

The ancient city of Ashur (Assur, modern Qal'at Sherqat) is located 390km north of Baghdad. The settlement was founded on the western bank of the Tigris. The excavated remains consist of superimposed archaeological deposits, the earliest from the Sumerian Early Dynastic period (early 3rd millennium BC), then the Akkadian and Ur III periods, followed by the Old, Middle and Neo-Assyrian (ending mid-1st millennium BC) periods, and finally, the Hellenistic period and that of the Arab kings of Hatra.

Structurally, the city of Ashur was divided into two parts: the old city (Akkadian libbi-ali, the heart of the city), which is the northern and largest part of Ashur, and the new city (Akk. alu-ishshu), which was constructed around the mid-2nd millennium BC. The major features of the city now visible on-site consist of architectural remains: the ziggurat and the great temple of the god Ashur, the double temple of Anu and Adad, the temple of Ishtar, the Sumerian goddess of love and war, the Old Palace with its royal tombs and several living quarters in many parts of the city. The city was surrounded by a double wall with several gates and a big moat. The majority of the buildings of the city were built with sun-dried mud-bricks with foundations of quarried stones or dressed stone, depending on the period. Artistic objects and parts of architectural remains of the city are at present on display in the major museums of the world.”⁴⁷

In 2003 Assur was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List and was simultaneously listed as a World Heritage Site in Danger; it has remained on the endangered list since.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1130>

⁴⁸ <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1130/threats/>

Site Date: 3rd millennium BCE – 9th century BCE

Source of Destruction: ISIL deliberate destruction.

Pattern: One May 28, 2015 the Radio Free Iraq Twitter account stated that local informants had witnessed ISIL militants attacking the citadel of Assur, and additional media outlets repeated the claims. ASOR CHI sources confirm that ISIL militants destroyed the protective glass panels installed two years ago over the royal Assyrian tombs. ASOR CHI sources also report rumors that ISIL militants targeted the Tabiri Gate, the older excavation house for the German expedition, and a historic Turkish building located northeast of the Ziggurat that was used as a small museum. No further details about the extent of the damage or photo/video documentation were provided.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI is continuing to monitor the situation and will attempt to confirm reports via in-country sources.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Al Arabiya:

<http://www.alarabiya.net/ar/arab-and-world/iraq/2015/05/28/حريمة-جديدة-يرتكبها-داعش-بحق-آثار-العراق.html>

Anwaka: <http://english.ankawa.com/?p=14964>

International Business Times:

<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/isis-blows-unesco-world-heritage-assyrian-site-ashur-near-tikrit-1503367>

Radio Free Iraq: https://twitter.com/iraqhurr_eng/status/603894431402582016

Scholarly:

Dittmann, Robert. (1990) *Ausgrabungen der Freien Universitat Berlin in Ashur und Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta in den Jahren 1986-1989*. MDOG, vol. 122, pp. 157-171.

UNESCO: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1130/>

IHI 15-0083

Report Date: June 2, 2015

Site Name: al-Hajj Shaker al-Dahi Mosque

Date of Incident: June 1, 2015

Location: Fallujah, Anbar Governorate, Iraq

Coordinates:

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: unknown

Source of Destruction: Aerial bombardment by Iraqi Air Force

Pattern: On June 1, 2015 media outlets reported that the al-Hajj Shaker al-Dahi Mosque was damaged when the Iraqi Air Force dropped five barrel bombs onto Fallujah, which also killed 31 people and injured 82 others over the course of three days of ground and air assaults against ISIL militants. The airstrikes also hit civilian residential and market areas in the city. No further details about the extent of the damage or photo/video documentation were provided.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will attempt to confirm reports via in-country sources and is continuing to monitor the condition of religious cultural heritage in Iraq.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

CNN: <http://www.cnn.com/2015/05/31/middleeast/iraq-falluja-offensive/>

Albawabwa:

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/iraqi-airforce-barrel-bomb-kills-12-civilians-anbar-residents-701910>