

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

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Michael D. Danti, Marina Gabriel, Allison Cuneo, Susan Penacho, William Reynolds, Kyra Kaercher, Darren Ashby, Jamie O’Connell, Gwendolyn Kristy

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

Other Key Points

Syria

- **Deir ez-Zor Governorate**
 - A reported US-led Coalition airstrike destroyed the Umm al-Mouminein Aisha Mosque in Ruwaished Village, Deir ez-Zor Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0161**
 - Satellite imagery shows damage to an Unnamed Mosque in al-Baghiliyah, Deir ez-Zor Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0168**
- **Hama Governorate**
 - The Turkistan Islamic Party reportedly militarized Tell Qarqur in Qarqur, Hama Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0160**
- **Hasakah Governorate**
 - New video shows the condition of Mar Odisho Church in Tell Tal, Hasakah Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0032 UPDATE**
- **Idlib Governorate**
 - Looting and theft has compromised the archaeological site of Tell Danit in Qamnas, Idlib Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0163**
 - A suspected Russian airstrike damaged the Abu Bakr al-Siddiq Mosque in Jerjnaz, Idlib Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0166**
 - Reported SARG-Russian airstrikes damaged Ebla, Idlib Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0167**
 - A reported SARG airstrike damaged al-Kabir Mosque in Bdama, Idlib Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0170**
 - A reported SARG-Russian airstrike damaged al-Iman Mosque in Jisr al-Shugour, Idlib Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0171**
 - A local organization repaired al-Kabir Mosque in Sarmin, Idlib Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0172**
 - A suspected Russian airstrike damaged al-Kabir Mosque in Jisr al-Shughour, Idlib Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0173**
 - A reported SARG airstrike damaged al-Janoubi Mosque in Mazra'at al-Tis'a, Idlib Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0174**
- **Raqqa Governorate**
 - New photographs show damage to the Raqqa Museum in Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0098 UPDATE**
 - Photographs show the condition of Heraqla, in Heraqla, Raqqa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0106 UPDATE**
 - Video and photographs show the condition of Qasr al-Banat in Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0111 UPDATE**
 - A photograph shows the condition of al-Kabir Mosque in Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0114 UPDATE**
 - New video and photographs show the condition of al-Rafiqah Wall in Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0122 UPDATE**
 - New photographs show the condition of Bab Baghdad in Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0127 UPDATE**
 - Sources reported the US-led Coalition destroyed the Circassian Mosque in Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0153 UPDATE**

- Newly released photographs and video show the condition of al-Qadim Mosque in Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0157 UPDATE**
- Reported US-led Coalition airstrikes destroyed al-Firdous Mosque in Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0162**
- Reported US-led Coalition airstrike destroyed the Omar bin Abdulaziz Mosque in Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0164**
- Satellite imagery revealed damage to the Armenian Catholic Church of the Martyrs in Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0165**
- Satellite imagery revealed damage to al-Imam al-Nawawi Mosque in Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0169**
- Theft of electrical cables damaged Qalaat Jabar in Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0175**

Iraq

- **Ninawa Governorate**

- New video footage shows damage to al-Nour Mosque in Tal Afar, Ninawa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 17-0074**

Libya

- **Tripolitania**

- Ongoing fighting between two militias in Sabratha has damaged the theatre of Sabratha. **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0022**
- A historic building (R-2) was illegally torn down and replaced by a new construction in Tripoli, Tripolitania. **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0023**
- A historic building (R-3) was illegally torn down and replaced by a new construction in Tripoli, Tripolitania. **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0024**
- A historic building (R-8) was illegally torn down and replaced by a new construction in Tripoli, Tripolitania. **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0025**
- A historic building (R-9) was illegally torn down and replaced by a new construction in Tripoli, Tripolitania. **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0026**
- A historic building (R-11) was illegally torn down and replaced by a new construction in Tripoli, Tripolitania. **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0027**

Military and Political Context

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

1. Deir ez-Zor Governorate:
 - On September 6, SARG forces reached besieged Syrian troops located on the outskirts of the city of Deir ez-Zor, effectively breaking a “three-year blockade” by ISIS.²
 - On September 8, the Russian Defense Ministry reported that Russian airstrikes killed an estimated 40 ISIS fighters, including four senior commanders, near the city of Deir ez-Zor.³
 - On September 9, SARG forces captured the ISIS-held Teym oil field near the city of Deir ez-Zor, as well as part of a main highway running between the cities of Deir ez-Zor and al-Mayadin.⁴
 - On September 10, SARG and US-backed Syrian opposition forces continued separate offensives against ISIS in Deir ez-Zor Governorate. The US-backed SDF advanced into the city of Deir ez-Zor’s “industrial zone,” located a few miles east of the city. SARG forces backed by “Iran and Russian air cover” reportedly advanced west of the city, capturing the Deir ez-Zor–Damascus highway.⁵
 - On September 11–12, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported that Russian airstrikes had struck an IDP camp and ferry landing near the city of Deir ez-Zor, killing dozens of civilians. Syrian State TV later confirmed that the army was targeting rafts (likely using the ferry landing), stating that the intended target was ISIL militants using the river to leave the city of Deir ez-Zor.⁶
 - On September 12–14, US-led Coalition airstrikes killed three “senior and highly skilled” ISIS officials near al-Mayadin.⁷
 - On September 13, buses carrying ISIS militants and members of their families reached the ISIS-held town of al-Mayadin areas of Deir ez-Zor Governorate after being stranded in the desert.⁸

² <https://apnews.com/8d03e53ccc1b4a95bb0073aec7c8cf2d/Syrian-troops-breach-3-year-IS-siege-on-eastern-city> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-41146976> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria/syrian-army-fights-to-secure-corridor-into-deir-al-zor-idUSKCN1BH1G8> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria/syrian-army-allies-break-islamic-state-siege-in-eastern-city-idUSKCN1BG1G6> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-deir-alzor/syrian-army-allies-race-to-relieve-deir-al-zor-idUSKCN1BE0W4> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-41162683> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria/aid-convoy-reaches-syrias-deir-al-zor-after-three-year-siege-idUSKCN1BI1BC> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/09/syria-situation-report-august-31.html>

³ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-russia/russia-says-its-air-strike-kills-several-top-islamic-state-commanders-in-syria-idUSKCN1B10KJ>

⁴ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-army/syrian-army-seizes-oilfield-from-islamic-state-in-east-state-tv-idUSKCN1BK07K>

⁵ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-east/syria-army-u-s-backed-forces-converge-on-islamic-state-in-separate-offensives-idUSKCN1BL0KT> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/09/syria-situation-report-august-31.html>

⁶ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-41241193> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-hezbollah/hezbollah-declares-syria-victory-russia-says-much-of-country-won-back-idUSKCN1BNOYL>

⁷ <https://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1329189/strikes-kill-isis-drone-experts/source/GovDelivery/>

- On September 16, Russian airstrikes struck US-backed SDF and Coalition advisors, causing injuries to some of the forces.⁹
 - On September 16–24, pro-regime forces, backed by Russia and Iran, began the new operation “Fajr III” aimed at clearing ISIS from the Syria-Iraq border area in Deir ez-Zor Governorate, including the ISIS-held town of Abu Kamal. Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). Members of the Iraqi Shia Popular Mobilization Front (PMF) began similar operations on the other side of the border in Iraq.¹⁰
 - On September 18, pro-regime forces, backed by heavy SARG and Russian aerial bombardment, crossed the Euphrates River south of Deir ez-Zor city.¹¹
 - On September 23, the US-backed SDF captured the Conoco natural gas field—the largest gas field in Syria—from ISIS. US officials have stated that the SDF will not enter the city of Deir ez-Zor, minimizing the chances of clashes between the SDF and SARG forces.¹²
 - On September 24, Iran’s Revolutionary Guards used drones to strike ISIS bases located near the Syria-Iraq border.¹³
 - On September 25, members of the US-backed SDF reported that Russian airstrikes targeted their positions in the Conoco natural gas field, killing one fighter.¹⁴
 - On September 27, SOHR reported that SARG forces had nearly encircled ISIS militants located in the city of Deir ez-Zor.¹⁵
2. Idlib Governorate:
- On September 12, *The Guardian* reported that hundreds of ISIS defectors have “massed” in Idlib Governorate, intending to cross the Turkish border.¹⁶
 - On September 15, talks between Russia, Turkey, and Iran in Astana, Kazakhstan agreed on a “tentative deal” regarding a new “de-escalation” zone in Idlib Governorate. The deal may include a monitoring force of 500 forces from each country.¹⁷

⁸ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-41265784> ; <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/13/world/middleeast/syria-islamic-state-isis-convoy.html>

⁹ <https://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1313819/russian-strike-wounds-syrian-democratic-forces-troops/source/GovDelivery/>

¹⁰ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/09/syria-sitrep-map-september-14-27-2017.html>

¹¹ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/09/syria-sitrep-map-september-14-27-2017.html>

¹² [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle east/shelling-on-syrian-presidents-hometown-kills-2/2017/09/25/660c9248-a1dc-11e7-b573-8ec86cdfed_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/shelling-on-syrian-presidents-hometown-kills-2/2017/09/25/660c9248-a1dc-11e7-b573-8ec86cdfed_story.html) ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-sdf-usa/u-s-backed-forces-not-planning-on-entering-deir-al-zor-city-idUSKCN1BP2H9> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/09/escalation-in-eastern-syria.html>

¹³ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-syria-iran-drones/iran-says-guards-attack-islamic-state-with-drones-in-eastern-syria-idUSKCN1BZ11G>

¹⁴ https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle east/shelling-on-syrian-presidents-hometown-kills-2/2017/09/25/660c9248-a1dc-11e7-b573-8ec86cdfed_story.html ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/09/syria-sitrep-map-september-14-27-2017.html> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-sdf/u-s-backed-alliance-says-russian-jets-struck-its-fighters-in-east-syria-idUSKCN1C0118>

¹⁵ https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/russia-says-its-airstrike-kills-5-al-qaida-branch-warlords/2017/09/27/0ab91b5c-a360-11e7-b573-8ec86cdfed_story.html

¹⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/12/hundreds-of-isis-defectors-mass-on-syrian-border-hoping-to-flee>

¹⁷ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/09/syria-sitrep-map-september-14-27-2017.html> ; <http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/final-de-escalation-zone-agreed-at-syrian-peace-talks/911108> ; <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-syria-turkey-ministry/turkey-iran-and-russia-to-deploy-observers-around-syrias-idlib-idUKKCN1BQ1EH>

- On September 19, SARG airstrikes targeted three hospitals, a medical center, and a rescue service area in response to a Syrian opposition attack in Hama Governorate.¹⁸
 - On September 21, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced that Turkish troops would be deployed in Idlib Governorate as part of a “de-escalation agreement” brokered by Russia, Iran, and Turkey. According to Erdogan, Turkey will maintain security inside Idlib Governorate, while Russian will maintain security outside the region.¹⁹
 - On September 21, al-Qaeda linked militants from the so-called Levant Liberation Committee attacked 29 Russian military officers outside of Idlib, injuring three. The fighting lasted several hours, but the attackers were eventually repelled by the Russians with the help of local tribes. The following day, Russian cruise missiles reportedly targeted and killed five senior members of the Levant Liberation Committee south of the city of Idlib.²⁰
 - On September 23, reported Russian airstrikes targeted a training camp run by FSA-affiliate Failaq al-Sham, killing over 50 fighters.²¹
 - On September 23–25, SOHR reported Russian and SARG airstrikes killed at least 37 people in the town of Jisr al-Shughour. Dozens of other airstrikes struck several towns in Idlib Governorate, killing up to 100 civilians according to SOHR. Russia denied reports that its airstrikes in Idlib killed civilians.²²
3. Homs Governorate:
- On September 4, *The Washington Post* reported that an ISIS convoy stranded in the Syrian desert near al-Sokhna has “split up,” with some fighters having found their way into Iraq. Several vehicles from the convoy were reported to be headed towards Palmyra.²³

¹⁸ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-attack/jihadists-launch-big-attack-on-syrian-government-near-hama-idUSKCN1BU0Y>; <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/09/air-strikes-target-hospitals-syria-idlib-170920052632431.html>

¹⁹ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-usa-erdogan-exclusive/exclusive-turkey-to-deploy-troops-inside-syrias-idlib-erdogan-idUSKCN1BW2PT>

²⁰ https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/russia-says-its-airstrike-kills-5-al-qaida-branch-warlords/2017/09/27/0ab91b5c-a360-11e7-b573-8ec86cdfed_story.html; https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/russian-sub-fires-cruises-missiles-at-militants-in-syria/2017/09/22/8f396d9c-9f81-11e7-b2a7-bc70b6f98089_story.html

²¹ <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-syria-idlib/russia-syria-intensify-bombing-of-rebel-held-idlib-witnesses-say-idUKKCN1BZ005>

²² <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-09-26/russian-air-strikes-idlib-syria-kills-37-civilians-report/8987758>; <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-syria-idlib/russia-syria-intensify-bombing-of-rebel-held-idlib-witnesses-say-idUKKCN1BZ005>; <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-syria-russia/russia-denies-it-killed-civilians-in-air-strikes-on-syrias-idlib-idUKKCN1C10P8>; <http://www.syriaahr.com/en/?p=74277>

²³ https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/isis-fighters-on-a-stranded-convoy-may-have-escaped-to-iraq-despite-us-promises-to-stop-them/2017/09/03/fd094d16-90bc-11e7-8482-8dc9a7af29f9_story.html; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria/u-s-led-coalition-says-islamic-state-syria-convoy-split-in-two-idUSKCN1BE00Q>; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-convoy/hezbollah-says-bulk-of-is-convoy-has-left-syrian-government-area-idUSKCN1BD0HQ>; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria/u-s-led-coalition-says-still-monitoring-is-convoy-in-syria-idUSKCN1BC406>; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria/islamic-state-convoy-in-syria-appears-to-have-turned-back-u-s-led-coalition-says-idUSKCN1BB21E>

- On September 8, the US-led Coalition announced that they were ending their surveillance of the ISIS convoy stranded in the Syrian desert at the request of the Russian government.²⁴
 - On September 19, US forces and allied Arab fighters evacuated the Zakaf garrison located near the border with Iraq, relocating to the main al-Tanf base following a reported de-confliction deal with US and Russian officials.²⁵
4. Hama Governorate:
- On September 1, SARG and allied forces captured the town of Uqairabat from ISIS.²⁶
 - On September 2, SARG and allied forces advanced against ISIS after capturing the village of Uqairabat.²⁷
 - On September 7, Israel reportedly attacked a military site near the town of Maysaf. According to SOHR, the attack targeted a chemical weapons facility.²⁸
 - On September 19, Syrian opposition forces, including Islamist forces from Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), attacked SARG-held positions in Hama Governorate, capturing four villages.²⁹
 - On September 21, pro-regime forces brokered a deal allowing for the evacuation of at least 1500 ISIS fighters and civilians in Hama Governorate to areas in Idlib Governorate held by HTS.³⁰
5. Raqqa Governorate:
- On September 4, US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) captured the Old City of Raqqa, including the city's historic Great Mosque (aka al-Qadim Mosque) from ISIS.³¹
 - On September 8, the US-backed SDF captured Raqqa University from ISIS.³²
6. Quneitra Governorate:
- On September 11, Israeli army forces reportedly "advanced for 200 meters" into the countryside of Quneitra Governorate, crossing the border into Syria.³³
 - On September 19, Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) reportedly shot down an "unmanned aerial vehicle" near the Golan Heights.³⁴

²⁴ <https://twitter.com/OIRSpox/status/906210296699768833>

²⁵ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-usa/rebels-say-u-s-evacuates-base-in-southern-syrian-desert-idUSKCN1BU1B3> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/09/syria-sitrep-map-september-14-27-2017.html>

²⁶ <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/09/syria-army-gains-isil-central-stronghold-170902110943714.html> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/09/syria-situation-report-august-31.html>

²⁷ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria/syrian-army-gains-in-islamic-states-last-central-syria-bastion-idUSKCN1BD09P>

²⁸ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-israel/israel-hits-syrian-site-said-to-be-linked-to-chemical-weapons-idUSKCN1BI0MH> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-41184867>

²⁹ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-attack/jihadists-launch-big-attack-on-syrian-government-near-hama-idUSKCN1BU0IY>

³⁰ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/09/syria-sitrep-map-september-14-27-2017.html>

³¹ https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/us-backed-forces-seize-raqqas-old-city-from-isis-but-a-tough-fight-still-lies-ahead/2017/09/04/8fbc5ac6-917a-11e7-8482-8dc9a7af29f9_story.html ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-raqqa/u-s-backed-syrian-forces-seize-raqqa-mosque-coalition-idUSKCN1BF1R7> ; <http://eaworldview.com/2017/09/syria-daily-kurdish-led-sdf-claims-capture-of-raqqas-old-city/> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/09/syria-situation-report-august-31.html>

³² <https://southfront.org/syrian-democratic-forces-captures-raqqa-university-1500-isis-members-remain-in-city/>

³³ <http://www.iraqinews.com/arab-world-news/war-syria-israeli-army-forces-advance-syrian-territory/>

³⁴ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/09/syria-sitrep-map-september-14-27-2017.html>

7. Damascus Governorate:
 - On September 22, the IDF reportedly carried out a “cross-border airstrike” against a Hezbollah arms depot located at the Damascus International Airport.³⁵
8. Hasakah Governorate:
 - On September 22–26, the Democratic Federation of Northern Syria (DFNS) — the “*de facto* autonomous region run by the Syrian Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) — held their first elections for local “communes” as part of a “three-phase plan to establish a new decentralized government in Northern Syria.” The elections were boycotted by the Kurdish National Coalition (KNC).³⁶
9. Aleppo Governorate:
 - On September 6, the Russian Defense Ministry reported that they had established a “deconfliction zone” around the town of Tell Rifaat near the Kurdish Afrin Canton in Aleppo Governorate in order to prevent clashes between the Kurdish YPG and Turkish forces. According to the Russian statement, the Syrian Arab Army (SAA) and Russian Military Police had “replaced” the YPG in Tell Rifaat, however the claim was denied by the SDF.³⁷

Other Key Points:

- During the reporting period, the US-led coalition conducted airstrikes in the areas of Abu Kamal, Deir ez-Zor, Hawl, Raqqa, and Shadaddi.³⁸
- During the reporting period, Russian and SARG airstrikes were reported in Aleppo, Idlib, and Hama Governorates.³⁹
- On August 31–September 5, Salafi-Jihadist Syrian opposition groups Ahrar al-Sham and Jaysh al-Islam joined at least 27 other opposition groups in “pledging support for the formation of a “Revolutionary Ministry of Defense” and “National Army” under the Syrian Interim Government (SIG). The SIG later appointed a prime minister, Awad Abu Hatab, as the standing “Revolutionary Defense Minister.” HTS denounced the new initiative.⁴⁰
- On September 6, United Nations Special Envoy for Syria stated that the Syrian opposition must accept their loss in the Syrian civil war. In response, Syrian opposition stated that UN mediation in Syria has failed.⁴¹
- On September 6, a UN war crimes investigative body reported that the Syrian regime has carried out chemical weapons attacks 20 times since March 2013; four attacks attacks have taken place since March 2017.⁴²

³⁵ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/09/syria-sitrep-map-september-14-27-2017.html> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/09/syria-situation-report-august-31.html>

³⁶ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/09/syria-sitrep-map-september-14-27-2017.html>

³⁷ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/09/syria-situation-report-august-31.html>

³⁸ See: “US DOD News Release Military Strikes Hit ISIS in Syria, Iraq”. *Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve*. News Release No: [1298911](#), [1298831](#), [1298709](#), [1300113](#), [1299036](#), [1301311](#), [1302847](#), [1308941](#), [1310539](#), [1312197](#), [1313698](#), [1314099](#), [1315628](#), [1327804](#), [1326057](#), [1322726](#), [1324252](#), [1329097](#), [1330482](#), [1322158](#), [1319027](#), [1320694](#), [1317408](#)

³⁹ www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/shelling-on-syrian-presidents-hometown-kills-2/2017/09/25/660c9248-a1dc-11e7-b573-8ec86c9248_story.html

⁴⁰ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/09/syria-situation-report-august-31.html>

⁴¹ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-un/syrian-opposition-must-accept-it-has-not-won-the-war-u-n-idUSKCN1BH1MC> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-opposition/syrian-opposition-leader-says-u-n-mediation-has-failed-idUSKCN1BI1Q4>

⁴² <http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx> ; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/06/syrian-regime-dropped-sarin-on-rebel-held-town-in-april-un-confirms> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-syria-france/france-paying-close-attention-to-u-n-report-on-chemical-attacks-in-syria-idUSKCN1BI2DX> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis->

- On September 11, Jordanian officials confirmed that they were working with their Russian counterparts to establish a “de-escalation zone” in southern Syria, including along the Syrian-Israeli border.⁴³
- On September 12, Hezbollah declared victory in Syria and Russia stated that Syrian army had regained 85% of Syria. Meanwhile, SOHR contradicted Hezbollah’s statement, instead putting the percentage of SARG-held territory in Syria at 48%.⁴⁴
- On September 12, Iran signed a deal with the Syrian regime to build or repair power grids in Latakia, Damascus, Deir ez-Zor, and Aleppo Governorate, including five power stations in the city of Aleppo.⁴⁵
- On September 27, Physicians for Human Rights reported that SARG and Russian forces have carried out calculated attacks on hospitals in Syria since April 2017 despite so-called “de-escalation zones.”⁴⁶

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

1. Al Anbar Governorate:
 - On September 19, Anbar provincial police and Sunni Arab tribal fighters, backed by US-led Coalition airstrikes and military advisors, advanced on the ISIS-held town of Ana. Iraqi officials announced the recapture of Ana two days later on September 21.⁴⁷
2. Basra Governorate:
 - On September 11, Iraqi officials and security sources warned that tribal armed clashes and an ongoing political void is threatening security at Iraq’s biggest oil fields in Basra Governorate.⁴⁸
3. Dhi Qar Governorate:
 - On September 14, twin bombings struck the Dhi Qar Governorate capital of Nasiriya, killing at least 80 people and injured 93 more. ISIS took responsibility for the attack.⁴⁹
4. Kirkuk Governorate:
 - On September 18, Iraqi police were deployed in the city of Kirkuk to “prevent any outbreak of ethnic violence” ahead of the upcoming Kurdish independence referendum.⁵⁰

[syria-warcrimes/syrian-government-forces-used-chemical-weapons-more-than-two-dozen-times-u-n-idUSKCN1BH18W](http://www.uskcn1bh18w.com) ; <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/mena/2017/09/06/history-sarin-use-syrian-conflict/> ; http://www.bbc.com/news/world/middle_east

⁴³ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-jordan-russia/russia-jordan-agree-to-speed-de-escalation-zone-in-south-syria-idUSKCN1BM2A5>

⁴⁴ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-hezbollah/hezbollah-declares-syria-victory-russia-says-much-of-country-won-back-idUSKCN1BN0YL>

⁴⁵ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-iran/iran-strikes-deal-with-syria-to-repair-power-grid-idUSKCN1BN25Y> ; <https://www.voanews.com/a/syria-signs-aleppo-power-plant-contract-with-iran/4025859.html> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2017/09/syria-situation-report-august-31.html>

⁴⁶ <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/09/rights-group-condemns-attacks-syrian-hospitals-170928072406051.html>

⁴⁷ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-41319905>

⁴⁸ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-oil-basra/tribal-clashes-political-void-threaten-oil-installations-in-iraqs-south-idUSKCN1BM1BJ>

⁴⁹ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-41270791> ; https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/coordinated-attack-in-southern-iraq-kills-at-least-50/2017/09/14/a7b2341a-994d-11e7-af6a-6555caeb8dc_story.html?utm_term=.226b544568a1

- On September 21, the Iraqi forces, including members of the military, federal police officers, Sunni tribal fighters, and Shia paramilitary forces, launched an offensive to recapture the ISIS-held town of Hawija, one of the last two areas in Iraq still under ISIS control. The Iraqi military later announced that they had captured 11 villages.⁵¹
- On September 27, the Iraqi Parliament asked Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi to send Iraqi troops to the Kurdish-held region of Kirkuk in order to secure the governorate's oil fields.⁵²
- On September 29, ISIS militants reportedly set fire to oil wells south of the city of Kirkuk in order to slow-down the advancement of Iraqi security forces.⁵³

Other Key Points:

- During the reporting period, the US-led coalition conducted airstrikes in the areas of Ana, Asad, Baghdad, Beiji, Fallujah, Haditha, Huwayjah, Qaim, Qayyarah, Ramadi, Rawah, Rutbah, Samarra, Sinjar, and Tuz.⁵⁴
- On September 18, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi ordered the suspension of the upcoming Kurdish independence referendum. His request was ignored.⁵⁵
- On September 25, the Kurdish regional government held an independence referendum. Election authorities later stated that the vote passed with 92% in favor. In response, Turkey and Iran conducted military exercises along the borders the countries share with Kurdistan. On September 29, the Iraqi government suspended all international flights to and from Kurdistan following the Kurdish independence referendum.⁵⁶

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

1. Tripolitana:
 - On September 4, east Libyan forces reported that they had conducted airstrikes against ISIS fighters following incursions by the militants on the south and east of Sirte, a former stronghold of the group.⁵⁷

⁵⁰ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-kirkuk/police-deploy-in-iraqi-oil-city-as-tensions-rise-before-kurdish-independence-vote-idUSKCN1BU06F>

⁵¹ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-41346427>; <https://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1328658/isis-losing-on-all-fronts-oir-spokesman-says/source/GovDelivery/>

⁵² <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-kurds-referendum-troops/iraqi-parliament-asks-leader-abadi-to-take-back-kurd-held-kirkuk-idUSKCN1C21HG>

⁵³ <https://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/sets-oil-wells-fire-urges-militants-evacuate-villages-hawija/>

⁵⁴ See: "US DOD News Release Military Strikes Hit ISIS in Syria, Iraq". *Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve*. News Release No: [1298911](#), [1298831](#), [1298709](#), [1300113](#), [1299036](#), [1301311](#), [1302847](#), [1308941](#), [1310539](#), [1312197](#), [1313698](#), [1314099](#), [1315628](#), [1327804](#), [1326057](#), [1322726](#), [1324252](#), [1329097](#), [1330482](#), [1322158](#), [1319027](#), [1320694](#), [1317408](#)

⁵⁵ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-41306048>

⁵⁶ <https://www.rferl.org/a/putin-erdogan-syria-iraq-talks-ankara/28761044.html>; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-kurds-referendum/last-flight-departs-as-iraq-imposes-ban-for-kurdish-independence-vote-idUSKCN1C4113>; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-41382494>; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-41440747>; <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-kurds-referendum-talks/iraq-refuses-talks-with-kurdistan-about-independence-referendum-results-idUKKCN1C107D>; <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/25/world/middleeast/kurds-referendum.html>; <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/27/world/middleeast/kurdistan-referendum-iraq.html>; https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/iraq-bans-flights-to-kurdish-region-as-rift-grows-over-independence-bid/2017/09/29/860e326e-a532-11e7-b573-8ec86cdf1ed_story.html

⁵⁷ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security-islamic-state/libyan-forces-attack-islamic-state-near-former-stronghold-idUSKCN1BF1BN>

- On September 22, US forces, in coordination with the Libyan Government of National Accord (GNA), carried out precision airstrikes targeting an ISIS camp located in the desert approximately 150 miles southeast of Sirte. The strikes reportedly killed 17 ISIS militants and destroyed three vehicles.⁵⁸

Other Key Points:

- On September 8, the United Nations mission in Libya announced the deployment of “up to 250 Nepalese guards to Libya” to protect the UN base in upcoming preparations to re-establish UN operations in the country.⁵⁹

Other significant political and military events during the reporting period:

- On September 11, an ISIL attack on a convoy in North Sinai killed 19 Egyptian policemen.⁶⁰
- On September 13, the Iranian Revolutionary Guards arrested ISIS members in Iran.⁶¹
- On September 15, an improvised “bucket bomb” struck a train in London, causing injuries. ISIS later claimed responsibility for the attack.⁶²
- On September 28, ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi reportedly released a new audio recording encouraging his followers to keep fighting.⁶³

⁵⁸ <https://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1323712/us-precision-airstrikes-kill-17-isis-militants-in-libya/source/GovDelivery/>; <http://www.cnn.com/2017/09/24/politics/us-strikes-libya-trump/index.html>; <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2017/09/24/u-s-airstrikes-kill-17-islamic-state-fighters-in-libya-military-says/>

⁵⁹ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security-un/u-n-to-deploy-nepalese-guards-as-it-ramps-up-presence-in-libya-idUSKCN1BJ11Q>

⁶⁰ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-41230821>

⁶¹ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-security-islamic-state/iran-arrests-islamic-state-member-foils-attacks-revolutionary-guards-idUSKCN1B00UK>

⁶² <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/15/world/europe/uk-london-underground-tube-explosion.html>

⁶³ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-baghdadi/islamic-states-baghdadi-in-undated-audio-urges-militants-to-keep-fighting-idUSKCN1C32C4>; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-41435183>

Incident Reports: Syria

SHI 16-0032 UPDATE

Report Date: September 25, 2017

Site Name: Old Mar Odisho Church (كنيسة القديس مار اوديشو)

Date of Incident: September 22, 2017

Location: Tell Tal (تل طال), Hasakah Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Church belonging to the Assyrian Church of the East.

Site Date: 1936 CE⁶⁴

Incident Summary: New video showed the condition of the church.

Incident Source and Description: On September 22, 2017 France 24 posted a video showing the condition of Mar Odisho Church.⁶⁵ ISIS destroyed the church on April 28, 2015.⁶⁶ The video confirms that the church has been completely destroyed, with the building being leveled.

For more information on previous damage to Mar Odisho Church, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0032** in **Weekly Report 81-82**.

Pattern: Site management: tourism/visitor activity; Military activity: intentional destruction.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Assyrian International News Agency: <http://www.aina.org/news/20150429141847.htm>

ESyria:

<http://www.esyria.sy/ehasakeh/index.php?p=stories&category=places&filename=201007161830022022>

France 24: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bNh_Cl5eAso

⁶⁴ <http://www.esyria.sy/ehasakeh/index.php?p=stories&category=places&filename=201007161830022>

⁶⁵ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bNh_Cl5eAso&feature=youtu.be&t=6m7s

⁶⁶ <http://www.aina.org/news/20150429141847.htm>



Video still of the rubble of the church (France 24; September 22, 2017)



Video still of the rubble of the church (France 24; September 22, 2017)



Video still of the rubble of the church (France 24; September 22, 2017)



Video still of the rubble of the church (France 24; September 22, 2017)



Video still of the rubble of the church (France 24; September 22, 2017)



Video still of the rubble of the church (France 24; September 22, 2017)



Video still of the rubble of the church (France 24; September 22, 2017)



Video still of the rubble of the church (France 24; September 22, 2017)



Video still of the bell tower of the church (France 24; September 22, 2017)



Video still of the bell tower of the church (France 24; September 22, 2017)



Video still of the rubble of the church (France 24; September 22, 2017)



Video still of the rubble of the church (France 24; September 22, 2017)

SHI 17-0098 UPDATE

Report Date: September 18, 2017

Site Name: Raqqa Museum

Date of Incident: September 15, 2017

Location: Old City, Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate, Syria

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

“The Museum of Raqqa, founded in 1981, is dedicated to the preservation and exhibition of the cultural heritage of the Ar-Raqqa province. This museum notably curates large collections gathered from the excavation researches led in the region: Tell Sabi Abyad, Tell Bi'a, Tell Chuera, Tell Munbaqa, and various artefacts dating back to Roman and Byzantine times, as well as more recent objects from the Islamic period (notably the epoch of Haroun al-Rachid) and from the time of the bedouin domination.”⁶⁷

The museum is located in a structure that was constructed in 1861 CE to serve as a government building.⁶⁸

Site Date: 19th century CE

Incident Summary: Video and photographs showed damage to the Raqqa Museum.

Incident Source and Description: On September 15, 2017 Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently (RBSS) posted photographs showing damage to the southern and western facades of the Raqqa Museum, as well as to its interior.⁶⁹ The southern facade of the building has been damaged at least twice previously. An airstrike in November 2014 caused damage visible on the right half of structure.⁷⁰ Three parallel bands of pockmarks on the left half of the facade are more recent, possibly the result of projectiles. Their cause and the date of their creation are unknown. Damage to the western facade is concentrated around the windows on the first floor of the structure. Photographs of the museum's interior show smashed glass, trash, and overturned furniture covering the floor. The exhibit cases stand open and empty.

On September 20, 2017 the Authority of Tourism and Protection of Antiquities - al Jazira Canton (ATPA) visited the museum. Their video and photographs show heavy damage to the interior and exterior of the building as well as evidence of vandalism to and theft of the museum's collection.⁷¹

For more information on previous damage to the Raqqa Museum see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 14-0090** in **Weekly Report 16-17**; **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0149** in **Weekly Report 67-68**; and **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0098** in **June 2017 Monthly Report 145-148**.

⁶⁷ http://cdli.ucla.edu/collections/syria/raqqa_en.html@section=3.html

⁶⁸ <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1517>

⁶⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/posts/1679538108724100>

⁷⁰ <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1517>

⁷¹ <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/documentation-of-the-archaeological-sites-in-raqqa-2092017/>; <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/raqqa-museum/>

Pattern: Site management: tourism/visitor activity; Vandalism; Theft.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Association for Research into Crimes against Art (ARCA): <http://art-crime.blogspot.it/2017/09/ar-raqqah-museum-september-2017-status.html>

The Authority of Tourism and Protection of Antiquities - al Jazira Canton (ATPA):

September 23, 2017: <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/documentation-of-the-archaeological-sites-in-raqqa-2092017/>

September 28, 2017: <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/raqqa-museum/>

DGAM:

November 25, 2014: <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1517>

September 16, 2017: <http://dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2337>

Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently (RBSS):

September 15, 2017: <https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/posts/1679538108724100>

September 20, 2017: <https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/videos/1683921928285718/>

Scholarly:

CDLI: http://cdli.ucla.edu/collections/syria/raqqa_en.html@section=3.html



The Raqqa Museum before the current conflict (DGAM; September 16, 2017)



Damage to the southern facade of the museum. The damage on the right half of the facade occurred in November 2014. The three parallel bands on the left half were created more recently (RBSS; September 15, 2017)



Damage to the western facade of the building (RBSS; September 15, 2017)



Damage to the southern facade (RBSS; September 15, 2017)



Damage to the interior of the museum (RBSS; September 15, 2017)



Damage to the interior of the museum (RBSS; September 15, 2017)



The northern facade of the museum (ATPA; September 23, 2017)



The southern facade of the museum (ATPA; September 23, 2017)



Raqqqa musuem
the western facad
20/9/2017

The western facade of the museum (ATPA; September 23, 2017)



Raqqqa musuem
the eastern facad
20/9/2017

The eastern facade of the museum (ATPA; September 23, 2017)



Raqqa musuem
Sabi Abyyad Hall
20 / 9 / 2017

The Sabi Abyad Hall of the museum (ATPA; September 23, 2017)



Raqqa Musuem
Hamam Al Turkman Hall
20 / 9 / 2017

The Hammam al-Turkman Hall of the museum (ATPA; September 23, 2017)



Raqqqa musuem
Southern Hall
20 / 9 / 2017

An area where an artifact was looted from a wall in the southern hall (ATPA; September 23, 2017)



Raqqqa musuem
southren Hall
20 / 9 / 2017

Vandalism on a mosaic in the southern hall (ATPA; September 23, 2017)



Raqqa musuem
the southern Hall
20 / 9 / 2017

Vandalism on a mosaic in the southern hall (ATPA; September 23, 2017)



Raqqa musuem
the Hall - Mosaic
20 / 9 / 2017

Vandalism on a mosaic in the museum (ATPA; September 23, 2017)



Vandalism in the statue garden on the northern side of the museum (ATPA; September 23, 2017)



Vandalism in the statue garden on the northern side of the museum



Raqqa musuem
the guarden
20 / 9 / 2017

Vandalism in the statue garden on the northern side of the museum (ATPA; September 23, 2017)



Al Raqa Raqa Museum

Video still of the southeastern corner of the museum (ATPA; September 28, 2017)



Video still of the eastern facade of the museum (ATPA; September 28, 2017)



Video still of a sign on the eastern facade of the museum (ATPA; September 28, 2017)



Video still of the hole in the eastern facade (ATPA; September 28, 2017)



Video still of the view through the hole in the eastern facade (ATPA; September 28, 2017)



Video still of an artifact in the statue garden (ATPA; September 28, 2017)



Video still of damage to the northern facade (ATPA; September 28, 2017)

SHI 17-0106 UPDATE

Report Date: September 30, 2017

Site Name: Heraqla (قلعة هرقله)

Date of Incident: September 23, 2017

Location: Heraqla, Raqqa Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Heraqla, a 9th century CE fort, was constructed to commemorate the 806 CE campaign of the Abbasid Harun al-Rashid against Heraclea in southwestern Anatolia. The nearly square, compact construction measures 100 by 106 meters in area and 3 meters high. Four meter-high towers stand at each of the four corners. The walls are made of evenly-hewn stone blocks from locally available pale yellow gypsum. The building is located at the center of a circular outer wall ring made of gypsum stone blocks 500 meters in diameter and 2.5 meters thick. The wall is buttressed every 20 meters and had four gates in the cardinal directions.

Site Date: 9th-century CE

Incident Summary: Photographs showed the condition of Heraqla.

Incident Source and Description: On September 23, 2017 the Authority of Tourism and Protection of Antiquities - al Jazira Canton (ATPA) posted photographs of Heraqla.⁷² The photographs were taken on September 20, 2017 during a visit to multiple heritage sites in Raqqa. The site's condition appears to be unchanged since its capture in June 2017. One of the photographs shows the Syrian DGAM's warehouses at Heraqla, which were used to store archaeological materials from various sites in Raqqa Governorate. ISIS looted these warehouses in March 2013.

For more information on previous damage to Heraqla, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0140** in **Weekly Report 63-64** and **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0106** in **June 2017 Monthly Report 145-148**.

Pattern: Site management: tourism/visitor activity.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Authority of Tourism and Protection of Antiquities - al Jazira Canton (ATPA): <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/documentation-of-the-archaeological-sites-in-raqqa-2092017/>

⁷² <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/documentation-of-the-archaeological-sites-in-raqqa-2092017/>



View of Heraqla, seen from the southeast (ATPA; September 23, 2017)



View of the DGAM warehouses at Heraqla (ATPA; September 23, 2017)

SHI 17-0111 UPDATE

Report Date: September 30, 2017

Site Name: Qasr al-Banat

Date of Incident: September 23, 2017

Location: Old City, Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Qasr al-Banat is located in the eastern side of Raqqa's Old City along the interior face of al-Rafiqah Wall (CHI 950). The Syrian Directorate-General for Antiquities and Museums excavated and reconstructed portions of the site between 1977 and 1982.⁷³ The focus of the building is a central rectangular courtyard with an *iwan* on each side. Additional rooms surround the courtyard on all four sides.

The date and function of Qasr al-Banat are not precisely known. The presence of the four *iwans* around a central courtyard indicates a date between the 11th century CE and the destruction of Raqqa by the Mongols in 1265.⁷⁴ The size, elaborate ornamentation, and lack of rooms with overtly religious functions suggest that the building functioned as a palace.⁷⁵

Site Date: ca. 11th–13th century CE

Incident Summary: Video and photographs showed the condition of Qasr al-Banat.

Incident Source and Description: On September 23, 2017 the Authority of Tourism and Protection of Antiquities - al Jazira Canton (ATPA) posted photographs of Qasr al-Banat.⁷⁶ The photographs were taken on September 20, 2017 during a visit to multiple heritage sites in Raqqa. On September 28, 2017 ATPA posted a video of the visit as well.⁷⁷ Overall, the video and photographs confirm that the site has not suffered major damage. However, they also reveal that a portion of the northwestern corner of the building is in danger of collapse.

For more information on previous damage to Qasr al-Banat, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0111** in **Weekly Report 145–148** and **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0111 UPDATE** in the **August 2017 Monthly Report**.

Pattern: Site management: tourism/visitor activity.

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

⁷³ Toueir 1985: 298

⁷⁴ Toueir 1985: 318

⁷⁵ Toueir 1985: 319

⁷⁶ <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/documentation-of-the-archaeological-sites-in-raqqa-2092017/>

⁷⁷ <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/raqa-museum/>

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Authority of Tourism and Protection of Antiquities - al Jazira Canton (ATPA):

September 23, 2017: <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/documentation-of-the-archaeological-sites-in-raqqa-2092017/>

September 28, 2017: <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/raqa-museum/>

Scholarly:

Toueir, Kassem (1985) "Der Qasr al-Banat in ar-Raqqa. Ausgrabung, Rekonstruktion und Wiederaufbau (1977–1982)," *Damaszener Mitteilungen* 85(2), 297–319.



Qasr al-Banat, seen from the southeast (ATPA; September 23, 2017)



Raqqa musuem
Qaser Al Banat
20 / 9 / 2017

Qasr al-Banat, seen from the west (ATPA; September 23, 2017)



Raqqa musuem
Qaser Al Banat
20 / 9 / 2017

Qasr al-Banat, seen from the west. Note the slumping architecture on the left side of the image (ATPA; September 23, 2017)



Video still of Qasr al-Banat, seen from the west (ATPA; September 28, 2017)

SHI 17-0114 UPDATE

Report Date: September 30, 2017

Site Name: al-Kabir Mosque

Date of Incident: September 23, 2017

Location: Old City, Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: A photograph showed the condition of a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On September 23, 2017 the Authority of Tourism and Protection of Antiquities - al Jazira Canton (ATPA) posted a photograph of al-Kabir Mosque in the city of Raqqa.⁷⁸ The photograph was taken on September 20, 2017 during a visit to multiple heritage sites in Raqqa. Only the minaret and part of the building are visible. The top of the minaret is missing and bullet holes are visible on the lower half of the structure. A hole is also visible in the adjacent wall of the mosque. Shelling in June 2017 reportedly caused the damage to the top of the minaret. The date of the other damage to the mosque is unknown.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other damaged heritage sites in Raqqa Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0157 UPDATE, SHI 17-0162, SHI 17-0164, SHI 17-0165, and SHI 17-0169.**

For more information on previous damage to al-Kabir Mosque, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0114 in June 2017 Monthly Report 145-148 and ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0114 UPDATE in August 2017 Monthly Report 153-156.**

Pattern: Site management: tourism/visitor activity.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

The Authority of Tourism and Protection of Antiquities - al Jazira Canton (ATPA): <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/documentation-of-the-archaeological-sites-in-raqqa-2092017/>

⁷⁸ <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/documentation-of-the-archaeological-sites-in-raqqa-2092017/>



Raqqa musuem
Al Kabir Musque
20 / 9 / 2017

Damage to al-Kabir Mosque, indicated by the red ovals (ATPA; September 23, 2017)

SHI 17-0122 UPDATE

Report Date: September 30, 2017

Site Name: al-Rafiqah Wall

Date of Incident: September 23, 2017

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

Site Description: Al-Rafiqah Wall originally surrounded al-Rafiqah, a garrison town built next to the city of Raqqa by the Abbasid caliph al-Mansur in 771–772 CE.⁷⁹ Under Harun al-Rashid, al-Mansur's grandson, the dual city of Raqqa/al-Rafiqah served as the residence of the caliph and capital city of the Abbasid Caliphate.⁸⁰ Harun al-Rashid's sons moved the imperial capital back to Iraq, but Raqqa/al-Rafiqah continued to serve as a provincial capital and military base. The settlement fell into a deep decline following its sacking by the Mongols in the 13th century CE.⁸¹

Al-Rafiqah's defenses consist of a main wall, an outer wall, and a moat along the outside.⁸² The defenses run for a total length of around 5 km, enclosing an area of 1.47 km². Roughly 2.6 km of the northern, eastern, and southeastern sections of the main wall remain standing. Semi-circular towers project from the face of the main wall every 25–28 m.⁸³

The DGAM began to restore the Abbasid-period remains in Raqqa in 1976. Al-Rafiqah Wall received repair and consolidation in a number of areas, primarily along its eastern and northern sides.⁸⁴

Site Date: 8th century CE

Incident Summary: Video and photographs showed the condition of al-Rafiqah Wall.

Incident Source and Description: On September 23, 2017 the Authority of Tourism and Protection of Antiquities - al Jazira Canton (ATPA) posted photographs of al-Rafiqah Wall.⁸⁵ The photographs were taken on September 20, 2017 during a visit to multiple sites in Raqqa. On September 28, 2017 ATPA posted a video of the visit as well.⁸⁶ The video and photographs show damage from combat and neglect along the wall and provide new views of the southern breach made by the US-led Coalition in early July.

For more information on previous damage to al-Rafiqah Wall, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0072** in **Weekly Report 38**; **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0132** in **Weekly Report 59–60**; **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0109** in **June 2017 Monthly Report 145–148**; and **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0122** in **July 2017 Monthly Report 149–152**.

⁷⁹ Heidemann 2003: 23

⁸⁰ Heidemann 2003: 30

⁸¹ Heidemann 2003: 9

⁸² Becker 2004: 3

⁸³ Becker 2004: 3

⁸⁴ al-Khalaf 1985: 129–130

⁸⁵ <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/documentation-of-the-archaeological-sites-in-raqqa-2092017/>

⁸⁶ <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/raqa-museum/>

Pattern: Site management: tourism/visitor activity.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Authority of Tourism and Protection of Antiquities - al Jazira Canton (ATPA):

September 23, 2017: <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/documentation-of-the-archaeological-sites-in-raqqa-2092017/>

September 28, 2017: <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/raqa-museum/>

Scholarly:

Becker, Andrea (2004) "Die 'abbāsische Stadtmauer.'" In *Baudenkmäler und Paläste I*, Eds. Verena Daiber and Andrea Becker, 3–4. Raqqa III. Mainz am Rhein: Verlag Philipp von Zabern,

Heidemann, Stefan (2003) "Die Geschichte von ar-Raqqa/ar-Rāfiqa – ein Überblick." In *Die islamische Stadt*, Eds. Stefan Heidemann & Andrea Becker, 9–56. Raqqa II. Mainz am Rhein: Verlag Philipp von Zabern.

Al-Khalaf, Murhaf (1985) "Die 'abbāsische Stadtmauer von ar-Raqqa/ar-Rāfiqa,'" *Damaszener Mitteilungen* 2, 123–131.



fence of Raqqa
eastern side
20 / 9 / 2017

View of the southern breach, seen from the west (ATPA; September 23, 2017)



fence of Raqqa
eastern side
20 / 9 / 2017

View of the southern breach, seen from the west (ATPA; September 23, 2017)



fence of Raqqa
southern side
20 / 9 / 2017

View of al-Rafiqah Wall near the Bab Baghdad (visible in the distance), seen from the west (ATPA; September 23, 2017)



Video still of the roadway through the wall located north of the Qasr al-Banat, seen from the southwest (ATPA; September 28, 2017)



Video still of the roadway through the wall located north of the Qasr al-Banat, seen from the west (ATPA; September 28, 2017)

SHI 17-0127 UPDATE

Report Date: September 17, 2017

Site Name: Bab Baghdad

Date of Incident: September 6, 2017

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

Site Description: The Bab Baghdad (Gate of Baghdad) lies at the southeastern corner of the outer wall of al-Rafiqah's defenses, which consist of a main wall, an outer wall, and a moat.⁸⁷ These defenses originally surrounded al-Rafiqah, a garrison town built next to the city of Raqqa by the Abbasid Caliph al-Mansur in 771–772 CE.⁸⁸ The east–west oriented gate provided access to the area along the southern side of the main city wall.

Roughly one-quarter of the gate remains intact. The structure originally covered an area of ca. 18 x 14.5 m and was ca. 11 m high.⁸⁹ Its architectural qualities suggest that it was conceived primarily as a ceremonial gateway rather than as an essential part of the city's defenses.⁹⁰

Suggested dates for the construction of the Bab Baghdad range from the early 10th century CE to the mid-12th century CE.⁹¹ Based on stylistic criteria, the early 11th century CE is the most likely option.⁹²

Site Date: Early 11th century CE

Incident Summary: Photographs showed the condition of Bab Baghdad.

Incident Source and Description: On September 6, 2017 a personal twitter account user posted photographs that show the condition of the eastern and southern facades of Bab Baghdad.⁹³ Overall, the structure is in good condition. Some light damage is visible near the base of the eastern facade as well as in an arched niche on the same side. The cause of this damage is unclear.

Additionally, pockmarks are visible on the southern facade. Their arrangement and size suggests that they were caused by small-arms fire. However, the detonation of an ISIS car bomb in the road along the southern facade on July 5, 2017 could have also caused the damage.⁹⁴

For more information on previous damage to Bab Baghdad see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0109** in **June 2017 Monthly Report 145–148** and **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0127** in **July 2017 Monthly Report 149–152**.

⁸⁷ Becker 2004: 3

⁸⁸ Heidemann 2003: 23

⁸⁹ Korn 2004: 11

⁹⁰ Korn 2004: 14–15

⁹¹ Hillenbrand 1985: 35–36; Korn 2004: 18

⁹² Korn 2004: 18

⁹³ Personal Twitter Account; <https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/posts/1671664322844812>

⁹⁴ Amaq News Agency

Pattern: Site management: tourism/visitor activity.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Authority of Tourism and Protection of Antiquities - al Jazira Canton (ATPA): <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/documentation-of-the-archaeological-sites-in-raqqa-2092017/>

Personal Twitter Account

Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently (RBSS):
<https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/posts/1671664322844812>

Scholarly:

Heidemann, Stefan (2003) "Die Geschichte von ar-Raqqa/ar-Rāfiqa – ein Überblick." In *Die islamische Stadt*, Ed. Stefan Heidemann and Andrea Becker, 9–56. Raqqa II. Mainz am Rhein: Verlag Philipp von Zabern.

Hillenbrand, Robert (1985) "Eastern Islamic Influences in Syria: Raqqa and Qal'at Ja'bar in the Later 12th Century." In *The Art of Syria and the Jazira 1100–1250*, Ed. Julian Raby, 21–48. Oxford Studies in Islamic Art 1. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Korn, Lorenz (2004) "Das Baghdad-Tor (Südosttor der Halbrundstadt)." In *Baudenkmäler und Paläste I*, Eds. Verena Daiber and Andrea Becker, , 11–18. Raqqa III. Mainz am Rhein: Verlag Philipp von Zabern.



View of the eastern facade of Bab Baghdad (RBSS; September 6, 2017)



View of Bab Baghdad (Personal Twitter Account; September 6, 2017)



View of the southern facade of Bab Baghdad (Personal Twitter Account; September 6, 2017)



The northeastern side of Bab Baghdad (ATPA; September 23, 2017)



Damage to the southern facade (Personal Twitter Account; September 6, 2017)

SHI 17-0153 UPDATE

Report Date: September 17, 2017

Site Name: Circassian Mosque (جامع الشراكسة)

Date of Incident: Between August 13, 2017 and August 25, 2017

Location: Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: Sources confirmed the destruction of a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On September 10, 2017 Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently (RBSS) reported that US-led Coalition airstrikes destroyed the Circassian Mosque an unspecified number of days earlier.⁹⁵ The following day, Raqqa24 also reported the destruction of the mosque.⁹⁶

ASOR CHI reported the destruction of this mosque in August 2017 using DigitalGlobe satellite imagery. The destruction occurred between August 13 and August 25, 2017. For more information on previous damage to the Circassian Mosque, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0153 in August 2017 Monthly Report 153-156**.

Pattern: Military activity: explosives - airstrike.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Raqqa24: <https://twitter.com/24Raqqa/status/907245038282952705>

Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently (RBSS):
<https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/posts/1675361435808434>

⁹⁵ <https://twitter.com/24Raqqa/status/907245038282952705>

⁹⁶ <https://twitter.com/24Raqqa/status/907245038282952705>

SHI 17-0157 UPDATE

Report Date: September 12, 2017

Site Name: al-Qadim Mosque (al-Mansoor Mosque; Great Mosque) (الجامع القديم)

Date of Incident: September 11, 2017

Location: Old City, Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate, Syria

Site Description: The Abbasid Caliph al-Mansur built al-Qadim Mosque in 772 CE.⁹⁷ The mosque received extensive renovations during the reign of Nur ad-Din Zangi in 1166.⁹⁸ The destruction of the city of Raqqa in 1265 ended the mosque's use.⁹⁹

The mosque consisted of a rectilinear structure with rounded towers on all four sides. A single large courtyard lay inside. Multiple arched colonnades flanked the courtyard on all four sides. The mosque's minaret lay in the northeastern corner of the courtyard and a cistern was located in the northwestern corner.

Much of the mosque has disappeared in the centuries since its destruction. However, the exterior wall of the mosque, the minaret, the cistern, and the northernmost colonnade on the southern side of the courtyard remain largely intact. The Syrian DGAM restored these remains between 1983 and 1987.¹⁰⁰

Additionally, a small, domed shrine was built in the courtyard of the mosque in 1836.¹⁰¹ This was located over the purported grave of Wabisa ibn Ma'bad al-Asadi, a companion of the prophet Muhammad.

Site Date: 772–1265 CE; rebuilt ca. 1165 CE

Incident Summary: Photographs and video showed the condition of mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On September 11, 2017 a personal twitter account user posted a new photograph of al-Qadim Mosque, which the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) recaptured on September 2, 2017.¹⁰² The photograph shows that the brick enclosure wall and the arched colonnade inside of it have sustained damage in multiple places. This damage appears to be the result of shrapnel or small-arms fire.

⁹⁷ Hagen, al-Hassoun, and Meinecke 2004: 37

⁹⁸ Hagen, al-Hassoun, and Meinecke 2004: 38

⁹⁹ Heidemann 2003: 51

¹⁰⁰ Hagen, al-Hassoun, and Meinecke 2004: 26

¹⁰¹ Heidemann 2003: 55

¹⁰² Personal Twitter Account; <https://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1298928/syrian-democratic-forces-clear-great-mosque-of-raqqa/>

On September 17, 2017 Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently (RBSS) posted a video of al-Qadim Mosque.¹⁰³ The video reveals damage to the enclosure wall near its northeastern corner. It is unclear whether this was caused by combat or exposure to the elements. Possible damage to the northwestern corner of the enclosure wall is also visible.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Raqqa Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0114 UPDATE, SHI 17-0162, SHI 17-0164, SHI 17-0165, and SHI 17-0169.**

For previous reports of damage to al-Qadim Mosque, see: **ASOR CHI Incident Report 15-0132 in Weekly Report 59-60, ASOR CHI Incident Report 17-0110 in June 2017 Monthly Report, and ASOR CHI Incident Report 17-0157 in August 2017 Monthly Report.**

Pattern: Site management: tourism/visitor activity.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Personal Twitter Account

Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently (RBSS):

September 12, 2017: <https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/photos/a.780113668666553.1073741828.780110825333504/1676758662335378/>

September 17, 2017 <https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/videos/1681564725188105/>

Reuters:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-raqqa/u-s-backed-syrian-forces-seize-raqqa-mosque-coalition-idUSKCN1BF1R7>

US Department of Defense: <https://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1298928/syrian-democratic-forces-clear-great-mosque-of-raqqa/>

Scholarly:

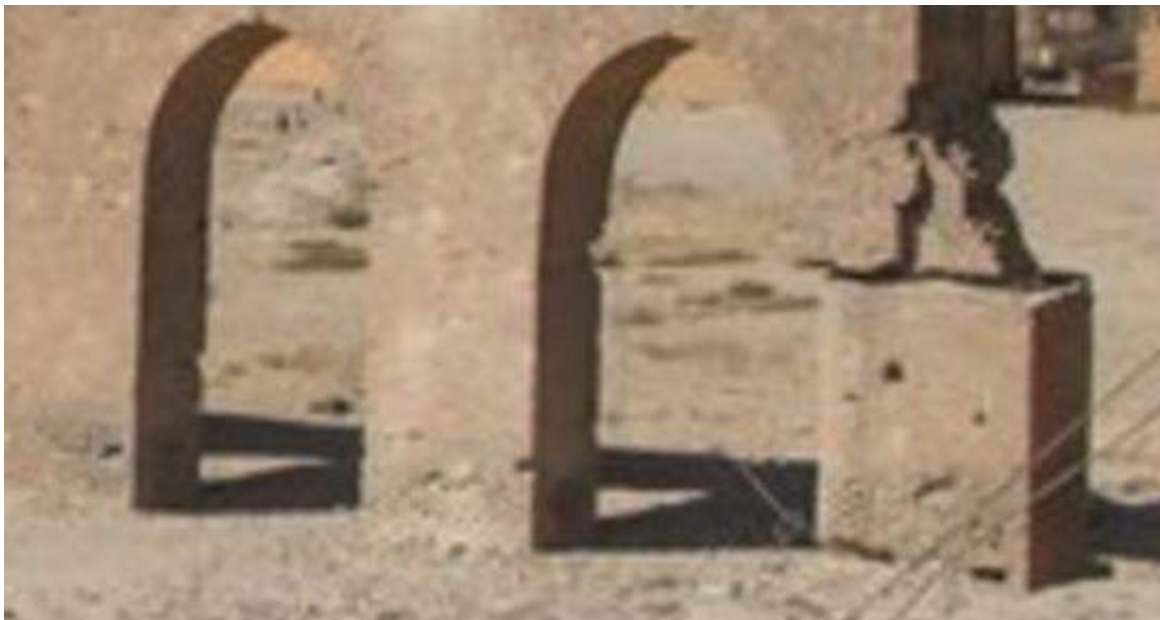
Hagen, Norbert, Mustafa al-Hassoun, and Michael Meinecke (2004) "Die grosse Moschee von ar-Rāfiqa." In *Baudenkmäler und Paläste I*, Eds. Verena Daiber and Andrea Becker, 25–39. Raqqa III. Mainz am Rhein: Verlag Philipp von Zabern.

Heidemann, Stefan (2003) "Die Geschichte von ar-Raqqa/ar-Rāfiqa – ein Überblick." In *Die islamische Stadt*, Eds. Stefan Heidemann and Andrea Becker, 9–56. Raqqa II. Mainz am Rhein: Verlag Philipp von Zabern.

¹⁰³ <https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/videos/1681564725188105/>



Al-Qadim Mosque, seen from the southeast (Private Twitter Account; September 11, 2017)



Damage visible near the base of the arched colonnade (Private Twitter Account; September 11, 2017)

SHI 17-0160

Report Date: September 9, 2017

Site Name: Tell Qarqur (Kabir); Tell Qarqur (Sehrir)

Date of Incident: Ongoing

Location: Qarqur, Hama Governorate, Syria

Site Description: According to the CRANE Project,

Tell Qarqur is a large, multi-period mound located in northwest Syria on the Orontes River, 5km south of the modern town of Jisr al-Shurgur. The high mound [Tell Qarqur Kebir] of the site rises some 30 meters above the surrounding floodplain, and together with a lower mound [Tell Qarqur Sehrir] to the north, covers approximately 12 hectares, making it one of the most prominent sites in the lower Orontes Valley.

The site is perhaps best known for its likely association with the Iron Age city of Qarqur, the location of a major battle in 853 BC between the armies of the Neo-Assyrian king Shalmaneser III and a coalition of Levantine city states. In part because of the site's historic significance, Tell Qarqur was initially targeted for excavations by the American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR) in the early 1980s. Rudolph Dornemann (ASOR) later directed excavations from 1993-2009, with Jesse Casana (Dartmouth College) directing survey, geophysics, and excavations from 2005-2010.

Archaeological evidence shows that Tell Qarqur possesses an extraordinarily long history of occupation, with a nearly continuous record of settlement from the Pre-Pottery Neolithic (c. 7500 BC) through the Mamluk period (c. AD 1450). Excavations have revealed significant exposures of the Early Bronze Age IV through Middle Bronze I (c. 2400-1800 BC), including a long-lived temple, an administrative building, and a food processing area. A terminal Late Bronze Age (c. 1150 BC) destruction on the high mound was followed by a long history of Iron Age occupation. A stone-built gateway and fortification system was constructed in the Iron Age II and continued in use through the Hellenistic period, while Iron Age domestic structures have been found across the site. Later remains include a Late Roman church complex on the low mound, a Crusader-period town and fort, and a Mamluk village at the southern base of the mound. The long history of occupation at Qarqur, combined with meticulous excavation methods and intensive sampling of ceramics, botanical and faunal remains, provides a nuanced view of the local material culture sequence, as well as insights into changing agricultural and subsistence strategies throughout the Holocene.¹⁰⁴

Site Date: ca. 7500 BCE–1450 CE

Incident Summary: A non-state actor militarized an archaeological site.

Incident Source and Description: On September 9, 2017 the Association for the Protection of Syrian Archaeology (APSA) reported that the Turkistan Islamic Party in Syria had bulldozed part of Tell Qarqur.¹⁰⁵ The reason for the bulldozing was not given, but the activity is likely connected to militarization of the site.

¹⁰⁴ <https://www.crane.utoronto.ca/tell-qarqur.html>

¹⁰⁵ <http://apsa2011.com/apsanew/tell-qarqur/>

The militarization of Tell Qarqur began in 2011. Tell Qarqur (Sehrir) was originally militarized in July 2011.¹⁰⁶ The evidence of this military occupation, including large bunkers and bulldozer scars, is visible in an image from September 11, 2012. Military occupation of Tell Qarqur (Sehrir) ceased by November 2012. The southern mound, Tell Qarqur (Kabir), was not militarized at that time.

DigitalGlobe satellite imagery indicates that military garrisons were re-established at both mounds between January 16, 2013 and April 29, 2016. This is evidenced by visible trenching and earthworks on top of the mounds. Defensive walls and bunkers for military vehicles are clearly visible. During the same time period, there was an increase in illegal excavation on Tell Qarqur (Kabir). The military garrisons are still visible and in use as of February 15, 2017, the date of the most recently available image.

Pattern: Military activity: militarization/occupation.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

APSA: <http://apsa2011.com/apsanew/tell-qarqur/>

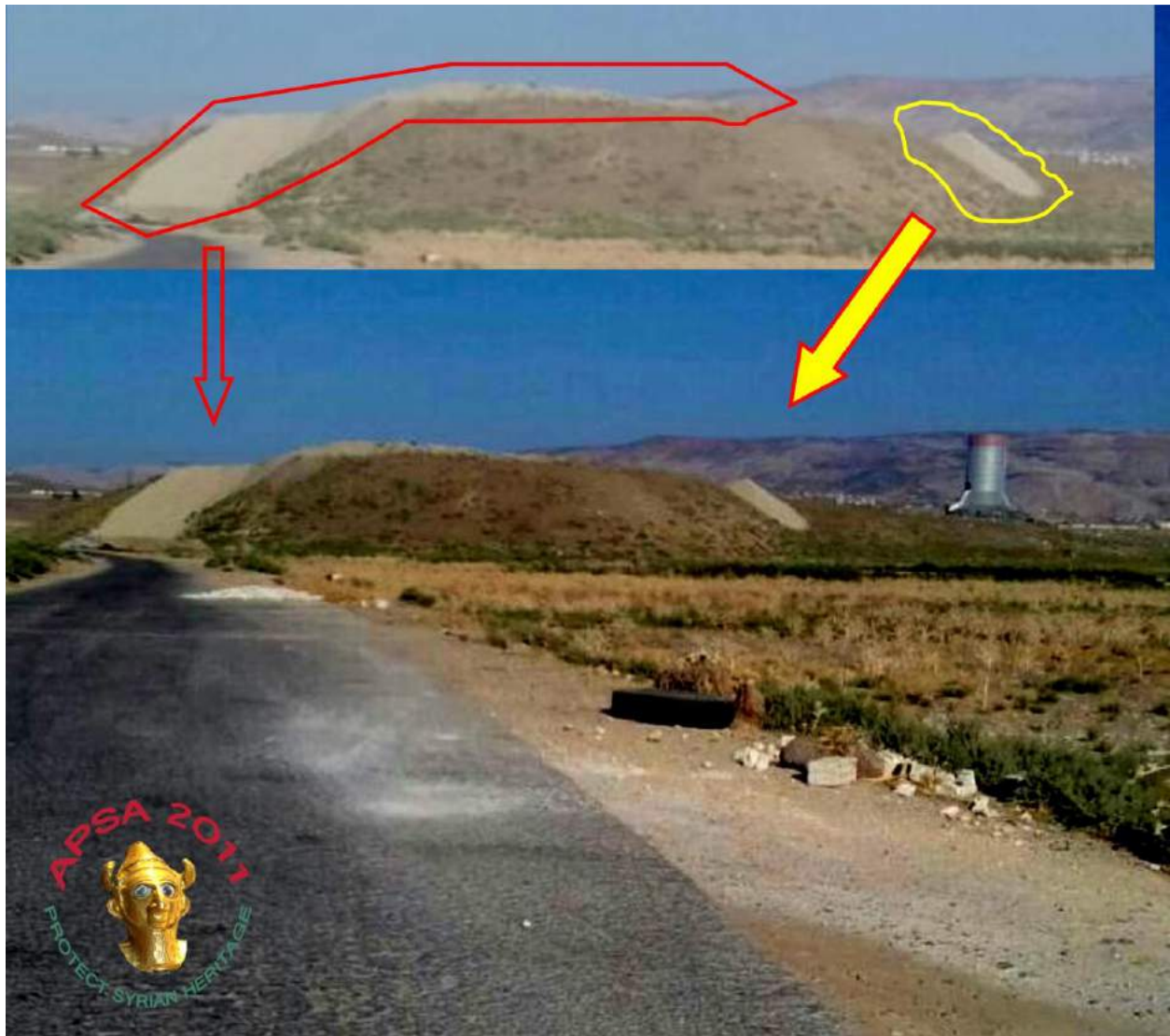
Scholarly:

Casana, Jesse & Mitra Panahipour, "Satellite Based Monitoring of Looting and Damage to Archaeological Sites in Syria," *Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology and Heritage Studies* Vol. 1, no 2, 2014.

The CRANE Project, "Tell Qarqur," <https://www.crane.utoronto.ca/tell-qarqur.html>

UNITAR, "Satellite-based Damage Assessment to Cultural Heritage Sites in Syria," 2014.

¹⁰⁶ Casana and Panahipour 2014; UNITAR 2014.



Bulldozing on Tell Qarqur, seen from the west (APSA; September 9, 2017)



Bulldozing on Tell Qarqur, seen from the west (APSA; September 9, 2017)



Bulldozing on Tell Qarqur (Sehrir), seen from the west (APSA; September 9, 2017)



Tell Qarqur (kabir) prior to military occupation, with red arrows indicating previously excavated areas (DigitalGlobe NextView License; January 16, 2013)



The site after militarization. A red arrow also indicates the location of illegal excavations (DigitalGlobe NextView License; April 29, 2016)



Tell Qarqur (Sehrir) prior to any military damage, with a red arrow indicating an area of previous excavation (DigitalGlobe NextView License; June 18, 2011)



The site after initial military occupation, with military vehicle bunkers and a bulldozing scar indicated by red arrows (DigitalGlobe NextView License; September 11, 2012)



Tell Qarqur (Sehrir) after its second military occupation, with earthworks and bulldozer scars indicated by red arrows (DigitalGlobe NextView License; April 29, 2016)

SHI 17-0161

Report Date: September 11, 2017

Site Name: Umm al-Mouminein Aisha Mosque (مسجد أم المؤمنين عائشة)

Date of Incident: September 10, 2017

Location: Ruwaished Village, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: A reported US-led Coalition airstrike destroyed a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On September 11, 2017 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that a US-led Coalition airstrike destroyed Umm al-Mouminein Aisha Mosque on September 10, 2017.¹⁰⁷ A video of the mosque shows that the building has been reduced to rubble.¹⁰⁸ The area was a focus of military activity in the days preceding the airstrike. On September 9, 2017 Baladi News reported that US-led Coalition airstrikes in the village caused at least one civilian casualty.¹⁰⁹

See the associated incident report in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Deir ez-Zor Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0168.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives - airstrike.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Baladi News:

<https://www.baladi-news.com/ar/news/details/23146/خسائر للنظام بدمشق وحمص وتنظيم الدولة يتراجع بالرقعة ودير الزور>

Private Facebook Account

¹⁰⁷ <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/09/11/international-coalition-forces-shelled-um-al-mouminein-aisha-mosque-ruwaished-village-deir-ez-zour-governorate-september-10/>

¹⁰⁸ Private Facebook Account

¹⁰⁹ <https://www.baladi-news.com/ar/news/details/23146/خسائر للنظام بدمشق وحمص وتنظيم الدولة يتراجع بالرقعة ودير الزور>

SNHR:

<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/09/11/international-coalition-forces-shelled-um-al-mouminein-aisha-mosque-ruwaished-village-deir-ez-zour-governorate-september-10/>



Video still of the remains of Umm al-Mouminein Aisha Mosque (Private Facebook Account; September 10, 2017)



Video still of the remains of Umm al-Mouminein Aisha Mosque (Private Facebook Account; September 10, 2017)

SHI 17-0162

Report Date: September 12, 2017

Site Name: al-Firdous Mosque (جامع الفردوس)

Date of Incident: September 11, 2017

Location: al-Huni Neighborhood, Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: Reported US-led Coalition airstrikes destroyed a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On September 11, 2017 Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently (RBSS) reported that US-led Coalition airstrikes destroyed al-Firdous Mosque.¹¹⁰ Recently released DigitalGlobe satellite imagery confirms severe damage to the mosque as a result of airstrikes between September 6, 2017 and September 19, 2017. The minaret is still standing but the dome of the mosque has collapsed, rendering the structure unusable.

See the associated incident report in this monthly report for other cultural sites that were damaged in Raqqa Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0114 UPDATE, SHI 17-0157 UPDATE, SHI 17-0164, SHI 17-0165, and SHI 17-0169.**

For more information on previous damage to al-Firdous Mosque, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0056 in Weekly Report 89-90.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives - airstrike.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently (RBSS):
<https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/posts/1676000862411158>

¹¹⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/posts/1676000862411158>



Al-Firdous Mosque, indicated by red box, prior to severe damage from airstrikes (DigitalGlobe NextView License; September 6, 2017)



Severe damage to the mosque as a result of airstrikes indicated by red arrows. The minaret is still standing. (DigitalGlobe NextView License; September 19, 2017)

SHI 17-0163

Report Date: September 15, 2017

Site Name: Tell Danit (تل دانييت; Tell Dayit; Tell Qamnas)

Date of Incident: Ongoing

Location: Qamnas, Idlib Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Archaeological site with remains dating from the Aramaean through Byzantine periods.¹¹¹

Site Date: ca. 1100 BCE through Byzantine Period

Incident Summary: Looting and theft has compromised the archaeological site of Tell Danit.

Incident Source and Description: On September 15, 2017 the Society for the Rescue of Archaeological Sites in Northern Syria posted a video on its Facebook page reporting on illegal excavation, theft, and bulldozing at the site of Tell Danit.¹¹² According to the video, the excavation houses for the Japanese and Italian missions to the sites of Tell Danit and Tell Mastuma were broken into, with whatever artifacts and equipment that were not stolen now littering the ground. There is also evidence of illegal excavations on Tell Danit, with olive trees bulldozed in order to detect archaeological material under the surface of the mound.

Based on DigitalGlobe satellite imagery, significant illegal excavation occurred between August 19, 2015 and June 19, 2016. Also during this period, parts of the site were damaged by bulldozing and leveling. Illegal excavation intensified between August 1, 2016 and October 1, 2016. Bulldozing and leveling on the mound increased between February 21, 2017 and July 17, 2017.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other archaeological sites that were damaged in Idlib Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0167**.

Pattern: Illegal excavation; Theft.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Society for the Rescue of Archaeological Sites in Northern Syria:

<https://www.facebook.com/261087317743143/videos/vb.261087317743143/275602326291642/>

¹¹¹ <http://www.discover-syria.com/bank/874>

¹¹² <https://www.facebook.com/261087317743143/videos/vb.261087317743143/275602326291642/>

Scholarly:

Shaath, S. (1981–2) "Tell Denit." *Archiv für Orientforschung* 28: 215–217.



Looting pit on Tell Danit (Society for the Rescue of Archaeological Sites in Northern Syria/Facebook; September 15, 2017)



Damage to Byzantine structure near Tell Danit (Society for the Rescue of Archaeological Sites in Northern Syria/Facebook; September 15, 2017)



Artifacts from looted excavation dig houses on Tell Danit (Society for the Rescue of Archaeological Sites in Northern Syria/Facebook; September 15, 2017)



Artifacts from looted excavation dig houses on Tell Danit (Society for the Rescue of Archaeological Sites in Northern Syria/Facebook; September 15, 2017)



Looting hole on Tell Danit (Society for the Rescue of Archaeological Sites in Northern Syria/Facebook; September 15, 2017)



Tell Dayit prior to significant damage from illegal excavation and bulldozing (DigitalGlobe NextView License; August 19, 2015)



The appearance of many illegal excavation pits on the mound indicated by red arrows (DigitalGlobe NextView License; June 19, 2016)



A simultaneous increase in illegal excavation and bulldozing on top of the mound (DigitalGlobe NextView License; October 1, 2016)



The most recently available image of the site shows a significant increase in bulldozing and leveling on top of the site (DigitalGlobe NextView License; July 17, 2017)

SHI 17-0164

Report Date: September 18, 2017

Site Name: Omar bin Abdulaziz Mosque (مسجد عمر بن عبد العزيز) (al-Shamti Mosque جامع الشمطي)

Date of Incident: September 17, 2017

Location: al-Jamili Neighborhood, Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: A reported US-led Coalition airstrike destroyed a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On September 17, 2017 multiple sources reported that a US-led Coalition airstrike destroyed Omar bin Abdulaziz Mosque.¹¹³ DigitalGlobe satellite imagery and photographs show that the mosque and its adjacent minaret have collapsed.¹¹⁴

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Raqqa Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0114 UPDATE, SHI 17-0157 UPDATE, SHI 17-0162, SHI 17-0165, and SHI 17-0169.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives - airstrike.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Amaq News Agency

Personal Twitter Account

Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently (RBSS):

September 17, 2017: <https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/posts/1681533248524586>

September 18, 2017: <https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/posts/1682512548426656>

Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR):

September 18, 2017: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/09/18/international-coalition-forces-shelled-al-shamti-mosque-al-jamili-neighborhood-raqqa-city-september-17/>

¹¹³ <https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/posts/1681533248524586>; Personal Twitter Account

¹¹⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/posts/1682512548426656>

September 19, 2017: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/09/19/destruction-omar-bin-abdul-aziz-mosque-caused-international-coalition-forces-shelling-al-jamili-neighborhood-raqqa-city-september-17/>

September 22, 2017: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SF-eTQthMyI>



The entrance to the Omar bin Abdulaziz Mosque compound, seen from the northeast. Note the minaret lying in the middle ground with the mosque's dome beyond it (RBSS; September 18, 2017)



The dome with the minaret lying in front of it (RBSS; September 18, 2017)



The remains of the top of the minaret (RBSS; September 18, 2017)



Omar bin Abdulaziz Mosque, location indicated by red box, prior to severe damage from airstrikes (DigitalGlobe NextView License; September 6, 2017)



The mosque, indicated by red arrows, after severe damage from airstrikes (DigitalGlobe NextView License; September 19, 2017)

SHI 17-0165

Report Date: September 22, 2017

Site Name: Armenian Catholic Church of the Martyrs (كنيسة الشهداء)

Date of Incident: Between September 6, 2017 and September 19, 2017

Location: al-Sharaqsa neighborhood, Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Armenian Catholic Church

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: Satellite imagery revealed damage to a church.

Incident Source and Description: Recently released DigitalGlobe satellite imagery shows that the Armenian Catholic Church of the Martyrs has been heavily damaged. The damage occurred between September 6 and September 19, 2017. Two of the auxiliary buildings have been entirely destroyed, and the main building of the church complex has been damaged on its southeastern and southwestern facades. It appears that this damage is the result of aerial bombardment.

Following the capture of Raqqa by ISIS in 2013, the church was repurposed as an Islamic center and as the headquarters of ISIS' Islamic police force.¹¹⁵ For more information on previous damage to the Armenian Catholic Church of the Martyrs, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0036** in **Weekly Report 83-84**.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Raqqa Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0114 UPDATE, SHI 17-0157, SHI 17-0162, SHI 17-0164, and SHI 17-0169**.

Pattern: Military activity: explosives - airstrike.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Expressen: <http://www.expressen.se/nyheter/womens-secret-films-from-within-closed-city-of-islamic-state/>

The New York Times: <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/24/world/middleeast/islamic-state-controls-raqqa-syria.html>

¹¹⁵ <http://www.expressen.se/nyheter/womens-secret-films-from-within-closed-city-of-islamic-state/>; <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/24/world/middleeast/islamic-state-controls-raqqa-syria.html>



The Armenian Catholic Church of the Martyrs, shown within the red box, prior to severe damage (DigitalGlobe NextView License; September 6, 2017)



The church after severe damage from airstrikes. Two of the auxiliary buildings are almost entirely destroyed, and there is damage to the southeast part of the main church, all indicated by red arrows (DigitalGlobe NextView License; September 19, 2017)

SHI 17-0166

Report Date: September 22, 2017

Site Name: Abu Bakr al-Siddiq Mosque

Date of Incident: September 20, 2017

Location: Eastern Neighborhood, Jerjnaz, Idlib Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: A suspected Russian airstrike damaged a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On September 20, 2017 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that a suspected Russian airstrike had occurred near Abu Bakr al-Siddiq Mosque.¹¹⁶ Subsequent video footage of the area revealed that the mosque and the buildings around it have been heavily damaged.¹¹⁷ The airstrike collapsed part of the mosque and ruined the furniture inside of it.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Idlib Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0170, SHI 17-0171, SHI 17-0173, and SHI 17-0174.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives - airstrike.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR):

September 20, 2017: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/09/20/suspected-russian-forces-shelled-abu-bakr-al-siddiq-mosque-jerjnaz-town-idlib-governorate-september-20/>

September 22, 2017: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=na1-cyhVeV0>

September 22, 2017: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f264roxkMko>

September 22, 2017: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S2rGXMfwyyY>

¹¹⁶ <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/09/20/suspected-russian-forces-shelled-abu-bakr-al-siddiq-mosque-jerjnaz-town-idlib-governorate-september-20/>

¹¹⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=na1-cyhVeV0>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f264roxkMko>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S2rGXMfwyyY>



Damage to the interior of Abu Bakr al-Siddiq Mosque. Note the large cracks along the corners and tops of the walls that were caused by the force of the explosion (SNHR; September 20, 2017)



Video still of damage to the mosque (SNHR; September 22, 2017)



Video still of damage to the mosque (SNHR; September 22, 2017)



Video still of damage to the mosque's interior (SNHR; September 22, 2017)



Video still of damage to the mosque's interior (SNHR; September 22, 2017)



Video still of damage to the mosque's interior (SNHR; September 22, 2017)



Video still of damage to religious material inside the mosque (SNHR; September 22, 2017)



Video still of damage to the mosque's exterior (SNHR; September 22, 2017)



Video still of damage to the mosque's interior (SNHR; September 22, 2017)



Video still of damage to the mosque's interior (SNHR; September 22, 2017)



Video still of damage to the mosque's ceiling (SNHR; September 22, 2017)



Video still of damage to the mosque (SNHR; September 22, 2017)

SHI 17-0167

Report Date: September 25, 2017

Site Name: Ebla (Tell Mardikh; تل مردیخ)

Date of Incident: September 23, 2017

Location: Tell Mardikh, Idlib Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Ebla (Tell Mardikh) was one of the earliest kingdoms in Syria. Ebla was an important center throughout the third millennium BCE and in the first half of the second millennium BCE. Its discovery proved the Levant was a center of ancient, centralized civilization equal to Egypt and Mesopotamia, and ruled out the view that the latter two were the only important centers in the Near East during the early Bronze Age.¹¹⁸

The city was destroyed and rebuilt several times, until its final, major destruction by the Hittites in 1600 BCE. The site continued to be occupied off and on as a small settlement until the 7th century CE, when it was abandoned.

Excavated remains include fortifications and gates surrounding the site, several palaces, temples to Ishtar, Hadad, Reseph, and Shamash, and royal tombs.

One of the most important finds from the site are the Ebla Tablets, discovered in 1974–5. These are a collection of around 1800 complete clay tablets and 4700 fragments found in the palace archives at Ebla. Found in situ on collapsed shelves, these retained many of their contemporary clay tags to help reference them. They all date to the period between ca. 2500 BCE and the "first destruction" of the city ca. 2250 BCE. The tablets provide a wealth of information on Syria and Canaan in the Early Bronze Age, and include the first known references to the "Canaanites", "Ugarit", and "Lebanon". The contents of the tablets reveal that Ebla was a major trade center.

Site Date: 3500 BCE to 7th century CE

Incident Summary: Reported SARG-Russian airstrikes damaged Ebla.

Incident Source and Description: On September 23, 2017 the Syrian Civil Defense-Idlib Governorate posted a video that shows damage to Ebla from SARG-Russian airstrikes.¹¹⁹ At least two airstrikes hit the site. The video records the impact of one of them.

On September 25, 2017 Aleppo Archaeology posted photographs that exhibit the damage caused by these airstrikes.¹²⁰ The photographs show a crater in the site and damage to brick architecture. Based on the rebar visible in one photograph, at least some of the damaged architecture was reconstruction rather than original.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other archaeological sites that were damaged in Idlib Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0163**.

¹¹⁸ Bryce (2014); Gordon, Rendsburg, Winter (2002); Wellisch (1981): 488-500

¹¹⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KpiSIoZwaMs>

¹²⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/aleppoarchaeology/posts/1550010391724143>

For more information on previous damage to Ebla see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 14-0101** in **Weekly Report 20**; **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0137** in **Weekly Report 61-62**; and **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0150** in **Weekly Report 69-70**.

Pattern: Military activity: explosives - airstrike.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Aleppo Archaeology: <https://www.facebook.com/aleppoarchaeology/posts/1550010391724143>

Syrian Civil Defense-Idlib Governorate (SCD-IG): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KpiSloZwaM>

Scholarly:

Bryce, Trevor (2014) *Ancient Syria: A Three Thousand Year History*. Oxford University Press.

Gordon, Cyrus, Rendsburg, Gary & Winter, Nathan (2002) *Eblaitica: Essays on the Ebla Archives and Eblaite Language*, Vol. 4. Eisenbrauns.

Wellisch, Hans H. (Summer 1981) "Ebla: The World's Oldest Library," *The Journal of Library History* 16.3, 488-500.

Matthiae, Paolo & Marchetti, Nicoló (2013) *Ebla and its Landscape: Early State Formation in the Ancient Near East*. Left Coast Press.



Video still of damage to Ebla (SCD-IG; September 23, 2017)



Video still of remains near the airstrike (SCD-IG; September 23, 2017)



Video still of remains near the airstrike (SCD-IG; September 23, 2017)



Video still of damage to a contemporary subterranean structure at Ebla (SCD-IG; September 23, 2017)



Video still of an airstrike hitting Ebla (SCD-IG; September 23, 2017)



Video still showing the approximate location of the airstrike (SCD-IG; September 23, 2017)



Damage to the site of Ebla (Aleppo Archaeology; September 25, 2017)



Damage to archaeological remains at Ebla (Aleppo Archaeology; September 25, 2017)



Damage to archaeological remains at Ebla (Aleppo Archaeology; September 25, 2017)

SHI 17-0168

Report Date: September 27, 2017

Site Name: Unnamed Mosque

Date of Incident: Between February 27, 2017 and September 16, 2017

Location: al-Baghiliyah, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: Satellite imagery revealed damage to a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: Analysis of DigitalGlobe satellite imagery uncovered a damaged mosque in al-Baghiliyah. The eastern side of the mosque and dome were damaged by explosives. The damage occurred between February 27, 2017 and September 16, 2017.

See the associated incident report in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Deir ez-Zor Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0161**.

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

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



The unnamed mosque prior to any damage, shown within a red rectangle (DigitalGlobe NextView License; February 27, 2017)



Damage to the mosque from explosives as indicated by the red arrows (DigitalGlobe NextView License; September 16, 2017)

SHI 17-0169

Report Date: September 27, 2017

Site Name: al-Imam al-Nawawi Mosque (مسجد الإمام النووي)

Date of Incident: Between September 19, 2017 and September 24, 2017

Location: Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: Satellite imagery revealed damage to a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: Recently released DigitalGlobe satellite imagery shows that al-Imam al-Nawawi Mosque has been heavily damaged. The damage occurred between September 19, 2017 and September 24, 2017. The dome of the mosque has almost entirely collapsed, probably as a result of an airstrike. There is additional minor amounts of damage to the western and northeastern facades of the mosque as a result of nearby explosions.

See associated incidents report in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Raqqa Governorate: [ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0114 UPDATE](#), [SHI 17-0157 UPDATE](#), [SHI 17-0162](#), [SHI 17-0164](#), and [SHI 17-0165](#).

For more information on previous damage to al-Imam al-Nawawi Mosque, see [ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0038](#) in [Weekly Report 85-86](#).

Pattern: Military activity: explosives - airstrike.

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



al-Imam al-Nawawi Mosque prior to any serious damage shown within red box (DigitalGlobe NextView License; September 19, 2017)



Severe damage to the dome of the mosque as a result of an airstrike indicated by red arrow. Additionally damage also indicated by red arrows (DigitalGlobe NextView License; September 24, 2017)

SHI 17-0170

Report Date: September 27, 2017

Site Name: al-Kabir Mosque (مسجد الكبير)

Date of Incident: September 26, 2017

Location: Bdama (بداما), Idlib Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: A reported SARG airstrike damaged a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On September 26, 2017 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that a SARG airstrike had damaged al-Kabir Mosque.¹²¹ The strike partially damaged the building, disturbed its contents, and rendered it inoperable. A video posted online the day after the attack shows an airstrike in Bdama that hit near a mosque.¹²² The mosque in the video is likely al-Kabir Mosque.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Idlib Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0166, SHI 17-0171, SHI 17-0173, and SHI 17-0174.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives - airstrike.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Qalaat al-Mudiq: <https://twitter.com/QalaatAlMudiq/status/912978034495492098>

Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR): <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/09/26/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-bdama-al-kabir-mosque-bdama-town-idlib-governorate-september-26/>

¹²¹ <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/09/26/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-bdama-al-kabir-mosque-bdama-town-idlib-governorate-september-26/>

¹²² <https://twitter.com/QalaatAlMudiq/status/912978034495492098>



Damage to the interior of al-Kabir mosque (SNHR; September 26, 2017)



Video still of an airstrike that landed near what is probably al-Kabir Mosque (Qalaat al-Mudiq; September 27, 2017)

SHI 17-0171

Report Date: September 28, 2017

Site Name: al-Iman Mosque (جامع الايمان)

Date of Incident: September 27, 2017

Location: al-Gharbi neighborhood, Jisr al-Shughour, Idlib Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: A SARG-Russian airstrike damaged a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On September 28, 2017 multiple sources posted media showing the aftermath of a SARG-Russian airstrike on or near al-Iman Mosque on September 27, 2017.¹²³ The airstrike damaged the mosque's exterior, broke windows, and scattered materials inside the building. Jisr al-Shughour experienced multiple airstrikes on the day that the damage occurred.¹²⁴

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Idlib Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0166, SHI 17-0170, SHI 17-0173, and SHI 17-0174.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives - airstrike.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

SMART News Agency: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7wbWzKu0ico>

SNHR: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/09/28/suspected-russian-forces-shelled-al-eman-mosque-jisr-al-shoghour-city-idlib-governorate-september-27/>

Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR): <http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=75107>

¹²³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7wbWzKu0ico>; <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/09/28/suspected-russian-forces-shelled-al-eman-mosque-jisr-al-shoghour-city-idlib-governorate-september-27/>

¹²⁴ <http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=75107>



Video still of al-Iman Mosque's entrance (SMART News Agency; September 28, 2017)



Video still of damage to the mosque's exterior (SMART News Agency; September 28, 2017)



Video still of damage to the mosque's exterior (SMART News Agency; September 28, 2017)



Video still of damage to the mosque's interior (SMART News Agency; September 28, 2017)



Video still of rubble and a book on the mosque's floor (SMART News Agency; September 28, 2017)



Damage to the interior of the mosque (SNHR; September 28, 2017)

SHI 17-0172

Report Date: September 29, 2017

Site Name: al-Kabir Mosque (المسجد الكبير)

Date of Incident: September 28, 2017

Location: Sarmin, Idlib Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Umayyad Period

Incident Summary: A local organization repaired a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On September 28, 2017 SMART News Agency reported that reconstruction activities had occurred on al-Kabir Mosque.¹²⁵ The Awqaf Directorate directed the repairs. The mosque was previously damaged in 2012 and 2013.¹²⁶

Pattern: Site management: reconstruction/clean-up.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Sarmin Coordination: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zydlzsP6L7s>

SMART News Agency: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Umspa_Prn4Y

¹²⁵ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Umspa_Prn4Y

¹²⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zydlzsP6L7s>



Video still of damage to a wall alongside the mosque's courtyard (Sarmin Coordination; September 1, 2012)



Video still of damage to a column alongside the mosque's courtyard (Sarmin Coordination; September 1, 2012)



Video still of damage to the roof of an arcade alongside the courtyard (Sarmin Coordination; September 1, 2012)



Video still of damage to the floor of an arcade alongside the courtyard (Sarmin Coordination; September 1, 2012)



Video still of damage to a wall alongside the mosque's courtyard (Sarmin Coordination; September 1, 2012)



Video still of damage to the mosque's minaret (Sarmin Coordination; September 1, 2012)



Video still of damage to an arch alongside the mosque's courtyard (Sarmin Coordination; September 1, 2012)



Video still of the reconstruction efforts (SMART News Agency; September 28, 2017)



Video still of repairs to the top of the minaret (SMART News Agency; September 28, 2017)



Video still of the reconstruction efforts (SMART News Agency; September 28, 2017)



Video still of the reconstruction efforts (SMART News Agency; September 28, 2017)



Video still of repairs to a wall (SMART News Agency; September 28, 2017)



Video still of the reconstruction efforts (SMART News Agency; September 28, 2017)



Video still of the reconstruction efforts (SMART News Agency; September 28, 2017)



Video still of the reconstruction efforts (SMART News Agency; September 28, 2017)



Video still of the reconstruction efforts (SMART News Agency; September 28, 2017)

SHI 17-0173

Report Date: September 30, 2017

Site Name: al-Kabir Mosque (مسجد الكبير)

Date of Incident: September 28, 2017

Location: Jisr al-Shughour, Idlib Governorate, Syria

Site Description: The Great Mosque of Jisr al-Shughur was built in 1658 CE by Muhammad Basha al Kubirli Zadeh to serve as a rest spot for pilgrims from the north on their way to Mecca. It was reconstructed in 1826 after an earthquake.

Site Date: 1658 CE

Incident Summary: A suspected Russian airstrike damaged a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On September 28, 2017 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that a suspected Russian airstrike had damaged al-Kabir Mosque.¹²⁷ The airstrike blasted a hole through an exterior wall of the mosque. SNHR posted a video of the damage the following day.¹²⁸

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Idlib Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0166, SHI 17-0170, SHI 17-0171, and SHI 17-0174.**

For more information on previous damage to al-Kabir Mosque, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0039 in March 2017 Monthly Report.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives - airstrike.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR):

September 28, 2017: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/09/28/suspected-russian-forces-shelled-al-kabir-mosque-jisr-al-shoghour-city-idlib-governorate-september-28/>

September 29, 2017: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LqzPxGAXWNQ>

¹²⁷ <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/09/28/suspected-russian-forces-shelled-al-kabir-mosque-jisr-al-shoghour-city-idlib-governorate-september-28/>

¹²⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LqzPxGAXWNQ>



The damaged area of al-Kabir Mosque, visible beyond the arches (SNHR; September 28, 2017)



Video still of damage to the mosque (SNHR; September 29, 2017)



Video still of damage to the mosque (SNHR; September 29, 2017)



Video still of damage to the mosque, seen from the outside (SNHR; September 29, 2017)



Video still of damage to the mosque, seen from the outside (SNHR; September 29, 2017)

SHI 17-0174

Report Date: September 30, 2017

Site Name: al-Janoubi Mosque (المسجد الجنوبي)

Date of Incident: September 28, 2017

Location: Mazra'at al-Tis'a, Idlib Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: A reported SARG airstrike damaged a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On September 28, 2017 the Syrian Network for Humans Rights (SNHR) reported that a SARG airstrike hit al-Janoubi Mosque, causing heavy damage to the building and its contents.¹²⁹ The strike destroyed at least one wall of the mosque.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Idlib Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0166, SHI 17-0170, SHI 17-0171, and SHI 17-0173.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives - airstrike.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR):

<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/09/28/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-al-janoubi-mosque-mazraet-al-tesa-area-sahl-al-rouj-area-idlib-governorate-september-28/>

¹²⁹ <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/09/28/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-al-janoubi-mosque-mazraet-al-tesa-area-sahl-al-rouj-area-idlib-governorate-september-28/>



Damage to al-Janoubi Mosque (SNHR; September 28, 2017)

SHI 17-0175

Report Date: September 30, 2017

Site Name: Qalaat Ja'abar

Date of Incident: Unknown

Location: Raqqa Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Fortification at Qalaat Ja'abar may go back to the late 5th–early 6th centuries CE. The current citadel was built during the reign of Nur al-Din Zengi, starting in 1168 CE.¹³⁰ The castle was heavily damaged during the Mongol invasions. Tengiz, the Mamluk governor of Damascus, completed repair work on the building in 1335–36 CE.

The castle is situated on a promontory overlooking the Euphrates River. Following the construction of the Tabqa Dam, the waters of Lake Assad now surround the site. A narrow stretch of land connects the fort to the eastern shore of the lake.

The castle consists a central fortress surrounded by defensive walls and a ditch. The DGAM has completed restoration work on portions of the site, including the entrance and the defensive walls. However, much of the upper fortress is now rubble.

Site Date: 12th century CE–14th century CE

Incident Summary: Theft of electrical cables damaged an archaeological site.

Incident Source and Description: On September 23, 2017 the Authority of Tourism and Protection of Antiquities - al Jazira Canton (ATPA) reported that the theft of electrical cables had damaged Qalaat Ja'abar.¹³¹ The theft damaged part of the entrance to the citadel. ATPA stated that they posted a guard for a few days and that they intend to conduct repair work.

Pattern: Illegal excavation.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

The Authority of Tourism and Protection of Antiquities - al Jazira Canton (ATPA):
<http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/jaaber-citadel-2192017/>

¹³⁰ Burns 2009: 228

¹³¹ <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/jaaber-citadel-2192017/>

Scholarly:

Burns, Ross (2009) *Monuments of Syria: A Guide*. London: I.B. Tauris.



Damage to the entrance of the building as a result of the theft (ATPA; September 23, 2017)



The trench where the cables were located (ATPA; September 23, 2017)

Incident Reports: Iraq

IHI 17-0074

Report Date: September 29, 2017

Site Name: al-Nour Mosque

Date of Incident: Unknown

Location: Tal Afar, Ninawa Governorate, Iraq

Site Description: Mosque in al-Nour District

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: New video footage showed damage to a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On August 26, 2017 al-Mosuliya released a video showing the condition of al-Nour Mosque. There is an Islamic State sign outside the front of the mosque and the facade of the mosque has some bullet/shrapnel holes.

On September 6, 2017 al-Mosuliya released another video showing the exterior and interior of the mosque. The interior of the mosque has limited damage, including a hole in the dome over the mihrab. There is some structural damage below this hole. The rest of the mosque appears relatively undamaged. It has possibly been cleaned since the first video was filmed. One room has possible evidence of occupation with rugs, bedding, and shoes present.

Pattern: Military activity: explosives - airstrikes, occupation; Vandalism.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

al-Mosuliya:

August 26, 2017: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wHit-7IDCP4>

September 6, 2017: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oKhR5Bml18A>



Video still of damage to the exterior of al-Nour Mosque (al-Mosuliya; August 26, 2017)



Video still of graffiti on the exterior of al-Nour Mosque (al-Mosuliya; September 6, 2017)



Video still of the exterior of al-Nour Mosque (al-Mosuliya; September 6, 2017)



Video still of the interior of al-Nour Mosque (al-Mosuliya; September 6, 2017)



Video still of the interior of al-Nour Mosque (al-Mosuliya; September 6, 2017)



Video still of the interior of al-Nour Mosque showing possible occupation (al-Mosuliya; September 6, 2017)



Video still of the interior of al-Nour Mosque (al-Mosuliya; September 6, 2017)



Video still of the interior of al-Nour Mosque (al-Mosuliya; September 6, 2017)



Video still of the interior of al-Nour Mosque showing the mihrab (al-Mosuliya; September 6, 2017)



Video still of the interior of al-Nour Mosque showing a hole in the dome above the mihrab (al-Mosuliya; September 6, 2017)

Incident Reports: Libya

LHI 17-0022

Report Date: September 17, 2017

Site Name: Sabratha Theatre

Date of Incident: September 16, 2017

Location: Sabratha, Tripolitania, Libya

Site Description: The Sabratha Theatre is one of the most prominent features of the UNESCO World Heritage site of Sabratha. The theatre was restored in the 1930s by Italian colonial authorities.¹³²

Site Date: Roman (2nd–3rd century CE)

Incident Summary: Ongoing fighting between two militias in Sabratha damaged the Theatre of Sabratha.

Incident Source and Description: Fighting between the Amu Brigade and another militia supporting the Libyan National Army (LNA), based in Benghazi, spilled into the archaeological site of Sabratha. The site has largely escaped harm since the start of the Libyan revolution in February 2011. Initial reports of damage circulated on Facebook, with a photograph that appeared to document the aftermath of a rocket-propelled grenade that detonated against the side of the Sabratha Theatre.¹³³

Mohammed Shakshouki, the new director of the Libyan Department of Antiquities (DoA) based in Tripoli, sent an email to all foreign archaeological missions on September 21, 2017 explaining that despite the ongoing fighting in the modern city of Sabratha, the DoA superintendent in Sabratha was able to confirm that the site was largely out of harm's way.

Nevertheless, due to the intensity of the fighting, DoA staff were forced to temporarily abandon the site of Sabratha. A full damage assessment has not yet been completed. Both local and international authorities have called for a ceasefire and for all belligerent parties to respect the sanctity of the archaeological site.

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor reports of ongoing fighting in Sabratha and its impact on the UNESCO World Heritage site.

¹³² <http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1714>

¹³³ <https://www.facebook.com/Weld.Liberton/posts/1546330958738503>

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Libya Herald: <https://www.libyaherald.com/2017/09/18/sabratha-council-calls-for-an-end-to-town-battles/>

Sabratha Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/Weld.Librton/posts/1546330958738503>

UNESCO: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1714>



Damage inflicted by what appears to be the detonation of a rocket propelled grenade against the side of the Sabratha Theatre (Source: Sabrata; September 17, 2017)

LHI 17-0023

Report Date: September 27, 2017

Site Name: Tripoli - R-2

Date of Incident: Between October 19, 2016 and December 8, 2016

Location: Tripoli, Tripolitania Governorate, Libya

Site Description: Located in the heart of the Old City of Tripoli, this private residence lies within the zone designated for protection by the Libyan Historic Cities Authority.

Site Date: Original Building/Site R-2 - Ottoman Era

Incident Summary: A historic building was illegally torn down and replaced by a new construction.

Incident Source and Description: Seif ad-Din al Hisnawy, a representative of the Libyan Department of Antiquities, originally reported this encroachment in July 2017. The report was confirmed by Assedik Ergeg, the Director of the Historic Cities Authority in Tripoli.

As seen in DigitalGlobe satellite imagery, the historic building identified as R-2 in the Old City of Tripoli was torn down and a new building constructed between October 19, 2016 and December 8, 2016, as evidenced by the visible construction of a new building in its place.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Tripoli: **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0024, LHI 17-0025, LHI 17-0026, and LHI 17-0027.**

Pattern: Development disturbances.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor disturbances in the Old City of Tripoli and work with representatives of the Historic Cities Authority and Department of Antiquities to document similar disturbances.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

ASOR CHI: <http://www.asor-syrianheritage.org/update-old-city-of-tripoli/>



Historic building R-2 prior to destruction shown within the red circle (DigitalGlobe NextView License; October 19, 2016)



The construction of a new building in place of the historic building visible within the red circle (DigitalGlobe NextView License; December 8, 2016)

LHI 17-0024

Report Date: September 27, 2017

Site Name: Tripoli R-3

Date of Incident: Between April 1, 2016 and April 27, 2016

Location: Tripoli, Tripolitania Governorate, Libya

Site Description: Located in the heart of the Old City of Tripoli, this private residence lies within the zone designated for protection by the Libyan Historic Cities Authority.

Site Date: Original Building/Site R-3 - Ottoman Period.

Incident Summary: A historic building was illegally torn down and replaced by a new construction.

Incident Source and Description: Seif ad-Din al Hisnawy, a representative of the Libyan Department of Antiquities, originally reported this encroachment in July 2017. The report was confirmed by Assedik Ergeg, the Director of the Historic Cities Authority in Tripoli.

As seen in DigitalGlobe satellite imagery, the original historic building identified as R-3 was torn down and construction began on a new building between April 1, 2016 and April 27, 2016. In a satellite image from April 27, 2016 construction of a new building is visible. The new building was completed by November 28, 2016.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Tripoli: **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0023, LHI 17-0025, LHI 17-0026, and LHI 17-0027.**

Pattern: Development disturbances.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor disturbances in the Old City of Tripoli and work with representatives of the Historic Cities Authority and Department of Antiquities to document similar disturbances.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

ASOR CHI: <http://www.asor-syrianheritage.org/update-old-city-of-tripoli/>



Building R-3 prior to its destruction (DigitalGlobe NextView License; April 1, 2016)



The construction of a new building in place of R-3 is clearly visible within the red square (DigitalGlobe NextView License; April 27, 2016)



The newly constructed building that replaced historic building R-3 (DigitalGlobe NextView License; November, 28, 2016)

LHI 17-0025

Report Date: September 27, 2017

Site Name: Tripoli- R-8

Date of Incident: Between March 8, 2016 and March 29, 2016

Location: Tripoli, Tripolitania Governorate, Libya

Site Description: Located in the heart of the Old City of Tripoli, this private residence lies within the zone designated for protection by the Libyan Historic Cities Authority.

Site Date: Original Building/Site R-8 - Ottoman Period

Incident Summary: A historic building was illegally torn down and replaced by a new construction.

Incident Source and Description: Seif ad-Din al Hisnawy, a representative of the Libyan Department of Antiquities, originally reported this encroachment in July 2017. The report was confirmed by Assedik Ergeg, Director of the Historic Cities Authority in Tripoli.

As seen in DigitalGlobe satellite imagery, the historic building identified as R-8 in the Old City of Tripoli was destroyed sometime between March 8, 2016 and March 29, 2016. The area appears to have been used as a parking lot after the building's destruction.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Tripoli: **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0023, LHI 17-0024, LHI 17-0026, and LHI 17-0027.**

Pattern: Development disturbances.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor disturbances in the Old City of Tripoli and work with representatives of the Historic Cities Authority and Department of Antiquities to document similar disturbances.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

ASOR CHI: <http://www.asor-syrianheritage.org/update-old-city-of-tripoli/>



Historic building R-8 in the old city of Tripoli, shown within the red rectangle, prior to its destruction (DigitalGlobe NextView License; March 18, 2016)



The red rectangle indicates the area in which R-8 previously existed but had since been destroyed (DigitalGlobe NextView License; March 29, 2016)

LHI 17-0026

Report Date: September 27, 2017

Site Name: Tripoli - R-10 (CHI # 13836)

Date of Incident: Between February 5, 2017 and March 23, 2017

Location: Tripoli, Tripolitania Governorate, Libya

Coordinates: 32.897816 N, 13.177342 E

Site Description: Located in the heart of the Old City of Tripoli, this private residence lies within the zone designated for protection by the Libyan Historic Cities Authority.

Site Date: Original Building/Site R-10 - Ottoman Period

Incident Summary: A historic building was illegally torn down and replaced by a new construction.

Incident Source and Description: Seif ad-Din al Hisnawy, a representative of the Libyan Department of Antiquities, originally reported this encroachment in July 2017. The report was confirmed by Assedik Ergeg, the Director of the Historic Cities Authority in Tripoli.

As seen in DigitalGlobe satellite imagery, the historic building identified as R-10 in the Old City of Tripoli was destroyed sometime between February 5, 2017 and March 23, 2017. Construction of a modern building in the original place of the historic building is clearly visible in the imagery from March 23, 2017.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Tripoli: **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0023**, **LHI 17-0024**, **LHI 17-0025**, and **LHI 17-0027**.

Pattern: Development disturbances.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor disturbances in the Old City of Tripoli and work with representatives of the Historic Cities Authority and Department of Antiquities to document similar disturbances.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

ASOR CHI: <http://www.asor-syrianheritage.org/update-old-city-of-tripoli/>



The historic building R-10, within the red rectangle, prior to destruction (DigitalGlobe NextView License; February 5, 2017)



Construction of a new building in place of R-10 is visible within the red rectangle (DigitalGlobe NextView License; March 23, 2017)

LHI 17-0027

Report Date: September 27, 2017

Site Name: Tripoli - R-11 (CHI # 13837)

Date of Incident: Between October 24, 2013 and December 3, 2015

Location: Tripoli, Tripolitania Governorate, Libya

Coordinates: 32.897995 N, 13.177657 E

Site Description: Located in the heart of the Old City of Tripoli, this private residence lies within the zone designated for protection by the Libyan Historic Cities Authority.

Site Date: Original Building/Site R-11 - Ottoman Period

Incident Summary: A historic building was illegally torn down and replaced by new construction.

Incident Source and Description: Seif ad-Din al Hisnawy, a representative of the Libyan Department of Antiquities, originally reported encroachment on the site in July 2017. The report was later confirmed by Assedik Ergeg, Director of the Historic Cities Authority in Tripoli.

As seen in DigitalGlobe satellite imagery, the historic building identified as R-11 was destroyed between October 24, 2013 and December 3, 2015 and was replaced by a new building.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Tripoli: **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0023, LHI 17-0024, LHI 17-0025, and LHI 17-0026.**

Pattern: Development disturbance.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor disturbances in the Old City of Tripoli and work with representatives of the Historic Cities Authority and Department of Antiquities to document similar disturbances.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

ASOR CHI: <http://www.asor-syrianheritage.org/update-old-city-of-tripoli/>



Historic building R-11, shown within red rectangle, prior to destruction (DigitalGlobe NextView License; October 24, 2013)



Construction of a new building in the place of R-11, shown within the red rectangle (DigitalGlobe NextView License; December 3, 2015)



The former area of R-11 post-construction (DigitalGlobe NextView License; February 20, 2016)

Satellite Imagery and Geospatial Analysis

Deir ez-Zor Governorate in Syria has been a main theatre of conflict and a stronghold of ISIS for at least three years.¹³⁴ In the beginning of September 2017, Iranian and Russian backed forces reached the city of Deir ez-Zor, marking a significant change in the control of the governorate. Reports suggest that street fighting in the city will ensue, and a long battle in this city and surrounding areas is predicted.¹³⁵ Currently, Syrian backed forces are successfully retaking villages west of the city of Deir ez-Zor.¹³⁶ Over the course of ISIS's occupation of the region, there has been little reporting on the condition of archaeological sites from on the ground sources.

ASOR CHI analyzed the condition of archaeological sites in Deir ez-Zor Governorate using satellite imagery, in order to determine whether or not there has been extreme damage to these sites as a result of the occupation. Based on previous analysis from other ISIS-occupied regions in Syria, it was expected that many sites would have been used as military garrisons, and that there would be significant amounts of illegal excavation at sites. ASOR CHI has analyzed the condition of 67 archaeological sites or monuments within the governorate, comparing the most recent DigitalGlobe satellite imagery, which ranges from October 24, 2016 to September 16, 2017 to the earliest dated imagery. Out of these 67 sites, only five have no recorded damage of any kind and are in good condition. Five of the sites are assessed as being in fair condition, with only 1-10% of the site being damaged. 30 of the sites, about 45%, are reported as having some damage, with 10-60% of the site being damaged. 16 of 67 sites are reported to be 60-90% damaged. Only one site, the Deir ez-Zor suspension bridge, has been entirely destroyed, which collapsed due to explosive damage to the bridge supports in April 2013.

Through an analysis of DigitalGlobe satellite imagery, several negative impacts to archaeological sites in this region have been identified. One of the main impacts in Deir ez-Zor Governorate is illegal excavation. The most notable example occurred at the site of Dura Europos, which has been extensively reported by CHI (See **ASOR CHI Incident Reports SHI 14-0078** in **Weekly Report 15**, **SHI 14-0098** in **Weekly Report 19**, **SHI 16-0161** in **Weekly Report 117-118**, and **SHI 17-0081** in **Weekly Report 141-144**). Nearly 54% of the sites in Deir ez-Zor show signs of illegal excavation, although the majority of illegal excavation took place prior to the Syrian Civil War and is not systematic or extensive but irregular and scattered. 46% of sites have been compromised by agricultural plowing. Surprisingly, only five sites (7%) have been compromised by military disturbances, as evidenced by the building of earthworks/roadworks. The most striking observation from this dataset is the pervasiveness of modern development at archaeological sites. Nearly 80% of the inventoried sites have been impacted in some way by modern development, the majority of which is ongoing (53 total sites). 24 of these sites show signs of bulldozing/leveling, 16 have been impacted by modern construction, 34 are being absorbed by modern towns, four have

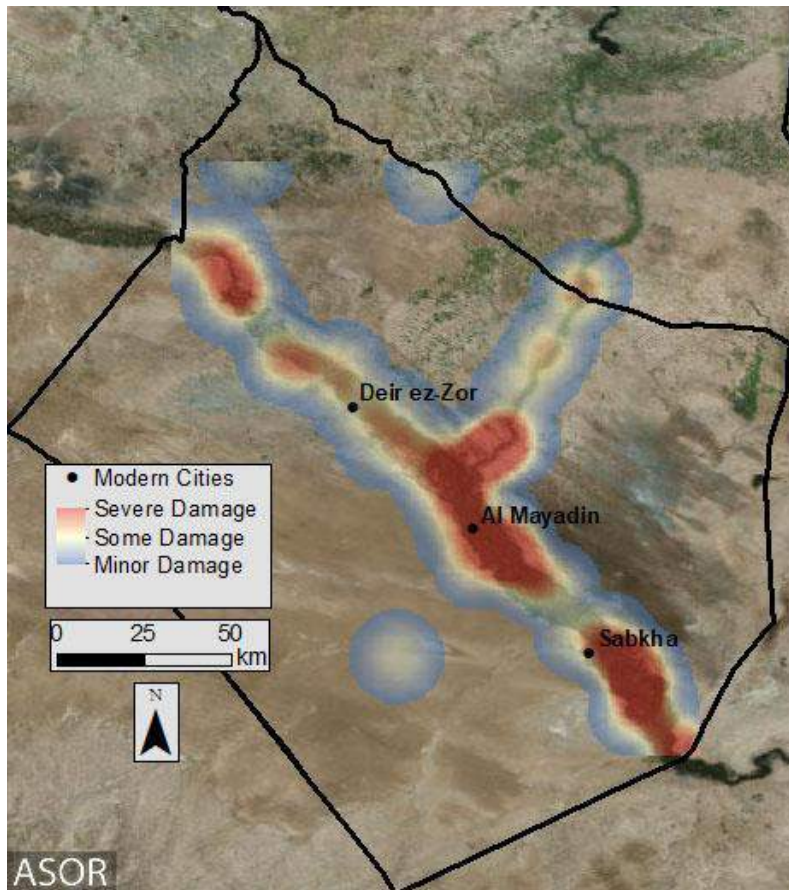
¹³⁴ <https://apnews.com/8d03e53ccc1b4a95bb0073aec7c8cf2d/Syrian-troops-breach-3-year-IS-siege-on-eastern-city>

¹³⁵ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria/syrian-army-fights-to-secure-corridor-into-deir-al-zor-idUSKCN1BH1G8>

¹³⁶ <https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2017/09/20/1525183/syria-army-liberates-more-areas-in-deir-ez-zor>

been affected by mining/quarrying, 13 have been affected by roadwork, seven show signs of trenching, and 24 show signs of other forms of development impacts.

These results vary in some ways from the expected outcomes. It was assumed, because of ISIS occupation in the region, that significantly more sites would have been used as military garrisons. It is unclear why this is not the case, but it could be related to the distance that the majority of archaeological sites are from major urban centers, including the city of Deir ez-Zor. Many of the sites have not been affected by a single factor alone, and often a site will have been damaged by a combination of illegal excavation, agricultural encroachment, and urban encroachment. Below is a heat map displaying regional trends of damage intensity within the governorate, followed by examples of the various compromising impacts at some of the archaeological sites. At the end of this section is a chart with a list of all sites assessed, with the condition of each site and the primary and secondary types of damage listed.



A heat map indicating the severity of damage to the archaeological sites in Deir ez-Zor governorate at a regional level through September 30, 2017 (Created by ASOR CHI; Basemap Sources: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, i-cubed, USDA FSA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community).

Many of the archaeological sites in the region have been damaged by a multitude of factors. Below is an image of Tell Qsubi, from February 17, 2017. The site has suffered from the effects of illegal

excavation, agricultural encroachment, urban encroachment, and modern burials, and is a good example of how a variety of damaging factors can affect a single site.



Tell Qsubi with multiple forms of damage indicated by red arrows (DigitalGlobe NextView License; February 17, 2017)

Modern development has also affected the majority of the sites in the governorate. Much of the damage from development occurred prior to the Syrian conflict. One of the most severely affected sites is Terqa, damage to which has previously been reported by ASOR CHI (see [ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 14-0098](#) in [Weekly Report 19](#)).



Severe urban encroachment on the site of Terqa, which is visible in the most recent imagery. There is also visible bulldozing on the southeastern part of the site (DigitalGlobe NextView License; September 8, 2017)

Agricultural encroachment has also negatively impacted many of the sites in Deir ez-Zor Governorate. Military disturbances have affected far fewer sites, but the site of Tell Malhat is a good example both types of damage.

 <p>ASOR ©2017 DigitalGlobe</p>	 <p>ASOR ©2017 DigitalGlobe</p>
<p>Tell Malhat with red arrows indicating agricultural plowing on top of the mound, as well as visible modern burials and modern buildings to the east of the site (DigitalGlobe NextView License; November 29, 2011)</p>	<p>Military trenching visible on the site and to the east of the site (DigitalGlobe NextView License; September 17, 2016)</p>

Illegal excavation has damaged over half of the sites in the governorate, although this has rarely been the only negative impact at a site and was often present at the site prior to the conflict. Tell al-Marwaniya is a good example of a site that was illegally excavated both prior and during the conflict.



Illegal excavation at Tell al-Marwaniya prior to the conflict indicated by red polygons. Other forms of damage such as bulldozing and a modern road indicated by red arrows (DigitalGlobe NextView License; February 4, 2011)



Increase in illegal excavation shown by blue polygons with former areas of looting indicated by red polygons. A new modern track running through the site indicated by a red arrow (DigitalGlobe NextView License; May 22, 2016)

SNHR Vital Facilities Report:

On September 9, 2017 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) released a vital facility report for August 2017. According to SNHR, there were 48 attacks against vital civilian facilities. The sites attacked include eight mosques.¹³⁷

- On August 5, 2017 a US-led Coalition airstrike damaged al-Kabir Mosque in Shamsani Sharqi, Hasakah Governorate. The mosque was rendered out of commission.
- On August 8, 2017 a SARG airstrike damaged al-Nur Mosque between the towns of Hazza and Ain Tarma in Rif Dimashq Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0142 in August Monthly Report**
- On August 8, 2017 a US-led Coalition airstrike damaged al-Thakana Mosque in Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate. The mosque was rendered out of commission. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0144 in August Monthly Report**
- On August 9, 2017 a SARG or Russian airstrike destroyed Abu Bakr al-Siddiq Mosque in Hamada Omar, Hama Governorate. The mosque was rendered out of commission. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0148 in August Monthly Report**
- On August 11, 2017 a SARG or Russian airstrike damaged Bilal ibn Rabbah Mosque in Soha, Hama Governorate. The mosque was rendered out of commission.
- On August 11, 2017 a SARG or Russian airstrike damaged al-Rahma Mosque in Soha, Hama Governorate. The mosque was rendered out of commission.
- On August 11, 2017 a SARG or Russian airstrike damaged Omar ibn al-Khitab Mosque in Soha, Hama Governorate. The mosque was rendered out of commission.
- On August 19, 2017 a US-led Coalition airstrike destroyed a mosque in al-Jaza, Hasakah Governorate. The mosque was rendered out of commission.

Heritage Timeline

September 29, 2017

BBC News published an article titled “**The archaeological treasures IS failed to destroy**” (by Sebastien Rey & John MacGinnis). The lead archaeologists from the British Museum Iraq Project discuss destruction of archaeological sites like Nineveh and Nimrud by ISIS militants, as well as new discoveries made at Qalatga Darband and Girsu.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-41390440>

¹³⁷ [http://sn4hr.org/wp-content/pdf/english/At least 48 incidents of attacks on civilian vital centers in August 2017 en.pdf](http://sn4hr.org/wp-content/pdf/english/At%20least%2048%20incidents%20of%20attacks%20on%20civilian%20vital%20centers%20in%20August%202017%20en.pdf)

- *Al Monitor* published an article titled “**Will the Jewish archive return to Iraq?**” (by Saad Salloum). The US State Department has announced that the United States will return an archive of Iraqi Jewish documents to Iraq in 2018. The archive was sent to the US in 2003, after American troops recovered it from the cellars of the Iraqi General Intelligence Service building in Baghdad. The archive includes tens of thousands of institutional documents, books, religious manuscripts, photographs, and personal documents of Iraqi Jews seized by the Baathist government in the 1970s and 1980s. <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/09/jewish-archive-iraq-israel-us.html>
 - *Science* published an article titled “**Mission aims to salvage what's left of Nimrud**” (by Jennifer Couzin-Frankel). This fall, Iraqi and US archaeologists will survey the damage at Nimrud for the first time following its recapture from ISIS militants in 2015. <http://science.sciencemag.org/content/357/6358/1340.full>
- September 28, 2017
- Foreign Affairs* published an article titled “**How China and America Can Protect the World's Antiquities**” (by Eleni Wah). An examination of the role governments play in cultural heritage protection. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2017-09-28/how-china-and-america-can-protect-worlds-antiquities?cid=nlc-fa-fatoday-20170928>
- SNHR published a post titled “**Syrian regime forces shelled al Janoubi Mosque Mazra’et al Tes’a area in Sahl al Rouj area in Idlib governorate on September 28.**” SARG forces shelled and damaged a mosque. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0174** <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/09/28/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-al-janoubi-mosque-mazraet-al-tesa-area-sahl-al-rouj-area-idlib-governorate-september-28/>
 - SNHR published a post titled “**Suspected Russian forces shelled al Kabir Mosque in Jisr al Shoghour city in Idlib governorate on September 28.**” A suspected Russian airstrike rendered a mosque inoperable. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0173** <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/09/28/suspected-russian-forces-shelled-al-kabir-mosque-jisr-al-shoghour-city-idlib-governorate-september-28/>
 - SNHR published a post titled “**Suspected Russian forces shelled al Eman Mosque in Jisr al Shoghour city in Idlib governorate on September 27.**” A suspected Russian airstrike rendered a mosque inoperable. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0171** <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/09/28/suspected-russian-forces-shelled-al-eman-mosque-jisr-al-shoghour-city-idlib-governorate-september-27/>

- **PBS** published an article titled “**Social Media and the Fight to Save Iraq’s Past—and Future**” (by Evan Hadingham). The use of social and online media are vital for tracking the continuing loss of cultural heritage in Iraq and Syria. ASOR’s Michael Danti, Susan Penacho, Allison Cuneo and Marina Gabriel are quoted.
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/next/ancient/rebuilding-mosul/>
- September 27, 2017

Middle East Monitor published an article titled “**Libya calls on UNESCO to protect world heritage site in Sabratha.**” Officials in Libya called on UNESCO to protect the world heritage site of Sabratha. Fighting erupted near the site on September 17, 2017.
<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170927-libya-calls-on-unesco-to-protect-world-heritage-site-in-sabratha/>
- **DGAM** published an article titled “ مديرًا عاماً للآثار “ الدكتور محمود حمود، والمتاحف (Dr. Mahmoud Hammoud, Director General of Antiquities and Museums).” Dr. Mahmoud Hammoud has replaced Maamoon Abdulkarim as head of the DGAM.
<http://dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=177&id=2341>
- **DGAM** published an article titled “ برعاية السيد وزير الثقافة محمد الاحمد، عرض “ تمثال أسد اللات التدمري بعد ترميمه أمام الجمهور الأحد المقبل (Under the patronage of the Minister of Culture Muhammad al-Ahmad, the statue of the Palmyra lion will be displayed to the public after its restoration next Sunday).” Minister of Culture Mohammed Al-Ahmad will present the newly restored Lion of Allat to the public following its restoration. The statue sat in the courtyard of the Museum of Palmyra until it was damaged by ISIS militants in 2015.
<http://dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=177&id=2342>
- *Yale News* published an article titled “**Yale leads effort to protect cultural heritage.**” Yale University is leading the formation of a new organization, the Global Consortium for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage (GCPCH), which will be “a convener for universities and museums working on the preservation of cultural heritage.”
<https://news.yale.edu/2017/09/27/yale-leads-effort-protect-cultural-heritage-0>
- September 26, 2017

BBC News published an article titled “**The city fit for no-one: Inside the ruined ‘capital’ of the Islamic State group**” (by Quentin Sommerville and Riam Dalati). The catastrophic destruction of much of the city of Raqqa is discussed.
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/idt-sh/the-city-fit-for-no-one-raqqa-syria-islamic-state-group>

- **SNHR** published a post titled “**Syrian regime forces shelled Bdama al Kabir Mosque in Bdama town in Idlib governorate on September 26.**” A SARG airstrike rendered a mosque inoperable. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0170**
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/09/26/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-bdama-al-kabir-mosque-bdama-town-idlib-governorate-september-26/>

- **World Customs Organization** published a press release titled “**The WCO rolls out the first practical training for Customs officers on the protection of cultural heritage.**” The World Customs Organization (WCO), in cooperation with the UNESCO Regional Office in Beirut, the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and with the support of Lebanese Customs, organized the first WCO Middle East and North Africa “Train-the-Trainer Session” for Customs officers on the prevention of illicit trafficking of cultural objects. During the four-day workshop, participants learned about the identification and handling of cultural objects, risk management, trends in smuggling, and concealment methods.
<http://www.wcoomd.org/en/media/newsroom/2017/september/wco-rolls-out-the-first-practical-training-for-customs-officers.aspx>

September 25, 2017

The Independent published an article titled “**Lost city in Iraq founded by Alexander the Great discovered by archaeologists**” (by Niamh McIntyre). Using drone footage and declassified CIA satellite photos from the 1960s, Iraqi and British archaeologists led by experts from the British Museum have discovered the Hellenistic/Parthian site of Qalatga Darband in Iraq.
<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/lost-city-iraq-alexander-great-founded-discover-archaeologists-qalatga-darband-a7965651.html>

- *Yale News* published an article titled “**Students ‘visit’ a lost archaeological treasure via virtual reality**” (by Karin Shedd). The Center for Teaching and Learning at Yale University has provided students with the opportunity to view a virtual model of the Northwest Palace at Nimrud, using the virtual reality system Oculus Rift. The VR experience was provided by Learning Sites, a Massachusetts-based company that specializes in models of archaeological sites for the purpose of interactive education and research.
<https://news.yale.edu/2017/09/25/students-visit-lost-archaeological-treasure-virtual-reality>

- *Phys.org* published an article titled “**How researchers can stop the plundering of cultural treasures**” (by Phillip-André Baarøy). Josephine Munch Rasmussen of the University of Oslo is interviewed regarding the black market trade of looted antiquities.
<https://phys.org/news/2017-09-plundering-cultural-treasures.html>

September 23, 2017

UN News Centre published a press release titled “**At UN Assembly, Iraq outlines vision for post-conflict reconstruction.**” According to Iraqi Minister for Foreign Affairs Ibrahim Abdulkarim al-Jafari, Iraq’s comprehensive vision for the future centers on restoring peace, providing basic services, allowing people to return to their homes, and facilitating post-conflict reconstruction, including for heritage sites.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=57715#.WcrWYmJSzow>

September 22, 2017

Damas al-An published an article titled “بعثة سورية-هنغارية لترميم قلعتي المرقب والحصن (A Syrian-Hungarian mission for the restoration of the fortresses al-Marqab and al-Hosn).” The Syrian-Hungarian Joint Archaeological Mission at al-Marqab and al-Hosn forts completed its fieldwork for the summer of 2017, having conducted a number of excavations and surveys at both sites, in addition to repairs to damage that occurred during the conflict.

<https://damasnow.com/2017/09/21/بعثة-سورية-هنغارية-لترميم-قلعتي-المرق-المرق/>

- **The International Association for Assyriology** published a post titled “**The Future of Babylon Project**” (by Jeff Allen). Since 2008, the World Monuments Fund and the Iraqi State Board of Antiquities and Heritage have worked together on the Future of Babylon project to conserve the archaeological site of Babylon is surveyed.
<http://iaassyriology.org/mar-shiprim/future-of-babylon/>
- **The International Association for Assyriology** published a post titled “**In the Field: Ahmed Kamil Mohammed**” (by Ahmed Kamil Mohammed). The author, Director of the Iraq Museum, reports on the latest news in the struggle to protect, preserve, and rebuild ancient Iraqi heritage, including reconstruction plans for Mosul’s Old City.
<http://iaassyriology.org/mar-shiprim/ahmed-kamil/>
- *Geopolitical Monitor* published an article titled “**Historical Holocaust: Daesh’s Lasting Legacy**” (by Malik Ibrahim). The destruction of cultural heritage sites by ISIS is discussed, as well as international responses to the destruction.
<https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/historical-holocaust-daeshs-lasting-legacy/>

- Eurasia Review* published an article titled “**The Civilizational Paradox Of Shared Heritage And Warfare – Analysis**” (by Azfar Mohammad). The author argues that the preservation of cultural heritage is important not only because it provides future generations with a sense of ancestral history, but also because it can play a vital role in “bridging gaps and fissures created over centuries of enmity and warfare.”
<http://www.eurasiareview.com/22092017-the-civilizational-paradox-of-shared-heritage-and-warfare%E2%80%8B-analysis/>
 - UNESCO published a press release titled “**UNESCO’s Director General calls on all parties to cease violence and to protect the World Heritage Site of Sabratha in Libya.**” On September 21, 2017 UNESCO was informed that military action is intensifying within and around the archaeological site of Sabratha in Libya, which has been inscribed on the World Heritage List since 1982. According to reports, military action is growing within and around the property.
<http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1714>
- September 21, 2017
- Smithsonian Magazine* published an article titled “**The Salvation of Mosul**” (by Joshua Hammer). The work of Iraqi archaeologist Layla Salih in documenting damage to Iraqi cultural heritage in Nineveh Governorate is discussed. Salih is frequently the first archaeologist on scene once a site has been retaken from ISIS militants.
<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/salvation-mosul-180964772/>
- The Canberra Times* published an article titled “**Global market for forged and stolen artworks is thriving and underpoliced**” (by Clive Williams). The author discusses the global trade in forged art and looted antiquities.
<http://www.canberratimes.com.au/comment/global-market-for-forged-and-stolen-artworks-is-thriving-and-underpoliced-20170921-gylyc0.html>
 - SNHR published a post titled “**Suspected Russian forces shelled Abu Bakr al Siddiq Mosque in Jerjnaz town in Idlib governorate on September 20.**” A suspected Russian airstrike severely damaged a mosque. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0166**
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/09/20/suspected-russian-forces-shelled-abu-bakr-al-siddiq-mosque-jerjnaz-town-idlib-governorate-september-20/>
 - Al Jazeera* published an article titled “**History lost: Destruction of Syria's UNESCO World Heritage sites**” (by Jamal Elshayyal). Damage to various Syrian cultural heritage sites is surveyed, including the Dead City site of al-Bara.
<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/09/history-lost-destruction-syrias-unesco-world-heritage-sites-170921113320130.html>

September 19, 2017

Charged Affairs published an article titled “**Carrot Versus Stick: Encouraging Private Collections to Self-Audit Collections for Looted Cultural Property**” (by Paige Mason). The author argues that tackling the sale of looted cultural heritage should involve government incentives for private collectors to willingly audit their own collections for looted material.

<https://chargedaffairs.org/carrot-versus-stick-encouraging-private-collections-self-audit-collections-looted-cultural-property/>

- *Hurriyet Daily News* published an article titled “**Ancient city of Palmyra in intensive care after destruction by ISIL.**” Artifacts like the Lion of Allat from the Museum of Palmyra, damaged and looted by ISIS militants in 2015, are being restored by experts at the National Museum of Damascus, which itself is undergoing restoration.

<http://www.hurriyetaidailynews.com/ancient-city-of-palmyra-in-intensive-care-after-destruction-by-isil.aspx>

- *The Art Newspaper* published an article titled “**Germany launches internet portal to fight art trafficking**” (by Catherine Hickley). The German government launched a new internet portal providing information relevant to Germany’s Cultural Property Protection Law. The site aims to tackle illegal trafficking in looted antiquities and offers information on German cultural property regulations for collectors, artists, museums and archives, as well as on national regulations in 60 further countries including Iraq, Afghanistan, China, and Egypt.

<http://theartnewspaper.com/news/germany-launches-internet-portal-to-fight-art-trafficking>

September 18, 2017

Heritage for Peace published its bi-weekly newsletter titled “**Damage to Syria’s Heritage—18 September 2017.**”

<http://www.heritageforpeace.org/syria-culture-and-heritage/damage-to-cultural-heritage/previous-damage-newsletters/damage-to-syrias-heritage-18-september-2017/>

- **SNHR** published a post titled “**International Coalition forces shelled al Shamti Mosque in al Jamili neighborhood in Raqqa city on September 17.**” A US-led Coalition airstrike rendered a mosque inoperable. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0164**
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/09/18/international-coalition-forces-shelled-al-shamti-mosque-al-jamili-neighborhood-raqqa-city-september-17/>

September 17, 2017

Libyan Express published an article titled “**Tubu Culture Day celebrated in Libya’s Sabha.**” Tubu Culture Day Festival premiered in Sabha, with members of civil societies, residents, elders, and officials from the city in attendance. The festival highlights the art, history, and culture of Libya’s Tubu tribe.

<http://www.libyanexpress.com/tubu-culture-day-celebrated-in-libyas-sabha/>

- *OnuItalia* published an article titled “**Carabinieri TPC tornano all’Onu per evento su protezione cultura da terrorismo, atrocita (Carabinieri TPC return to UN for event on protection of culture from terrorism, atrocities).**” Representatives of the Carabinieri Tutela Patrimonio Culturale (Protection of Cultural Heritage) attended a UN event on protecting cultural heritage from terrorism. <http://www.onuitalia.com/2017/09/17/carabinieri-tpc-tornano-allonu-per-evento-su-protezione-cultura-da-terrorismo-atrocita/>

- *The Conversation* published an article titled “**The enduring power of Mosul’s rich and diverse past**” (by Stephennie Mulder). The author discusses the history and significance of the destroyed al-Nuri Mosque for the inhabitants of Mosul. <https://theconversation.com/the-enduring-power-of-mosuls-rich-and-diverse-past-81246>

September 16, 2017

Libya Observer published an article titled “**Head of Libya's archeology authority urges neighboring countries to help end smuggling of antiquities**” (by Abdulkader Assad). The Head of Libya's archeology authority, Ahmed Hussein, urged neighboring countries to help Libya stop the smuggling of antiquities and regain looted ones, given the ongoing security situation in Libya.

<https://www.libyaobserver.ly/culture/head-libyas-archeology-authority-urges-neighboring-countries-help-end-smuggling-antiquities>

- *Al Wasat* published an article titled “ليبيا تشارك في ورشة إقليمية بتونس حول إدراج المواقع الثقافية بقائمة التراث العالمي (Libya participates in a regional workshop in Tunis on the inclusion of cultural sites on the World Heritage List).” Ahmed Hussein, head of the Libyan Antiquities Authority, participated in symposium held by the World Heritage Center in Tunis on the procedures for the inclusion of cultural heritage sites on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The workshop included several delegations from North African countries.

<http://www.alwasat.ly/ar/news/libya/152962/>

- *DGAM* published an article titled “**Photos, the Museum of Raqqa after the expulsion of ISIS.**” The DGAM has published photographs detailing extensive damage to the Museum of Raqqa, located in a section of Raqqa recently retaken from ISIS militants.

<http://dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2337>

- **DGAM** published an article titled “**Participation of DGAM in the Blue Shield Conference in Vienna.**” Maamoun Abdulkarim, Director-General of the DGAM, attended the Committee of the Blue Shield Conference in Vienna from September 14–15, 2017.
<http://dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=2335>
- September 15, 2017 *Business Insider* published an article titled “**Antiquities Coalition To Sponsor Everyday Hero Award.**” The Antiquities Coalition will sponsor an award for Col. Matt Bogdanos at the Global Hope Summit on September 18, 2017 in New York City for his work at the New York County District Attorney’s Office in exposing the connection between the trafficking of illicit antiquities and terrorist financing.
<http://markets.businessinsider.com/news/stocks/Antiquities-Coalition-To-Sponsor-Everyday-Hero-Award-1002014548>
- *ABC* published an article titled “**Volunteers rescue thousands of books from Mosul library destroyed by Islamic State**” (by Linda Mottram & Connie Agius). Blogger MosulEye leads a campaign to restore the collection at Mosul University’s library, which ISIS militants burned down in 2014.
<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-09-15/volunteers-save-thousands-of-books-from-mosul-library/8949496>
- *Northwestern Now* published an article titled “**When cultures collide: building visibility and unity with art**” (by Stephanie Kulke). The work of Professor Michael Rakowitz, who reconstructs destroyed Iraqi artifacts using wrappers from Middle Eastern foodstuffs, will be the focus of an exhibit titled “Backstroke of the West” at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago from September 16, 2017 to March 4, 2018.
<https://news.northwestern.edu/stories/2017/september/when-cultures-collide-building-visibility-and-unity-with-art/?linkId=42324959>
- *Al Monitor* published an article titled “**Ancient Syrian mosaics crumble under weight of war**” (by Asaad Hanna). The damage to Syria’s ancient mosaics, as well as the traditional art of mosaic-making in Syria, is explored.
<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/09/syrias-mosaic-makers-try-to-keep-their-craft-alive.html>
- September 14, 2017 *Gulf News* published an article titled “**The calamitous damage to our cultural heritage**” (by Fawaz Turki). A discussion of cultural heritage destruction by ISIS and others in Iraq and Syria.
<http://gulfnews.com/opinion/thinkers/the-calamitous-damage-to-our-cultural-heritage-1.2090244>

- Libya Herald* published an article titled “**National Council on U.S-Libya Relations Completes First Assessment Mission to Eastern Libya.**” During the first of several planned trips to various regions of conflict-ridden Libya, representatives of the National Council on U.S.-Libya Relations completed field assessments of Benghazi and parts of the Cyrenaica.
<https://www.libyaherald.com/2017/09/14/national-council-on-u-s-libya-relations-completes-first-assessment-mission-to-eastern-libya/>
 - Corriere* published an article titled “**L’Aga Khan e il progetto italiano per ricostruire la moschea di Aleppo (The Aga Khan and the Italian project for the restoration of the mosque of Aleppo)**” (by Francesco Battistini). The Aga Khan Trust for Culture has pledged to help restore the Great Mosque of Aleppo with the help of experts from two Italian Universities.
http://www.corriere.it/esteri/17_settembre_14/02-esteri-t1vvcorriere-web-sezioni-14cd3190-98b7-11e7-b032-1edc91712826.shtml?refresh_ce-cp
- September 13, 2017
- Africa News* published an article titled “**Misrata antique collector exhibits decades worth of Libyan heritage.**” An antiques dealer in Misrata has collected over 4,500 pieces that date back to the Ottoman Empire, the Italian colonial period, and the rule of Libya’s last king, Idris.
<http://www.africanews.com/2017/09/13/misrata-antique-collector-exhibits-decades-worth-of-libyan-heritage/>
- Al Bawaba* published an article titled “**Syrians Launch Campaign to Return Antiquities Stolen in Ongoing War.**” Local officials in Idlib Governorate have launched a campaign aimed at retrieving Syrian antiquities smuggled abroad during the country’s six-year-long conflict. This will include including drawing up lists of stolen antiquities and filing cases demanding their restoration with the relevant legal institutions, including UNESCO.
<https://www.albawaba.com/editorchoice/syrians-launch-campaign-return-antiquities-stolen-ongoing-war-1021170>
 - Al Dorars* published an article titled “**Kadyrov donates \$ 14 million for Umayyad Mosque reconstruction in Aleppo.**” Chechen President Ahmad Kadyrov pledged a donation of \$14 million for the reconstruction of the Umayyad Mosque in Aleppo.
<http://www.aldorars.com/en/news/1596>

- September 12, 2017 **Gov.uk** published a press release from the **Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport** titled “**Government ratifies Hague Convention on protecting cultural property.**” The United Kingdom has ratified the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two Protocols, which are designed to protect cultural property from destruction and looting during armed conflict. This include monuments, archaeological sites, works of arts and important artifacts.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-ratifies-hague-convention-on-protecting-cultural-property>
- September 11, 2017 **SNHR** published a post titled “**International Coalition forces shelled Um al Mouminein Aisha Mosque in Ruwaished village in Deir Ez-Zour governorate on September 10.**” A US Coalition-led airstrike rendered a mosque inoperable. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0161**
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/09/11/international-coalition-forces-shelled-um-al-mouminein-aisha-mosque-ruwaished-village-deir-ez-zour-governorate-september-10/>
- September 8, 2017 *Hyperallergic* published an article titled “**What We Lose and Gain in Recreating Antiquities**” (by Devon van Houten Maldonado). In his solo show “Prologue: Digital Cenotaphs” at Galeria Mascota in Mexico City, Miguel Angel Salazar used digital technology to recreate a statue of King Uthal. He has displayed the statue in pieces to recall the destruction of the original work by ISIS in an attack on the Mosul Museum.
<https://hyperallergic.com/397949/miguel-angel-salazar-galeria-mascota-mexico-city/>
- *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* published an article titled “**Despite protests, State Department says it will return trove of Jewish artifacts to Iraq**” (by Josefin Dolsten). The United States will return a trove of Iraqi Jewish artifacts to Iraq next year, following the expiration of a four-year extension to keep the Iraqi Jewish Archive in the U.S.
<http://www.jta.org/2017/09/08/news-opinion/politics/despite-protests-state-department-says-it-will-return-trove-of-jewish-artifacts-to-iraq>
 - *Global Construction Review* published an article titled “**Homs is broken, but should not be erased**” (by Ammar Azzouz & Abdalhamid Almasri). The authors argue that rebuilding efforts in Homs should focus on careful restoration and rehabilitation of existing buildings and neighborhoods in order to foster a new sense of community, rather than on building new, overly modern structures.
<http://www.globalconstructionreview.com/perspectives/homs-broken-should-not-be-erased/>

September 6, 2017

ABC News published an article titled “**US airstrikes on Syria mosque compound violated international law, UN says**” (by Lena Masri). UN investigators believe a US-led Coalition airstrike on a mosque in the village of al-Jinah, Aleppo Governorate, violated international law.

<http://abcnews.go.com/International/us-airstrikes-syria-mosque-compound-violated-international-law/story?id=49649280>

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UNESCO published an article titled “**UNESCO Beirut launches a workshop on Post-crisis reconstruction and revitalization of historic cities.**” In cooperation with the Syrian DGAM, UNESCO Beirut launched a two-day workshop entitled “Post-crisis reconstruction and revitalization of historic cities” at the Sham Palace Hotel in Damascus.

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/beirut/single-view/news/unesco-beirut-launches-a-workshop-on-post-crisis-reconstruction/>

September 5, 2017

Apollo Magazine published an article titled “**Aleppo: what remains?**” (by Ross Burns) The author theorizes that while around 45 of the 500 historic buildings in Aleppo’s city center “have suffered damage which could be classed at the catastrophic end of the scale, most of the remaining 90 percent could probably be restored by repairing surviving structures.”

<https://www.apollo-magazine.com/aleppo-what-remains/>

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DGAM published an article titled “**Post-crisis reconstruction and revitalization of historic cities.**” The DGAM and UNESCO held a workshop to discuss reconstruction and restoration of heritage sites damaged during the present conflict in Syria.

<http://dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2333>

September 4, 2017

Heritage for Peace published its bi-weekly newsletter titled “**Damage to Syria's Heritage - 04 September 2017.**”

<http://www.heritageforpeace.org/syria-culture-and-heritage/damage-to-cultural-heritage/previous-damage-newsletters/damage-to-syrias-heritage-04-september-2017/>

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Newsweek published an article titled “**U.S. returns antique chess set owned by Saddam Hussein, stolen during 2003 invasion**” (by Callum Paton). The U.S. government has returned an antique chess set which once belonged to former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, and was stolen during the 2003 invasion of the Iraq.

<http://www.newsweek.com/united-states-returns-antique-chess-set-owned-saddam-hussein-stolen-during-659122>

- September 3, 2017 *Iraqi News* published an article titled “**Artifacts stolen by IS from Mosul museum recovered**” (by Nehal Mostafa). Eight artifacts stolen by ISIS militants from the Mosul Museum have been recovered after a displaced family found them upon returning to their home in Mosul.
<http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/artifacts-stolen-mosul-museum-recovered/>
- September 2, 2017 *AMA* published an article titled “**Archaeology and tribal art: transactions under pressure.**” Trends in the antiquities market and issues of looting and black market antiquities are discussed.
<http://en.artmediaagency.com/120986/archaeology-and-tribal-art-transactions-under-pressure/>
- September 1, 2017 *The Guardian* published an article titled “**Castle of the Sealand kings: Discovering ancient Iraq’s rebel rulers**” (by Mary Shepperson). British and Iraqi archaeologists have identified Tell Khaiber as the first known settlement built under the Kings of the Sealand, a dynasty that ruled in southern Iraq ca. 1730–1460 BCE.
<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2017/sep/01/castle-sealand-kings-ancient-iraqs-rebel-rulers>
- *Al Monitor* published an article titled “**Iraq establishes new security force to protect its archaeological wealth**” (by Mustafa Saadoun). Dhi Qar Governorate has formed a security force to protect its archaeological sites and monuments. However, local officials have argued that this force is incapable of protecting archaeological areas, as it lacks adequate equipment, plans, and training to prevent looting at archaeological sites located in open areas with no perimeter fencing.
<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/09/dhi-qar-iraq-security-antiquities.html>
- August 23, 2017 *L’Opinion* published an article titled “**La Plaine de Ninive, laboratoire de la reconstruction et de la réconciliation après Daech en Irak (The Plain of Nineveh, laboratory of reconstruction and reconciliation after Daech in Iraq)**” (by Pascal Airault). Reconstruction efforts in Ninawa Governorate are discussed.
<http://www.lopinion.fr/edition/international/plaine-ninive-laboratoire-reconstruction-reconciliation-apres-daech-en-132572?0>