

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

NEA-PSHSS-14-001

Weekly Report 47–48 — July 7, 2015

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Executive Summary

During the reporting period in Syria, ISIL militants in the northern town of Manbij intercepted an individual(s) transporting Palmyrene funerary sculptures removed from tombs at the archaeological site and/or from the collections of the Tadmor Museum. ISIL sentenced this individual to public lashing and deliberately destroyed the sculptures. ISIL later released a video of these acts on social media sites. Media and social media sources variously identified this individual(s) as an antiquities trafficker(s), presumably unaffiliated with ISIL's own antiquities trafficking network, or an activist(s) attempting to save the sculptures. ISIL also released a video showing the mass execution of 25 SARG military personnel in the Palmyra Roman-era Theater (probably built in the late 2nd–early 3rd Century CE and partially a modern reconstruction). This execution occurred May 27, 2015 and the video was released on July 4. The use of a well known heritage site as the backdrop for this horrific act has numerous ramifications regarding ISIL's use of heritage in propaganda and future perceptions of this heritage site and its intangible associations.

In western Syria, ASOR CHI sources have reported damage to archaeological sites caused by intense military clashes in the area of Zabadani. In southern Syria, the **DGAM** reports that the **Daraa Museum** suffered minor damage to the interior of the building and the exterior garden courtyard during military combat. The museum collection had been removed prior to the incident.

In Iraq, ASOR CHI received and verified reports of the intentional destruction of the Shrine and Tomb of Imam Ismail south of Kirkuk. The exact date(s) of this destruction and the number of damage incidents are not clear. A 2014 destruction by ISIL has been alleged.

Key Points

- ISIL militants destroyed Palmyrene funerary sculptures in the northern town of Manbij (Aleppo Governorate) and released a video of the act on social media ([ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0105](#)).

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.

- ISIL released a video of its mass execution of SARG military personnel in the Palmyra Theater (ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0104).
- In western Syria, ASOR CHI sources have reported damage to archaeological sites caused by intense military clashes in the area of Zabadani (ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0107).
- The DGAM reported the Daraa Museum suffered minor damage during military combat (ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0106).
- In Iraq, ASOR CHI received and verified reports of the intentional destruction of the Shrine and Tomb of Imam Ismail south of Kirkuk (ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 15-0087).
- Recent satellite imagery reveals damage to two mounds in northern Syria near the border with Turkey in Aleppo Governorate linked to military use and looting (ASOR CHI Incident Reports SHI 15-0108 and 0109).

Heritage Timeline

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|--------------|---|
| July 7, 2015 | <i>Rudaw</i> published an article titled “ 4 killed as ISIS destroys another Mosul church. ” ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 15-0087
http://rudaw.net/english/middleeast/iraq/070720151 |
| July 5, 2015 | <i>Al Jazeera</i> published an article titled “ ISIL video shows mass killings in Syria's Palmyra. ”
http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/07/isil-video-shows-mass-killings-syria-palmyra-150704171332644.html |
| • | <i>The Daily Beast</i> published an article titled “ Real-Life Indiana Jones Vs. ISIS ” (by Nico Hines).
http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/07/05/real-life-indiana-jones-vs-isis.html |
| July 4, 2015 | The Syrian Organization for Human Rights (SOHR) , <i>CNN</i> , <i>Vice News</i> , <i>VOA News</i> , <i>France 24</i> all published articles on the video released by ISIL showing child soldiers executing 25 men dressed in military uniforms in the Roman amphitheater of the World Heritage Site of Palmyra, which took place on May 27, 2015. ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0104.
http://www.cnn.com/2015/07/04/middleeast/isis-execution-palmyra-syria/

http://news.vice.com/article/islamic-state-releases-gruesome-video-showing-mass-execution-of-syrian-soldiers-in-palmyra

http://www.voanews.com/content/islamic-state-video-shows-mass-execution-palmyra/2848998.html |

<http://www.france24.com/en/20150704-isis-is-group-video-mass-s-hooting-palmyra>

<http://www.syriahr.com/en/2015/07/isis-slaughters-a-soldier-and-executes-25-others-in-the-roman-theater/>

July 3, 2015

The Guardian published an article titled “**Looted in Syria – and sold in London: the British antiques shops dealing in artefacts smuggled by Isis**” (by Rachel Shabi).

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/03/antiquities-looted-by-isis-end-up-in-london-shops>

- *Reuters* published an article titled “**Islamic State looting Syrian, Iraqi sites on industrial scale: UNESCO**” (by Andrew Osborn).
<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/07/02/us-mideast-crisis-unesco-idUSKCN0PC10U20150702>
- *SkyNews* published an article titled “**IS Looting Ancient Sites On 'Industrial Scale'.**”
<http://news.sky.com/story/1512356/isis-looting-ancient-sites-on-industrial-scale>
- *International Business Times* published an article titled “**Unesco terms Isis's destruction of heritage sites 'cultural cleansing'**” (by Vasudevan Sridharan).
<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/unesco-terms-isis-destruction-heritage-sites-cultural-cleansing-1509109>
- *Al Jazeera* published a video about the site of Samarra titled “**UNESCO World Heritage site in Iraq under the threat of destruction**” (narrated by Jane Arraf).
<http://america.aljazeera.com/watch/shows/live-news/2015/7/unesco-world-heritage-site-in-iraq-under-the-threat-of-destruction.html>
- *The New York Times* published an article titled “**ISIS Destroys More Artifacts in Syria and Iraq**” (by Rick Gladstone and Maher Samaan).
<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/04/world/middleeast/isis-destroys-artifacts-palmyra-syria-iraq.html>
- *The NY Times* published an article titled “**Islamic State says it ordered Palmyra statues smashed**” (by Nabih Bulos).
<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/04/world/middleeast/isis-destroys-artifacts-palmyra-syria-iraq.html>

- *CNN* published an article titled “**ISIS publicly smashes Syrian artifacts**” (by Salma Abdelaziz).
<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/07/02/world/isis-syrian-artifacts/index.html>
- **Irina Bokova, Director General of UNESCO**, released a statement condemning the latest destruction of funerary busts and the Al-Lat lion statue from the site of Palmyra in Syria.
http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/irina_bokova_condemns_latest_destruction_of_cultural_property_from_the_site_of_palmyra_in_syria
- *Conflict Antiquities* published a blog post titled “**Palmyra: looting under the rebels, the Assad regime and the Islamic State?**” (by Sam Hardy).
<http://conflictantiquities.wordpress.com/2015/07/03/palmyra-looting-rebels-regime-islamic-state-propaganda/>
- *Sputnik News* published an opinion piece with contributions from Maamun Abdel Karim, head of Syria's Directorate-General for Antiquities and Museums (DGAM), titled “**Turkey Not Cooperating With Syria on Returning Smuggled Artefacts.**”
<http://sputniknews.com/analysis/20150703/1024180728.html>
- The **DGAM** reports that the **Daraa Museum** suffered minor damage to the interior of the building and the exterior garden courtyard during military combat. The museum collection had been removed prior to the incident. *ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0106*.
<http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1735>
- *Business Insider* wrote an article titled “**ISIS says it is their 'religious duty' to destroy Egypt's pyramids and the Sphinx**” (by Alex Heber).
<http://www.businessinsider.com/isis-want-to-destroy-egypts-pyramids-and-the-sphinx-2015-7?r=UK>
- *news.com.au* posted an article titled “**Islamic State threatens pyramids, sphinx, as it begins attack on Egypt**” (by Jamie Seidel).
<http://www.news.com.au/technology/science/islamic-state-threatens-pyramids-sphinx-as-it-begins-attack-on-egypt/story-fnjw1aw-1227426430711>

July 2, 2015

The Telegraph, BBC, USA Today, Halab News Network, i24 News, Channel 4 News, Al-Wafd all published articles on the **destruction of funerary statues from Palmyra**. ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0105.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/islamic-state/11714448/Islamic-State-takes-sledge-hammer-to-irreplaceable-ancient-Palmyra-ruins.html>

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-33369701>

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2015/07/03/islamic-state-palmyra/29661517/>

<http://halabnews.net/news/67827>

<http://www.i24news.tv/en/news/international/middle-east/76985-150702-is-destroys-statue-outside-syria-s-palmyra-museum>

<http://www.channel4.com/news/palmyra-statues-destroyed-by-isis-militants>

<http://alwafd.org/874392/علي-بالصور-تدمير-داعش-لآثار-سوريا-عرض-مستمر>

- *The Guardian* published an article titled “**Isis militants destroy 2,000-year-old statue of lion at Palmyra museum.**”
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/02/isis-militants-destroy-palmyra-stone-lion-al-lat>
- A roundtable meeting organized by the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) and its Centre for Financial Crime and Security Studies titled “**Fighting Terrorist Financing: The Threat of Cultural Destruction and ISIS**,” which focused on the need for new security strategies and international action to prevent extremism and its funding through the destruction of cultural heritage and the trafficking of stolen antiquities, was held in London.
http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/the_struggle_against_cultural_cleansing_is_a_security_imperative/
- *National Geographic* published an article titled “**ISIS Destruction of Ancient Sites Hits Mostly Muslim Targets**”(by Kristin Romney).
<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2015/07/150702-ISIS-Palmyra-destruction-salafism-sunni-shiite-sufi-Islamic-State/>
- *The Daily Sabah* published an article titled “**First aid to cultural heritage in times of crisis**”(by Hasan Ay).
<http://www.dailysabah.com/arts-culture/2015/07/02/first-aid-to-cultural-heritage-in-times-of-crisis>

- *The Guardian* published an article titled “**Unesco impotence takes shine off world heritage status**”(by Oliver Wainwright).
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/02/unesco-impotence-world-heritage-status>
 - *BBC* posted a video titled “**Civilisation under attack**” (narrated by Dan Cruickshank).
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b0615mxc/dan-cruickshanks-civilisation-under-attack>
- July 1, 2015
- ASOR** and the **Archaeological Institute of America (AIA)** released a statement regarding **H.R. 1493** in response to an open letter the organizations received
<http://www.asor.org/news/2015/07/HR-1493.html>
- **UNESCO** inscribed the World Heritage Site of Hatra to the List of World Heritage in Danger due to damage inflicted to the property by armed groups.
<http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1309>
 - **UNESCO** published a press release announcing its collaboration with **UNITAR-UNOSAT** to protect cultural heritage using geospatial technologies.
<http://en.unesco.org/news/unesco-and-unitar-unosat-team-protect-cultural-heritage-geo-spatial-technologies-0>
 - **Irina Bokova, Director General of UNESCO**, presented a talk titled “Cultural Heritage: Extremism's New Target” at the Chatham House, the Royal Institute of International Affairs.
<http://www.chathamhouse.org/event/cultural-heritage-extremisms-new-target>
 - *The New York Times* published an article titled “**The Islamic State’s Advantage at Historic Sites**” (by Sarah Almukhtar).
<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/06/29/world/middleeast/isis-historic-sites-control.html>
 - *The Guardian* published an article titled “**Unesco to use satellites to monitor ancient sites threatened by Isis**” (by Ewin MacAskill).
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/01/unesco-to-use-satellites-to-monitor-ancient-sites-threaten-by-isis>
 - **APSA** posted an update on the state of the **Altounbougha Mosque** in Aleppo, which remains in good condition.
<http://apsa2011.com/apsanew/alep-actual-state-of-the-altounbougha-mosque/>

- **APSA** posted photographs and a video of damage to the **Bab al-Nasr – Hammam al-Almagi** in Aleppo.
<http://apsa2011.com/apsanew/alep-actual-state-of-the-altounbougha-mosque/>
- June 30, 2015 The **DGAM** states that local community at Palmyra verified that **ISIL militants destroyed the Al-Lat lion statue** which was located in the front of the entrance hallway of the Museum of Palmyra.
<http://dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=1731>
- June 29, 2015 *Illicit Cultural Property* published a blog post titled “**The lack of options to combat heritage loss in Syria**” (by Derek Fincham).
<http://illicitculturalproperty.com/the-lack-of-options-to-combat-heritage-loss-in-syria/>
- *The Financial Times* published an article titled “**How antiquities are funding terrorism**” (by Andrea Burns).
<http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/fbecb8a2-09df-11e5-a6a8-00144feabdc0.html>
- June 28, 2015 *Bloomberg* published an article titled “**Islamic State is Selling Looted Art Online for Needed Cash**” (by Sangwon Yoon).
<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-06-28/isis-has-new-cash-cow-art-loot-it-s-peddling-on-ebay-facebook>
- **An appeal for the international community to counter the new threat of violent extremism and cultural cleansing was issued at the opening of the 39th session of World Heritage Committee** being held in Bonn, Germany. The meeting is being held between June 28 until July 8, 2015.
<http://en.unesco.org/news/world-heritage-committee-opens-appeal-protect-cultural-heritage-sites-targeted-destruction>
- June 26, 2015 *The New York Times* published an op-ed titled “**Yemeni Heritage, Saudi Vandalism**” (by Lamya Khalidi).
<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/27/opinion/yemeni-heritage-saudi-vandalism.html>
- *The Huffington Post* published an article titled “**Save Palmyra from ISIS’s Rampage**” (by Raza Rumi).
<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/raza-rumi/save-palmyra-from-isis-s-r b 7659742.html>
- The **UNESCO World Heritage Centre** published a special issue of its quarterly magazine *World Heritage* titled “**Iraq’s Heritage: A Treasure Under Threat.**”
<http://whc.unesco.org/en/review/77/>

- June 25, 2015 *Metro News* published an article titled “**Toronto man defies ISIS, using neo-Assyrian tablets.**”
<http://metronews.ca/news/canada/1408981/toronto-man-takes-on-isis-using-neo-assyrian-tablets/>
- June 24, 2015 *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *CNN*, and *CCTV* all published articles on the **destruction of two Islamic tombs in Palmyra.**
<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/25/world/middleeast/islamic-state-isis-destroys-palmyra-tombs.html>
http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/islamic-state-group-blows-up-2-mausoleums-in-syrias-palmyra/2015/06/24/2df6432-1a5a-11e5-bed8-1093ee58dad0_story.html
<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/06/24/middleeast/syria-isis-palmyra-shrines/index.html>
<http://www.cctv-america.com/2015/06/24/is-starts-destroying-ancient-tombs-in-syrias-palmyra-official>
- *The National* published an opinion piece titled “**Syria needs a museum in exile...and quickly**” (by Rashmee Roshan Lall).
<http://www.thenational.ae/opinion/comment/syria-needs-a-museum-in-exile--and-quickly>
 - Almada Press published an article titled “**Daesh’ forms a committee to demolish the tombs and mausoleums in Hawija, Kirkuk**” (داعش‘ يشكل لجنة لهدم المقابر والأضرحة في الحويجة). ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 15-0087.
<http://almadapress.com/ar/news/50643/>
[داعش-يشكل-لجنة-لهدم-المقابر-والأضرحة](http://almadapress.com/ar/news/50643/)
 - *Conflict Antiquities* published a blog post titled “**How does destroying buildings save children? (It doesn’t)**” (by Sam Hardy).
<https://conflictantiquities.wordpress.com/2015/06/24/syria-islamic-state-destruction-hypocrisy-waste-welfare/>
- June 23, 2015 *Vocativ* published a blog post titled “**Even United Nations Can’t Keep Track of ISIS’ Antiquities Destruction**” (by Emily Feldman).
<http://www.vocativ.com/world/isis-2/even-unesco-cant-keep-track-of-isis-destruction-of-antiquities/>
- June 22, 2015 *USA Today* published an article titled “**Rebels, Syrian government work together to protect antiquities**” (by Riham Kusa).
<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2015/06/22/syria-archaeology/28977009/>

- *Le Figaro* published an article titled “**Michel al-Maqdissi: ‘Daech veut anéantir l’identité syrienne’**” (by Alicia Paulet and Sophie Vincelot).
<http://www.lefigaro.fr/culture/2015/06/22/03004-20150622ARTFIG00252-michel-al-maqdissi-daech-veut-aneantir-l-identite-syrienne.php>
 - *USA Today* published an article titled “**Rebels, Syrian government work together to protect antiquities**” (by Riham Kusa).
<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2015/06/22/syria-archaeology/28977009/>
- June 21, 2015
- Conflict Antiquities* published a blog post titled “**Is it plausible that this is the Islamic State’s plan to blow up the Temple of Bel?**” (by Sam Hardy).
<https://conflictantiquities.wordpress.com/2015/06/21/syria-palm-ira-islamic-state-destruction-plan-temple-of-bel/>

Military and Political Context

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

1. Kobani, Aleppo Governorate
 - On Thursday, June 25, ISIL carried out two offensives in the town of Kobani on the Turkish border. Reports said that ISIL set off a truck bomb, engaged in clashes with local Kurdish forces, killed and took citizens hostage, and set off multiple suicide bombs. The death toll is unclear, but all sides — ISIL and civilians along with Kurdish fighters — suffered substantial losses.² One of the targets of the attack appeared to be the leader, Abu Issa, of the main Syrian rebel battalion fighting alongside the Kurds, Thuwar al-Raqqa or Raqqa Revolutionaries.³
 - The YPG has accused the Turkish army of facilitating the attack in an effort to help ISIL prevent the Kurds from consolidating control over territory adjoining Turkey. In response, Tanju Bilgic, a Turkish Foreign Ministry spokesman, said the Turkish government had evidence the attacks originated from the ISIL-controlled Syrian town of Jarablus.⁴

² <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/26/world/middleeast/isis-attacks-two-border-towns-in-northern-syria.html> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-33266399> ; http://www.lemonde.fr/proche-orient/article/2015/06/25/attaque-de-l-etat-islamique-a-kobane_4661207_3218.html

³ http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/islamic-state-returns-to-kobane-five-months-after-it-was-driven-out/2015/06/25/43498253-efce-44f8-bc6d-3000acc87d4e_story.html

⁴ http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/islamic-state-returns-to-kobane-five-months-after-it-was-driven-out/2015/06/25/43498253-efce-44f8-bc6d-3000acc87d4e_story.html

- Violence extended into Friday, June 26 as ISIL fighters continued to infiltrate Kobani and kill citizens. Early reports indicated that over one hundred residents were killed. If this death toll is confirmed, the attack would be one of the largest mass killings by jihadists in Syria since ISIL started claiming territory in the country.⁵
 - On Saturday, June 27, Kurdish forces reportedly cleared Kobani and residents began to return from Turkey.⁶
2. Aleppo Governorate
- Late on Thursday, July 2, two insurgent coalitions launched an offensive on government-held areas in the city of Aleppo that lasted into Friday. Fighting took place on the ground and in the form of airstrikes; many civilians have been killed in addition to fighters. Turkey sent reinforcements to its borders in case fighting seeped across the border.⁷
 - As part of the Aleppo offensive, the al Qaeda affiliated al Nusra Front and its close ally Ahrar al-Sham formed a new coalition called Ansar al-Sharia with the aim of the "liberation of Aleppo and its countryside" and eventually ruling the city in a "joint covenant...according to the rules of Sharia."⁸
3. Raqqa Area, Raqqa Governorate
- On Tuesday, June 23, Kurdish YPG fighters, backed by Syrian rebel fighters and U.S. coalition-led airstrikes, captured the town of Ain Issa, just 30 miles/ 50 kilometers north of ISIL's headquarters in Raqqa. This advance comes after the YPG captured Tel Abyad last week.⁹
 - On Wednesday, June 24, the Kurds said that ISIL had dug trenches around the city of Raqqa. Other reports alleged increased vehicle convoys were headed into the city and key supply routes were being cut.¹⁰
 - On Saturday, July 4 and Sunday, July 5, the U.S.-led coalition launched a series of intensive airstrikes on the city of Raqqa, killing a number of ISIL militants and wounding others.¹¹
4. Hasakah, Hasakah Governorate
- The United Nations stated that clashes in Hasakah have displaced around 60,000 people, and warned that as many as 200,000 may eventually flee.¹²

⁵ <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/27/world/middleeast/mass-killings-by-isis-fighters-in-syrian-kurdish-town.html>

⁶ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-33299306>

⁷ <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/04/world/middleeast/aleppo-fighting-flares-up-as-syria-rebels-renew-attacks.html>

⁸ <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/04/world/middleeast/aleppo-fighting-flares-up-as-syria-rebels-renew-attacks.html>

⁹ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-33234648>

¹⁰ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-33253497>

¹¹ <http://www.ibtimes.com/isis-ramadan-attacks-continue-us-iraq-counterattack-1996084> ; <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/u-s-coalition-airstrikes-de-facto-isis-capital-raqqa-syria/>

¹² <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/27/world/middleeast/mass-killings-by-isis-fighters-in-syrian-kurdish-town.html>

- On Thursday, June 25, ISIL attacked the city of Hasakah.¹³
 - On Friday, June 26, ISIL blew up a security building and launched another assault on government-held areas of the city. The Kurdish YPG and the Syrian army fought separate battles against ISIL into that night. The city is divided into areas run by President Bashar al-Assad's government and Kurdish authorities. The YPG, which controls northern parts of city, says it won't cooperate with government forces.¹⁴ Meanwhile, the government urged residents to take up arms against ISIL.¹⁵
 - On Thursday, July 2, the U.S. Pentagon announced that it had killed Tariq bin Tahar al-Awni al-Harzi in an airstrike in Shaddadi, Syria on June 16. The Pentagon reported him to be an ISIL leader who raised money, secured arms, and transported fighters for the militant group.¹⁶
 - On Sunday, July 5, ISIL suicide bombers blew up an explosive-filled truck near a power plant that served the city of Hasakah.¹⁷
5. Daraa, Daraa Governorate
- On Thursday, June 25, a coalition of mostly moderate rebel units launched an offensive to capture the city of Daraa from the Syrian government.¹⁸

Other key points:

- The U.S. announced on Thursday, June 25, that it would send more than \$360 million in additional assistance for those affected by the Syrian civil war.
- On Wednesday, July 1, the United Nations announced that it would cut food aid from the World Food Program for Syrians because of a lack of funding. The Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees called on the international community to contribute more.¹⁹ The U.N. has predicted that there will be 4.27 million Syrian refugees in the region by the end of 2015.²⁰
- On Thursday, July 2, Prime Minister David Cameron stated that he wanted the British Parliament to "be thinking about" authorizing Britain to join the U.S.-led coalition in its bombing efforts in Syria. Britain already conducts airstrikes in Iraq, but Cameron expressed an interest in expanding operations to Syria after a gunman with allegiance to ISIL killed 30 British tourists in Tunisia.²¹

¹³ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-33266399>

¹⁴ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/06/27/us-mideast-crisis-syria-idUSKBN0P706X20150627>

¹⁵ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/06/27/us-mideast-crisis-syria-idUSKBN0P706X20150627>

¹⁶ Reuters, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/03/world/middleeast/syria-strike-kills-an-isis-leader.html> ; <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/jul/2/tariq-bin-tahar-al-awin-al-harzi-islamic-state-lea/>

¹⁷ <http://www.ibtimes.com/islamic-state-attacks-power-plant-hasaka-northeast-syria-army-1996054>

¹⁸ http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/islamic-state-returns-to-kobane-five-months-after-it-was-driven-out/2015/06/25/43498253-efce-44f8-bc6d-3000acc87d4e_story.html;

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/26/world/middleeast/isis-attacks-two-border-towns-in-northern-syria.html>

¹⁹ http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/un-slashes-food-aid-to-syrian-refugees/2015/07/01/98297196-1ff3-11e5-a135-935065bc30d0_story.html

²⁰ Reuters, <http://news.yahoo.com/short-cash-u-n-cuts-syria-refugees-rations-115334282.html>

²¹ <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/03/world/europe/britain-syria-islamic-state-airstrikes-isis.html>

- On Saturday, July 4, Syrian government forces and their allies from the Lebanese Shiite group Hezbollah began an offensive against insurgents in Zabadani, Lebanon. The attack was seen as part of an ongoing effort for the Syrian government to maintain control of the Damascus-Beirut highway.²²

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

1. Baghdad Area, Baghdad Governorate
 - On Saturday, June 27, a bomb exploded near a crowded market in the Obeidi District of eastern Baghdad; a second bomb exploded in the Doura district of southern Baghdad;²³ a third bomb exploded in the western neighborhood of Baiyaa, all resulting in a number of casualties.²⁴
 - On Monday, June 29, drive-by shooters killed a pro-government Sunni tribal sheikh along with his three guards in Tarmiyah, 50 kilometers/30 miles north of Baghdad. A number of citizens were wounded the same day in a bomb explosion in Baghdad's western Ghazaliyah neighborhood.²⁵
2. Baghdad Governorate
 - On Sunday, July 5, a number of people were killed by a bomb in the mainly Shiite district of Shulaa, and additional people were killed by a bomb in Hussainiya. ISIL was the presumed aggressor.²⁶
 - On Monday, July 6, an Iraqi fighter jet accidentally dropped a bomb over the eastern neighborhood of New Baghdad. Numerous people were killed and many injured. Additional attacks in Arab Jabour, Abu Ghraib, and Ghazaliyah neighborhoods killed and injured more civilians.²⁷
3. Al Anbar Governorate
 - ISIL spokesman Abu Mohammed al-Adnani called for those still fighting against ISIL in the Anbar Governorate to put down their weapons on Tuesday, June 23. He singled out the Jughaifa tribe in the town of Haditha.²⁸
 - On Thursday, June 25, ISIL fighters launched an assault on Iraqi army forces that were guarding the Nathim al-Taqsam Dam, northeast of Fallujah. The Iraqi army then chased the ISIL fighters, and later in the day a suicide car bomb and another attack by a gunmen occurred in the region.²⁹

²² <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/05/world/middleeast/syria-forces-and-hezbollah-attack-insurgents-near-lebanon.html>

²³ <http://af.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idAFKBNOP70HG20150627>

²⁴ <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB11871130314313103897904581073871078323898> ; <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2015/0627/Baghdad-bomb-blasts-targeting-public-places-kill-12-people>

²⁵ AP, <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/iraq-attacks-inside-baghdad-kill-people-32097977>

²⁶ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/07/05/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-idUSKCN0PF0EA20150705> ; <http://www.newshour.com.bd/2015/07/05/islamic-state-suicide-bombers-strike-in-iraqi-refinery-town/>

²⁷ <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/945fcb468c244c73926b730c45d143fc/iraqi-fighter-jet-drops-bomb-over-baghdad-kills-9-people>

²⁸ AFP, <http://news.yahoo.com/calls-jihad-martyrdom-during-ramadan-192227321.html>

²⁹ <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/06/iraq-hit-deadly-attacks-150625125805023.html>

- On Saturday, June 27, Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi stated that Iraqi forces made an "unauthorized" withdrawal from Ramadi last month, which led to ISIL's takeover of the city. He maintains that the orders were for Iraqi forces to resist ISIL.³⁰
 - Early on Sunday, July 5, the Iraqi Army's Anbar Operations Command launched air strikes in Ramadi, killing and injuring numerous people thought to be involved with ISIL while they were playing soccer.³¹
 - On Sunday, July 5, Iraqi government forces shelled areas in northern Fallujah, killing a number of people, including citizens. That afternoon, ISIL launched an attack against an Iraqi Quick Reaction Force that was protecting the Nathim al-Taqsim Dam northeast of Fallujah.
4. Baiji, Salah ad Din Governorate
- Between June 28–29 Iraqi government forces and Popular Mobilization units drove ISIL militants away from the city of Baiji.³²
 - On the night of Saturday, July 4, ISIL suicide bombers attacked Baiji and clashes ensued. The Iraqi army and Shiite Hashd Shaabi forces were forced to retreat from the town. Army officers said that the army and Hashd groups were preparing a response.³³

Other key points:

- On Tuesday, June 23, ISIL spokesman Abu Mohammed al-Adnani called for Muslims to engage in jihad and become martyrs during the month of Ramadan.³⁴
- Iraq's Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi announced that security forces arrested Abdel Baqi al-Sadun on Thursday, June 25. Al-Sadun was a senior official in charge of Baath Party formations in southern Iraq during the Saddam Hussein era. He had been wanted for his role in repressing the Shiite uprising of 1991.³⁵
- For the first time, ISIL fighters have seized substantial territory in Afghanistan. During the reporting period, ISIL reportedly captured 21 Nangarhar districts from Taliban insurgents.³⁶

³⁰ AFP, <http://news.yahoo.com/iraq-forces-made-unauthorised-withdrawal-ramadi-pm-132106614.html>

³¹ <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/07/scores-killed-iraqi-army-raids-anbar-province-150705065022342.html> ;
<http://www.ibtimes.com/isis-ramadan-attacks-continue-us-iraq-counterattack-1996084>
; <http://www.newshour.com.bd/2015/07/05/islamic-state-suicide-bombers-strike-in-iraqi-refinery-town/>
³² <http://www.ibtimes.com/iraqi-government-forces-take-control-baiji-oil-refinery-1988773>

³³ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/07/05/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-idUSKCN0PF0EA20150705> ;
<http://www.newshour.com.bd/2015/07/05/islamic-state-suicide-bombers-strike-in-iraqi-refinery-town/>

³⁴ AFP, <http://news.yahoo.com/calls-jihad-martyrdom-during-ramadan-192227321.html>

³⁵ <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB11871130314313103897904581073871078323898> ;
<http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2015/0627/Baghdad-bomb-blasts-targeting-public-places-kill-12-people>

³⁶ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/06/29/us-afghanistan-islamic-state-idUSKCN0P91EN20150629>

Incident Reports: Syria

SHI 15-0104

Report Date: July 5, 2015

Site Name: UNESCO World Heritage Site of Palmyra

Date of Incident: May 27, 2015

Location: Roman theater at the archaeological site of Palmyra, Tadmor, Homs Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Roman amphitheater (See [ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0096](#) for additional details for all of ancient Palmyra).

Site Date: Roman

Source of Destruction: Militarization —used as site for mass execution.

Pattern: On May 27, 2015 the Syrian Organization for Human Rights (SOHR) reported that ISIL militants executed “Rawafed and Nusayriyya (Shiite and Alawite) from the regime forces and allied militiamen” in the Roman amphitheater of the World Heritage Site of Palmyra.³⁷ These executions took place shortly after ISIL militants captured the town of Tadmor on May 21, 2015.

On July 4, 2015 ISIL social media accounts released a video showing 25 men in military uniforms being executed in the Roman amphitheater of the archaeological site of Palmyra. The public execution was conducted by young boys in front of an ISIL flag before a crowd of civilian men and children, some of whom appear upset and a few are crying.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI is directing critical attention to the condition of all periods of cultural heritage at Palmyra, given the high visibility and ongoing significance of the city and UNESCO World Heritage Site. The use of a cultural heritage site as a stage for the execution of military prisoners in front of civilians is both an affront to human decency and a violation of numerous laws of war and international humanitarian laws.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Al Jazeera:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/07/isil-video-shows-mass-killings-syria-palmyra-150704171332644.html>

CNN: <http://www.cnn.com/2015/07/04/middleeast/isis-execution-palmyra-syria/>

³⁷ <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/>

VICE News:

<http://news.vice.com/article/islamic-state-releases-gruesome-video-showing-mass-execution-of-syrian-soldiers-in-palmyra>

VOA News:

<http://www.voanews.com/content/islamic-state-video-shows-mass-execution-palmyra/2848998.html>

France 24: <http://www.france24.com/en/20150704-isis-is-group-video-mass-shooting-palmyra>

Syrian Observatory for Human Rights:

<http://www.syriahr.com/en/2015/07/is-slaughters-a-soldier-and-executes-25-others-in-the-roman-theater/>



ISIL flag placed on the Roman theater of Palmyra (Video still; July 4, 2014)



ISIL militants driving near the archaeological site of Palmyra (Video still; July 4, 2014)³⁸

³⁸ Out of respect for the victims and their families, ASOR CHI will not reproduce images of the execution.

SHI 15-0105

Report Date: July 5, 2015

Site Name: Palmyrene objects removed from Palmyra

Date of Incident: July 2, 2015

Location: Manbij, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

Site Description: —

Site Date: Statues appear Palmyrene in style

Source of Destruction: Intentional performative destruction.

Pattern: On July 2, 2015 ISIL social media accounts released photographs depicting militants destroying funerary busts from the archaeological site of Palmyra. ISIL militants are shown displaying the statues to a crowd gathered in the central town square and then breaking the statues with sledgehammers. Some sources allege that the statues were being smuggled by an antiquities trafficker, who was caught by ISIL militants.³⁹ Other sources say that it was an activist smuggling the busts to safety.⁴⁰ Both accounts state that the person caught possessing the statues received a public lashing as punishment.⁴¹ Allegedly an “archaeological administration” was established by ISIL in town of Manbij, located near the Turkish border, to manage the trafficking and sale of artifacts.⁴²

This comes after a June 22, 2015 report stated that explosives had been laid inside parts of the UNESCO World Heritage Ancient Site of Palmyra, located in Homs Governorate, but the report asserted that the specific targets could not be determined. The report also stated that the “same sources” noted that the “al-Lat” Lion Statue, which had been relocated from the entrance of the Temple of al-Lat to the hall of the Museum of Palmyra, had been reported as destroyed on June 20, 2015.⁴³ Media outlets reported on July 2, 2015 that the al-Lat statue had been destroyed,⁴⁴ but no video or photographic evidence of this incident were available at the time of publication.

³⁹ <http://apsa2011.com/apsanew/palmyra-arrest-of-a-dealer-of-archaeological-objects-from-palmyra-and-acts-of-vandalism-by-isis-in-minbeij/> ; <http://www.shrc.org/en/?p=25317>

⁴⁰ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3147298/ISIS-sledgehammer-civilization-Islamist-group-capture-activists-trying-smuggle-ancient-statues-safety-force-destroy-lashing-baying-crowd.html#ixzz3eISvVCUC>

⁴¹ <http://www.cnn.com/2015/07/02/world/isis-syrian-artifacts/> ;

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/04/world/middleeast/isis-destroys-artifacts-palmyra-syria-iraq.html>

⁴² <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-06-28/isis-has-new-cash-cow-art-loot-it-s-peddling-on-ebay-facebook>

⁴³ <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1725>

⁴⁴ <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/02/isis-militants-destroy-palmyra-stone-lion-al-lat>

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI is directing critical attention to the condition of all periods of cultural heritage at Palmyra, given the high visibility and ongoing significance of the city and UNESCO World Heritage Site. Additionally, ASOR CHI is documenting episodes of intentional performative destruction and antiquities trafficking.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

NY Times:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/04/world/middleeast/isis-destroys-artifacts-palmyra-syria-iraq.html>

CNN: <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/07/02/world/isis-syrian-artifacts/index.html>

UNESCO:

http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/irina_bokova_condemns_latest_destruction_of_cultural_property_from_the_site_of_palmyra_in_syria

Telegraph:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/islamic-state/11714448/Islamic-State-takes-sledge-hammer-to-irreplaceable-ancient-Palmyra-ruins.html>

BBC: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-33369701>

USA Today:

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2015/07/03/islamic-state-palmyra/29661517/>

Halab News: <http://halabnews.net/news/67827>

Channel 4 News: <http://www.channel4.com/news/palmyra-statues-destroyed-by-isis-militants>

Alwafd: <http://alwafd.org/عالمي/874392-بالصور-تدمير-داعش-لآثار-سوريا-عرض-مستمر>

The Guardian:

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/02/isis-militants-destroy-palmyra-stone-lion-al-lat>



Destruction of Palmyrene statuery (APSA; July 3, 2015)



Destruction of Palmyrene statuery (APSA; July 3, 2015)



ISIL militants passing judgement (APSA; July 3, 2015)



ISIL militants flogging "smuggler" (APSA; July 3, 2015)



Destruction of Palmyrene statuary (APSA; July 3, 2015)



Destruction of Palmyrene statuary (APSA; July 3, 2015)



Destruction of Palmyrene statuary (APSA; July 3, 2015)



Palmyrene statuary destroyed by ISIL militants (APSA; July 3, 2015)



Palmyrene statuary destroyed by ISIL militants (APSA; July 3, 2015)



Palmyrene statuary destroyed by ISIL militants (APSA; July 3, 2015)



Palmyrene statuary destroyed by ISIL militants (APSA; July 3, 2015)



Palmyrene statuary destroyed by ISIL militants (APSA; July 3, 2015)



Palmyrene statuary destroyed by ISIL militants (APSA; July 3, 2015)

SHI 15-0106

Report Date: July 5, 2015

Site Name: Daraa National Museum

Date of Incident: July 3, 2015

Location: Daraa, Daraa Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Regional museum that houses archaeological finds from the area; regional headquarters for the DGAM were also located in this facility.

Site Date: —

Source of Destruction: Combat-related damage.

Pattern: On July 3, 2015 the Directorate General of Museums and Antiquities stated that the museum suffered non-structural damage to the building and garden due to nearby military operations. Windows and doors in the museum were blown out and cracks appeared in walls, and the pool on the garden grounds was damaged. The Daraa antiquities department was able reach the museum and temporarily close the damaged areas. The DGAM reported that the museum's collection had been recently relocated prior to the damage, and exhibit cases appear empty in photographs following the incident. Large stone artifacts (i.e. dark basalt sarcophagi and fragments of column capitals) do appear present in the background of images of the museum's garden.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI is monitoring the condition of the Daraa Museum, given its significance as a cultural repository.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

DGAM: <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1735>



Museum of Daraa, interior damage (DGAM; July 3, 2015)



Museum of Daraa, interior damage (DGAM; July 3, 2015)



Museum of Daraa, interior damage (DGAM; July 3, 2015)



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july, 2015

Museum of Daraa, interior damage (DGAM; July 3, 2015)



Museum of Daraa, exterior damage (DGAM; July 3, 2015)



Museum of Daraa, exterior damage (DGAM; July 3, 2015)



Museum of Daraa, exterior damage (DGAM; July 3, 2015)

SHI 15-0107

Report Date: July 5, 2015

Site Name: Qal'at al-Tall (Citadel al-Koukou) and Bloudane

Date of Incident: July 3-5, 2015

Location: Qal'at al-Tall lies West of modern Al-Zabadani, Rif Dimashq Governorate, Syria. Bloudane is located immediately east of Al-Zabadani

Site Description: Dr. Michel Al-Maqdissi provided the following information, "There is a rupestre complex (cave, cistern, well, Greek inscriptions, sculptures) from Roman times with an important phase of the Byzantine era. Likewise... the monuments which are at the height of Bloudane (temples called 'high place') have [also] been partially destroyed recently."

Site Date: Roman through Byzantine eras

Source of Destruction: Combat damage

Pattern: On July 3, 2015 the Syrian Army supported by the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah launched an attack on the strategic rebel-controlled town of Al-Zabadani.⁴⁵ An attack on the ancient citadel — a commanding highpoint — west of the town formed part of this larger offensive. The town is located on the major road linking Damascus and Beirut, and is held by Sunni rebels.⁴⁶ Multiple airstrikes and barrel bombs have hit the town during this military offensive.⁴⁷

The Arab Source (Al Masdar News) reports:

On Saturday morning [July 4], the soldiers from the 4th Mechanized Division steamrolled a joint Jabhat Al-Nusra, Harakat Ahrar Al-Sham, and Liwaa Suqour Al-Zabadani (Zabadani Hawks Brigade) contingent at Qal'at Al-Tal, capturing this castle and its surrounding barriers in the West Hills of Al-Zabadani after a series of fierce clashes that included the participation of Hezbollah, the National Defense Forces and the Syrian Arab Air Force.

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

⁴⁵ <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/07/syria-army-hezbollah-storm-rebel-held-zabadani-150705100934545.html>

⁴⁶ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-33394905>

⁴⁷ <http://www.syriahr.com/en/2015/07/clashes-continue-in-zabdani-and-aleppo-countryside/> ;
<http://www.syriahr.com/en/2015/07/more-than-30-airstrikes-target-al-zabadani-and-clashes-take-place-in-the-west-of-rif-dimashq/> ;
<http://www.syriahr.com/en/2015/07/32-explosive-barrels-hit-al-zabdani-amid-clashes-in-the-area> ;
<http://www.syriahr.com/en/2015/07/more-than-20-air-strikes-and-44-explosive-barrels-target-al-zabdani/>
/

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Al Masdar News:

<http://www.almasdarnews.com/article/syrian-armed-forces-and-hezbollah-suffocate-al-qaeda-in-al-zabadani/>



DigitalGlobe image of Qal'at al-Tall (Citadel al-Koukou) (DigitalGlobe; July 5, 2015).

SHI 15-0108

Report Date: July 1, 2015

Site Name: Ger Senli

Date of Incident: Mechanized earthmover damage first appears on the southwest corner of this mound in a DigitalGlobe image dated June 28, 2015. The damage occurred sometime within the last two years.

Location: Aleppo Governorate, Syria. The mound of Ger Senli is located near the Turkey-Syria border southwest of the modern village Karsanil. The site is south of Gaziantep Turkey and north of Al-Bab Syria in a region of heavy antiquities looting and trafficking.

Site Description: Small archaeological mound.

Site Date: Unknown

Source of Destruction: Illegal digging possibly connected to antiquities looting.

Pattern: Heavy looting in northern Syria.

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



Ger Senli, prior to damage (DigitalGlobe; March 29, 2013).



Ger Senli, showing damage to the mound's southwest quadrant (DigitalGlobe; June 28, 2015).

SHI 15-0109

Report Date: July 1, 2015

Site Name: Archaeological complex — Names Unknown

Date of Incident: Since November 2014

Location: Immediately south of the Turkey-Syria border in Aleppo Governorate northwest of the modern village of Al-Haluwaniyeh.

Site Description: Medium-sized high mound in the west with surrounding lower tell (especially to the east) and a low mounded area to the east possibly covered by a modern cemetery,

Site Date: Unknown

Source of Destruction: Trenching, road and berm construction, and flattening of the top of the western high mound and the low mound starting on or after November 2014. Small pits are visible on the western high mound. Pre-conflict damage is also discernible. Archaeological deposits removed from the western high mound have been dumped at the southwest slope of the lower eastern mound. The damage appears linked to a likely ISIL militarization of this mound for monitoring the nearby Turkish border and controlling access to the road network hubbing in the nearby modern village of Al-Haluwaniyeh.

Pattern: Militarization of archaeological mounds. ISIL militarization of mounds along the Turkish border.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: Further research should provide the name of this mound complex.



Unnamed mound including high tell and low surrounding mounds near modern Al-Haluwaniyeh to the east, looting activity is visible on the northwest lower slope of the high mound (DigitalGlobe; July 18, 2010).



Unnamed mound including high tell and low surrounding mounds near modern Al-Haluwaniyeh, looting activity is visible on the northwest lower slope of the high mound (DigitalGlobe; September 6, 2014).



Unnamed mound with high tell in the west and surrounding low mounded area in the east near modern Al-Haluwaniyeh, looting on the high mound appears to have increased and there is disturbance of the low mound (DigitalGlobe; October 27, 2014).



Unnamed mound (high tell in the west, surrounding low mound, and a low mounded area in the east) near modern Al-Haluwaniyeh, the summit of the high mound has been levelled and a protected road and trench lead up to this area from the village in the east and earthmoving activities and trenching are visible on the southwestern low mound – this disturbance appears to be caused by the ISIL militarization of this mound (DigitalGlobe; June 28, 2015).

Incident Reports: Iraq

IHI 15-0087

Report Date: July 5, 2015

Site Name: The Tomb of Imam Ismail (Imm Isml; Shrine of Sheikh Ismail)

Date of Incident: July 3, 2015

Location: Near Tawilah, Hawija district, Kirkuk Governorate, Iraq

Site Description: Tomb and shrine located near the archaeological ruins of the Islamic town of al-Bawazij. The shrine is a place of pilgrimage for followers of the Ismaili sect of Shia Islam.

Site Date: Middle of the 13th century CE to modern day with possible earlier Abbasid Era (566-1258 CE) remains.

Source of Destruction: ISIL deliberate destruction.

Pattern: On July 3, 2015, ASOR CHI received information from an expert source that the Shrine of Imam Ismail was destroyed. According to the report, ISIL has formed a committee to demolish the graves and tombs of the clergy in the Hawija province during the month of Ramadan. ISIL militants are reportedly using explosive devices planted in the graves and tombs, targeting sites associated with clerics and imams and other symbols they consider idolatrous.

On November 25, 2014, *Kirkuk Now* and *Rudaw* reported that ISIL bombed the shrine of Sheikh Ismail in the Hbejh Saud village south of Kirkuk using a number of improvised explosive devices. It reports that the bombing led to the destruction of the shrine in full without any casualties.⁴⁸

In 2006, reports stated that insurgents blew up the tomb of Imam Ismail near the village of Shikha. They placed a bomb inside the tomb.⁴⁹ The tomb may have been rebuilt or after this destruction.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Almada Press: <http://almadapress.com/ar/news/50643/داعش-يشكل-لجنة-لهدم-المقابر-والأضرحة>

⁴⁸ <http://kirkuknow.com/arabic/?p=39867#ixzz3KCDtv1q4> ;
<http://rudaw.net/arabic/kurdistan/261120144>

⁴⁹ http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/2006-10-29/news/0610280472_1_al-maliki-al-sadr-prime-minister-nouri

New York Times:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/04/world/middleeast/isis-destroys-artifacts-palmyra-syria-iraq.html>



The Tomb and Shrine of Imam Ismail before destruction (Anonymous source; Date unknown)



The Tomb and Shrine of Imam Ismail after destruction (Anonymous source; Date unknown)