

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

NEA-PSHSS-14-001

Weekly Report 115–116 — October 16 - 31, 2016

Michael D. Danti, Allison Cuneo, Susan Penacho, Marina Gabriel, Kyra Kaercher, Jamie O'Connell

Executive Summary

The long-

Key Points

ISIL-affiliated Amaq News Agency claimed that an Iraqi government airstrike allegedly damaged a mosque in Hawija, Kirkuk Governorate ([ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0034](#)).

New video footage and photographs show damage to three churches, a cultural center, and a cemetery in Bartella, Ninawa Governorate ([ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0035](#)).

An airstrike allegedly damaged a mosque in Daquq, Kirkuk Governorate ([ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0036](#)).

ISIL-affiliated Amaq News Agency claimed that an alleged US-led coalition airstrike destroyed a mosque in Hammam al-Aleel, Ninawa Governorate ([ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0037](#)).

An alleged SARG airstrike damaged a mosque in al-Sabha, Deir Ez Zor Governorate ([ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0157](#)).

Alleged SARG and Russian airstrikes damaged four mosques in Idlib Governorate ([ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0158](#)).

An alleged Russian airstrike damaged a mosque in Qebtan, Aleppo Governorate ([ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0159](#)).

The DGAM reported ongoing looting,97.32 590.26 Td[-)]TJETQq0.00000912 0 612 792 reWñBT0.2210.0000091

October 27, 2016

Dwarozh published an article titled "Artifacts dating to 2500 years ago found in Khorsabad." Kurdish Peshmerga forces uncovered neo-Assyrian artifacts while digging a trench to support the military operations in recapturing Mosul.

October 25, 2016

The Wall Street Journal published an article titled "There Are No More Panes of Glass Left in Aleppo" (by Raja Abdulrahman). The article details the extent of destruction in the city of Aleppo, as well as the re-use of Shaar Cemetery for new burials over old ones.

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/there-are-no-more-panes-of-glass-left-in-aleppo-1477409238>

NRT published an article titled "Protecting the Past: Towards a

October 18, 2016

The Conversation published an article titled "(أحمد إيفاقي آل مهدي -Mahdi Al-Faqi Al-Mahdi) «تجاهل المحكمة في قضية تيمبوكتو»" While the recent conviction of Ahmad Al Faqi Al-Mahdi for crimes against heritage in Timbuktu should be welcomed, the court's ruling did not go far enough in that it did not emphasize the idea that protecting cultural heritage sites is equally important and connected to the protection of civilian populations.
<http://theconversation.com/the-iccs-al-mahdi-ruling-protects-cultural-heritage-but-didnt-go>

1`
On October 20-22, the Syrian Arab Army released statements condemning operations by Turkish-backed Syrian opposition forces, calling the group an "occupation force."⁴

On October 22-27, Turkish-backed Syrian opposition forces participating in "Operation Euphrates Shield" clashed with SDF fighters near the towns of Azzaz and Tel Rifaat. Turkish-backed forces captured at least 10 ISIL-held villages as they advanced toward the key town of al-Bab.⁵

On October 23, military activity resumed in Aleppo city as pro-regime forces shelled ~~several opposition~~ held neighborhoods.

On October 25, SANA news agency reported that Syrian government forces had captured the opposition-held town of Talet Bazo. SARG helicopters also targeted

On October 22, Iraqi army forces recaptured the district of Hamdaniya, southeast of Mosul, after four days of clashes. Iraqi security forces (ISF) also seized the mainly Christian town of Bakhdida, 13 miles southeast of Mosul.³²

On October 23-24, Kurdish forces began an offensive against the town of Bashiqa. Iraqi forces continued to advance around the town of Bartella, "storming" at least three other villages including Khazna, Khazna Tabba, and Tob Zawa.³³

On October 24, Iraqi counterterrorism and Peshmerga forces attacked the ISIL-held town of Bashiqa, northeast of Mosul.³⁴

On October 24, Peshmerga and ISF forces reached the city limits of Mosul.³⁵

On October 25, Kurdish Peshmerga forces entered the ISIL-held town of Batnaya as Iraqi security forces recaptured the town of Karamles.³⁶

On October 25, ISIL militants reportedly executed civilians in the village of Tulul al-Nassir.³⁷

On October 26, ARA News reported that ISIL militants had arrested dozens of men in the city of Mosul under the accusation that the men had attacked the main Hisba headquarters in the district of Wadi Hajar.³⁸

On October 27, Peshmerga forces recaptured the village of Faziliya after a ten-day battle.³⁹

On October 28, UN human rights investigators reported that ISIL militants had executed "scores of people" and had "forcibly relocated close to 7,900 families [approximately 48,000 people] into the city [of Mosul]" for use as human shields. ISIL is reported to have ordered all male children over 9 years old in the area of Hammam al-Alil to be handed over to the militants for conscription.⁴⁰

On October 29, Shia militias began an operation aimed at reaching the ISIL-held town of Tal Afar located to the west of Mosul.⁴¹

³² <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis>

On October 23, ISIL militants seized control of the town of Rutba, overtaking the mayor's office, neighborhoods, and capturing and executing at least five people.⁴⁹

4. Baghdad Governorate:

On October 29, an ISIL suicide bomber targeted a Shia procession in the area of al-Mansour in western Baghdad, killing seven people and wounding ten more.⁵⁰

On October 30, a car bombing detonated in the northwestern area of Hurriyah in Baghdad, killing three people and wounding 10 more. A second suicide attacker was caught by Iraqi security forces in the northwestern area of al-Utaifiyah.⁵¹

5. Salah ad Din Governorate:

On October 21, two ISIL militants carried out a suicide bombing at the home of a

SHI 16-0158

Report Date: October 20 2016; October 26, 2016

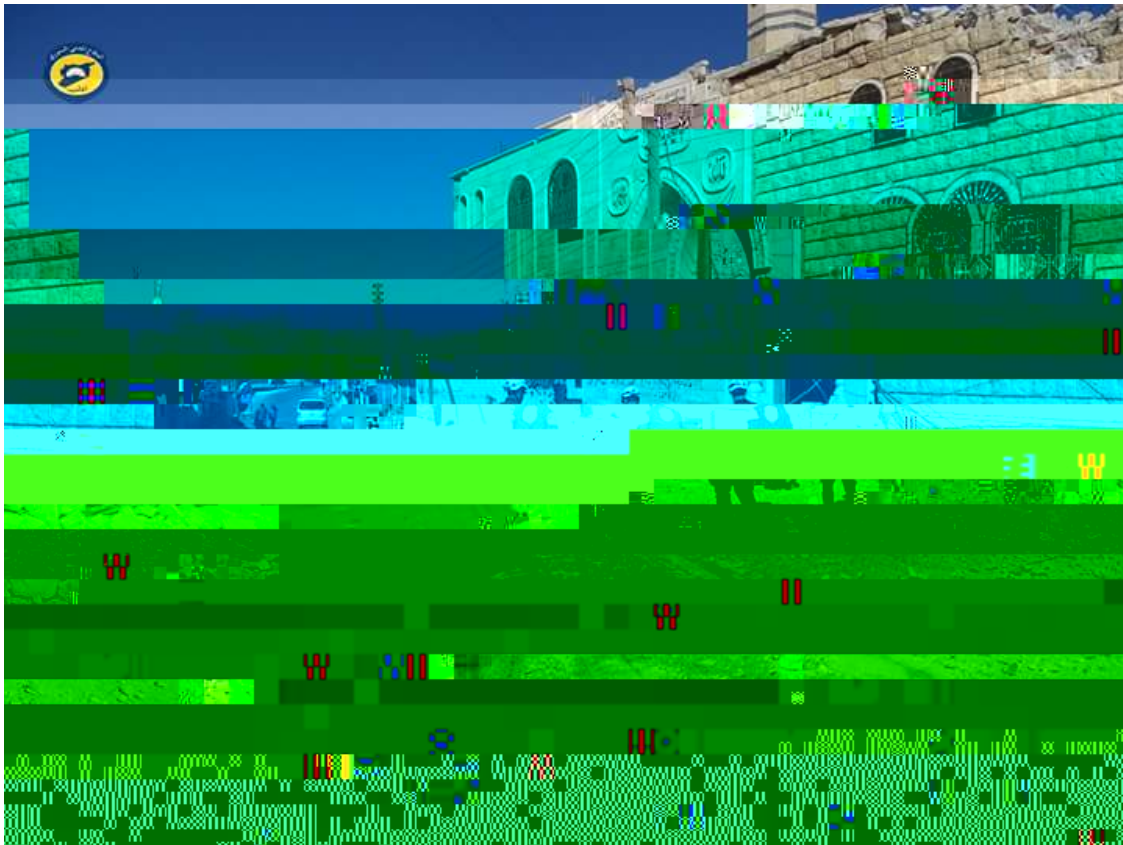
Site Name:



Damage to the interior of the Grand Tarmala Mosque (The White Helmets; October 20, 2016)

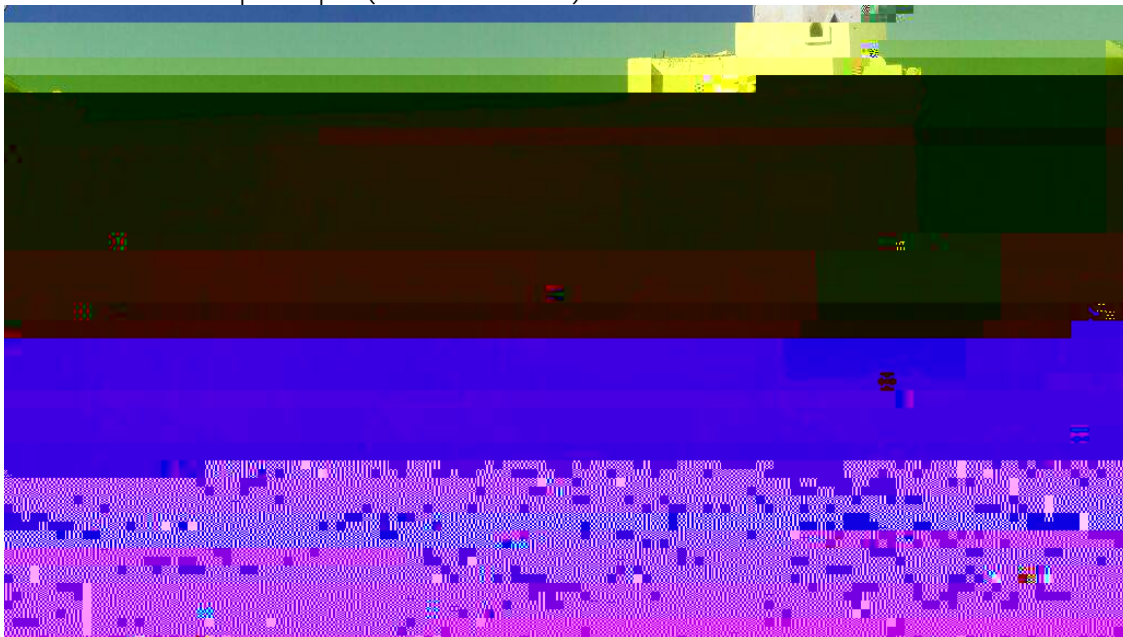


Damage to the interior of the Grand Tarmala Mosque (The White Helmets; October 20, 2016)



Damage to the exterior of the Grand Tarmala Mosque (The White Helmets; October 20, 2016)

Abu Bakr al-Sadiq Mosque (" " ")



Damage to Abu Bakr al-Sadiq Mosque (SNHR; October 26, 2016)



Damage to Abu Bakr al-Sadiq Mosque (The White Helmets; October 28, 2016)

SHI 16-0159

Report Date: October 26, 2016

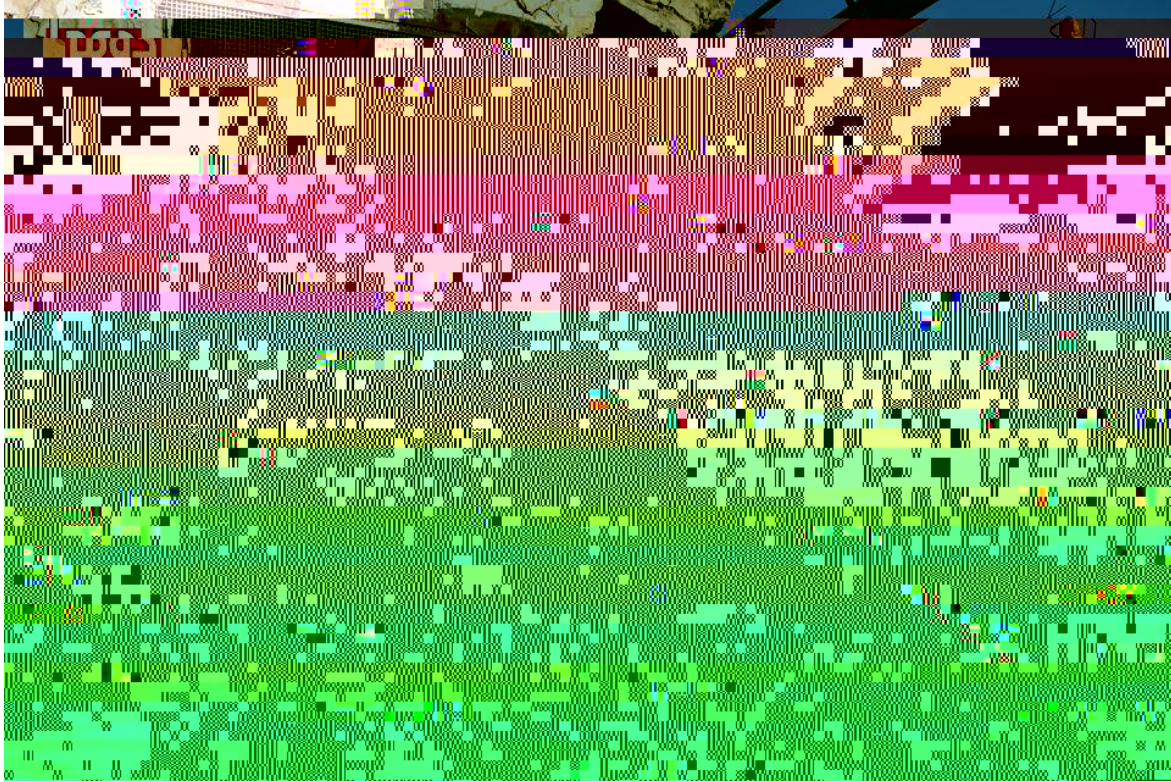
Site Name: Qebtan Mosque (

SHI 16-0160

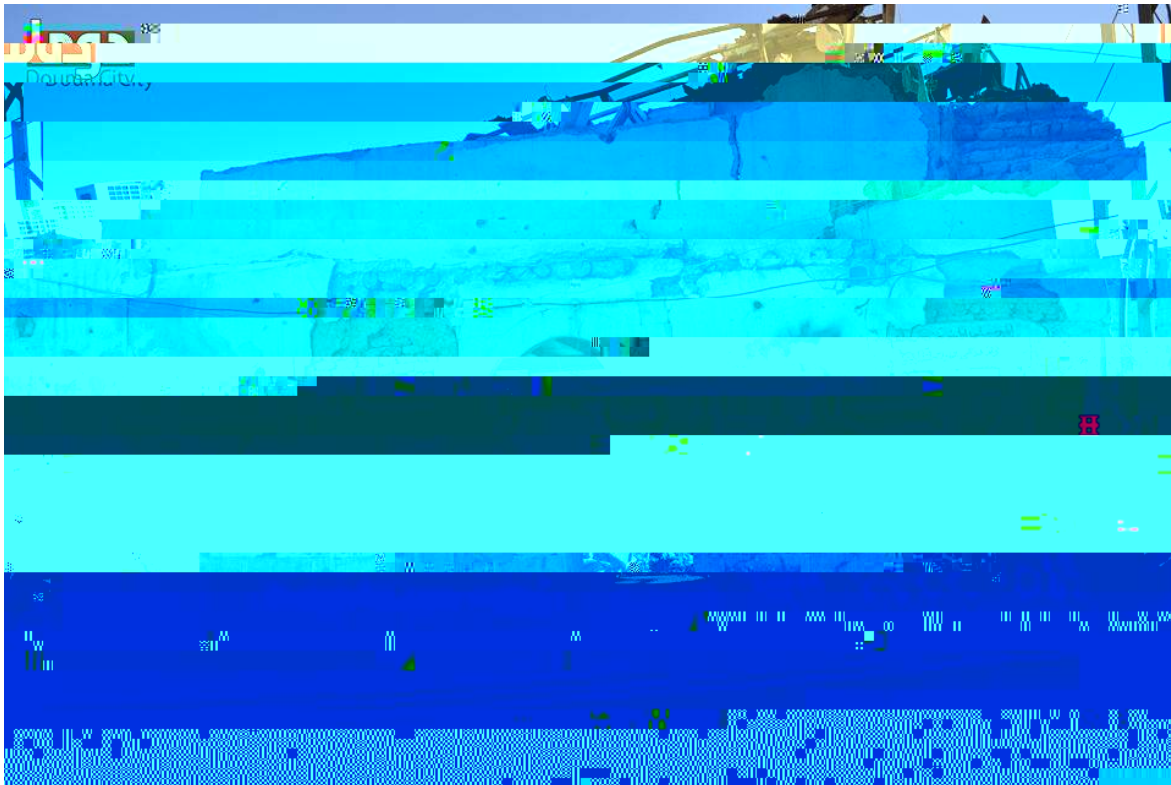
Report Date: October 31, 2016

Site Name:

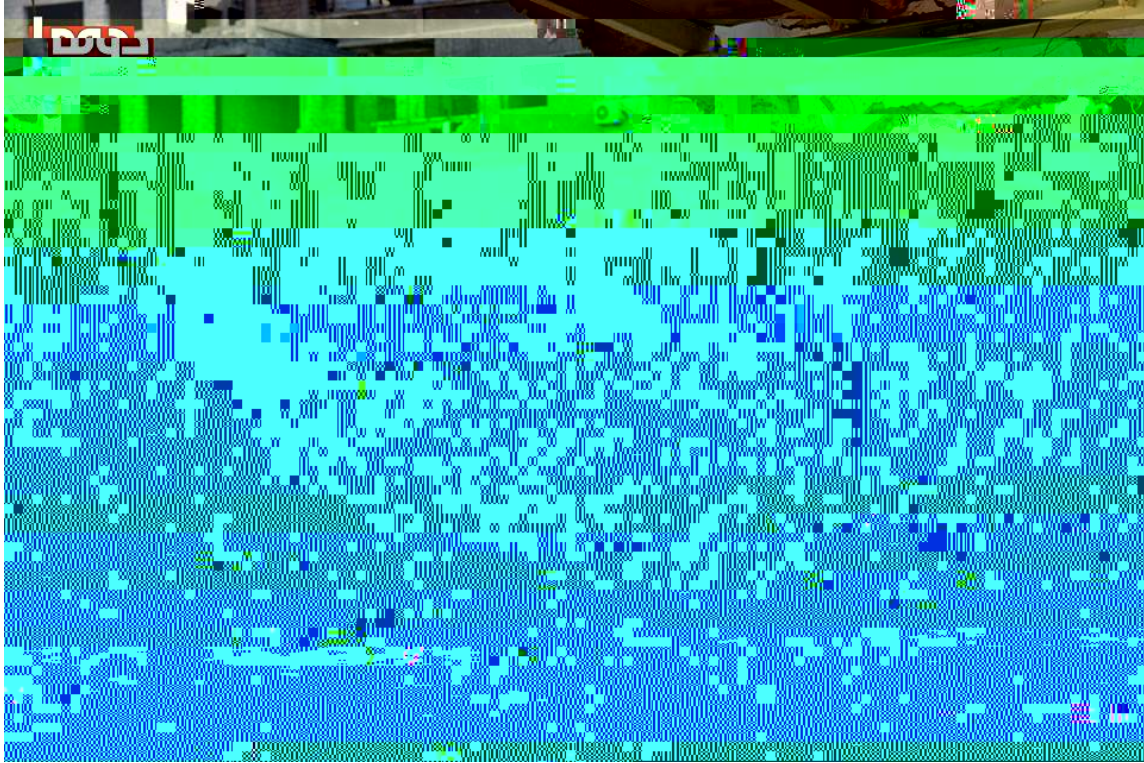
Church of Saint Simeon Stylites ()
Sitt al-Rum ()
Refade ()
Teqla ()
Batuta (Ó



Damage to Zeen Musalla in Douma (Douma Revolution; October 17, 2016)



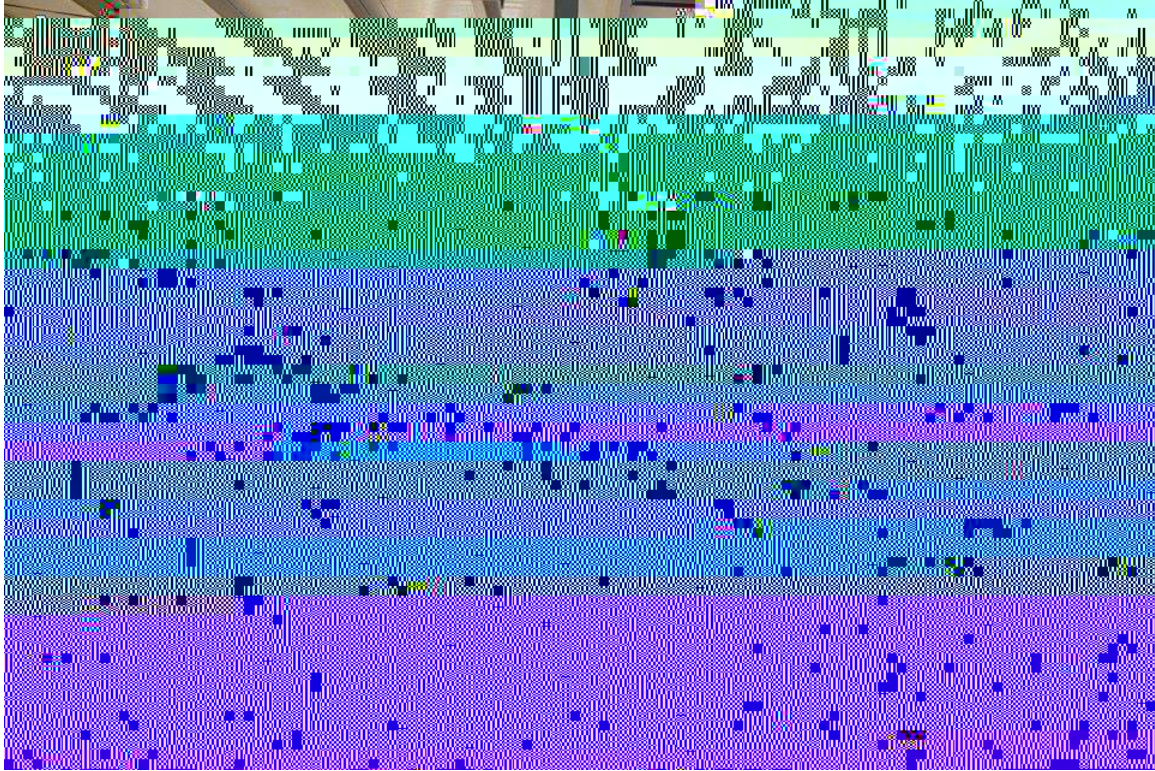
Damage to Zeen Musalla in Douma (Douma Revolution; October 17, 2016)



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Damage to Zeen Musalla in Douma (Douma Revolution; October 17, 2016)

Incident Reports: Iraq

IHI 16-0034

Report Date: October 16, 2016

Site Name: al-Shaheeda Mosque ()

Date of Incident: October 16, 2016

Location: Hawija, Kirkuk Governorate, Iraq

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: Iraqi airstrike damages mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On October 15, 2016 ISIL-affiliated Amaq News Agency released a video reporting to show extensive damage to al-Shaheeda Mosque as a result of an Iraqi airstrike.



Video still of damage to the interior of al-Shaheeda Mosque (Amaq News Agency; October 16, 2016)



Video still of damage to the interior of al-Shaheeda Mosque (Amaq News Agency; October 16, 2016)



Video still of damage to religious material inside al-Shaheeda Mosque (Amaq News Agency; October 16, 2016)



Video still of damage to religious material inside al-Shaheeda Mosque (Amaq News Agency; October 16, 2016)

Incident Source and Description: On October 21, 2014 a coalition of Iraqi and Kurdish forces, backed by the US-led coalition recaptured the majority-Christian village of Bartella from ISIL. In August 2014, the majority of Bartella residents including thousands of Assyrian Christians left the town.⁸⁷ During ISIL's hold over the village through the ensuing battle at least three churches, the local cultural center, and the Christian cemetery were damaged. Other religious symbols in the village have also been damaged.

Mar Gewargis Church () - Photographs shared

SOS Chrétiens Orient: <https://twitter.com/SOSCdOrient/status/789971248734408704>

Suroyo TV: <https://twitter.com/SuroyoTV/status/789838404678721536>

Telegraph: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/10/22/near-mosul-church-bells-ring-out-in-a-christian-town-freed-from/>

Washington Post: https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/new-kurdish-offensive-opens-on-mosuls-north-as-iraqi-forces-push-from-the-east/2016/10/20/19092040-9645-11e6-9cae-2a3574e296a6_story.html

Mar Gewargis Church ()



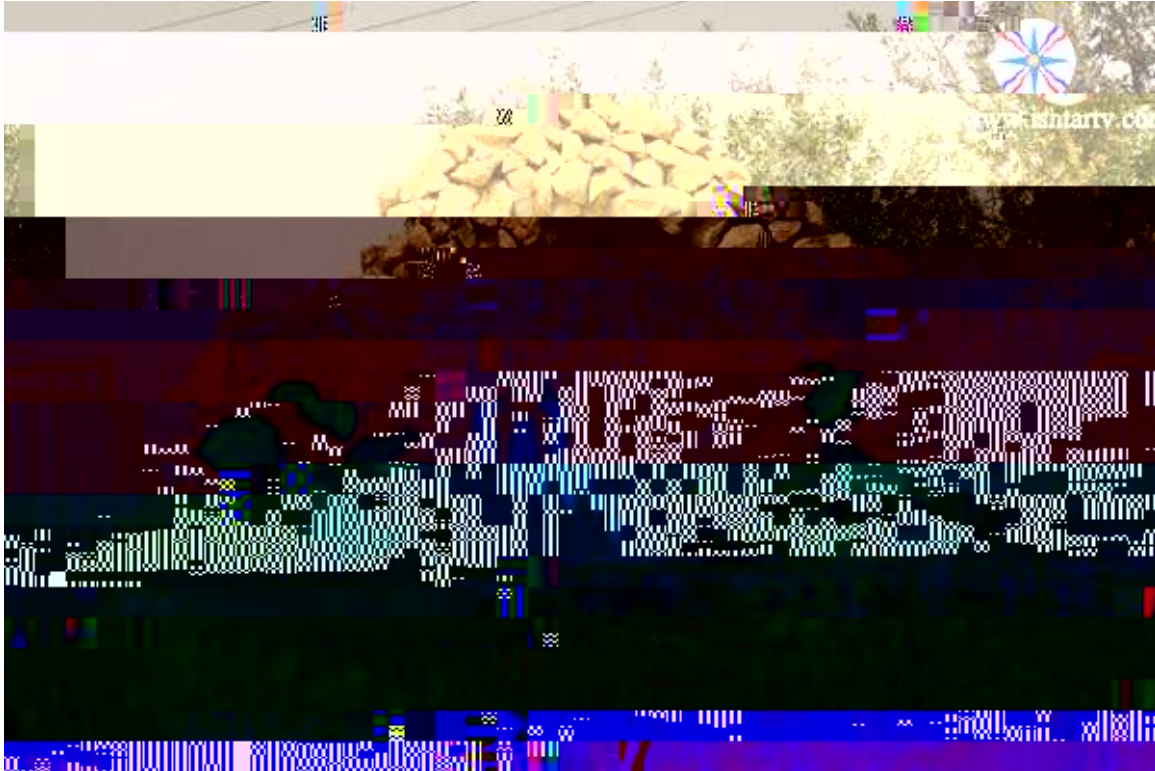
Fire damage and the removal of crosses at Mar Gewargis Church (Bartella Cafe; October 25, 2016)



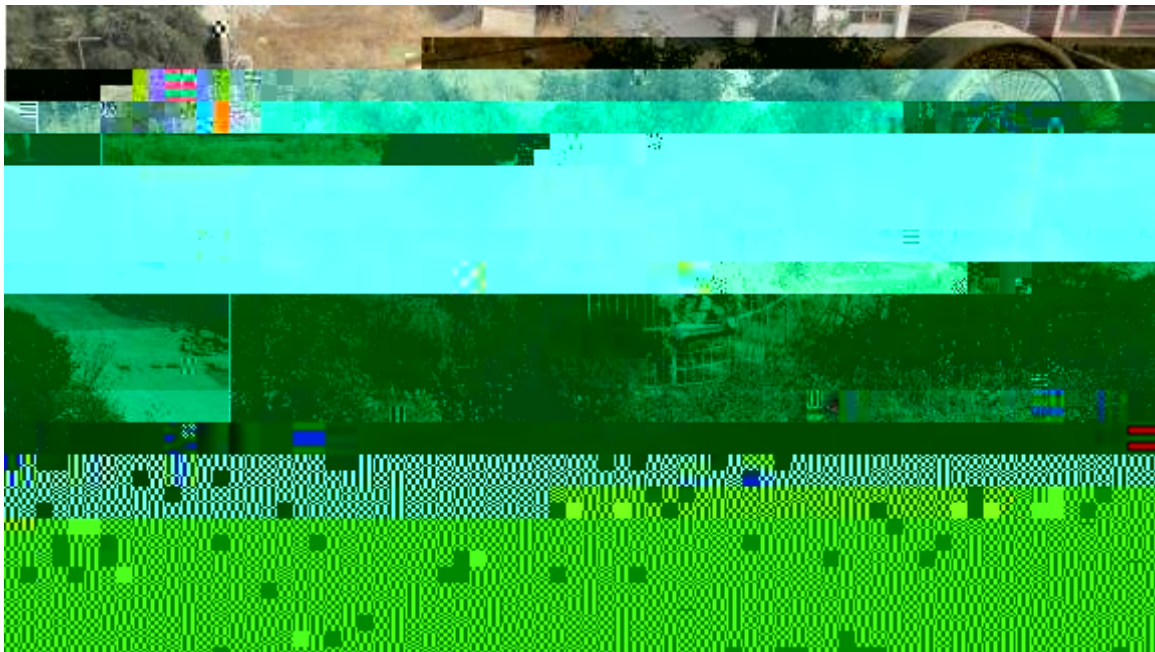
An Exterior wall of Mar Gewargis Church following the recapture of Bartella (Bartella Cafe; October 25, 2016)



Iraqi soldiers stand outside Mar Gewargis Church (Bartella Cafe; October 24, 2016)



A statue of the Virgin Mary outside of Mar Gewargis Church (Ishtar TV; October 29, 2011)



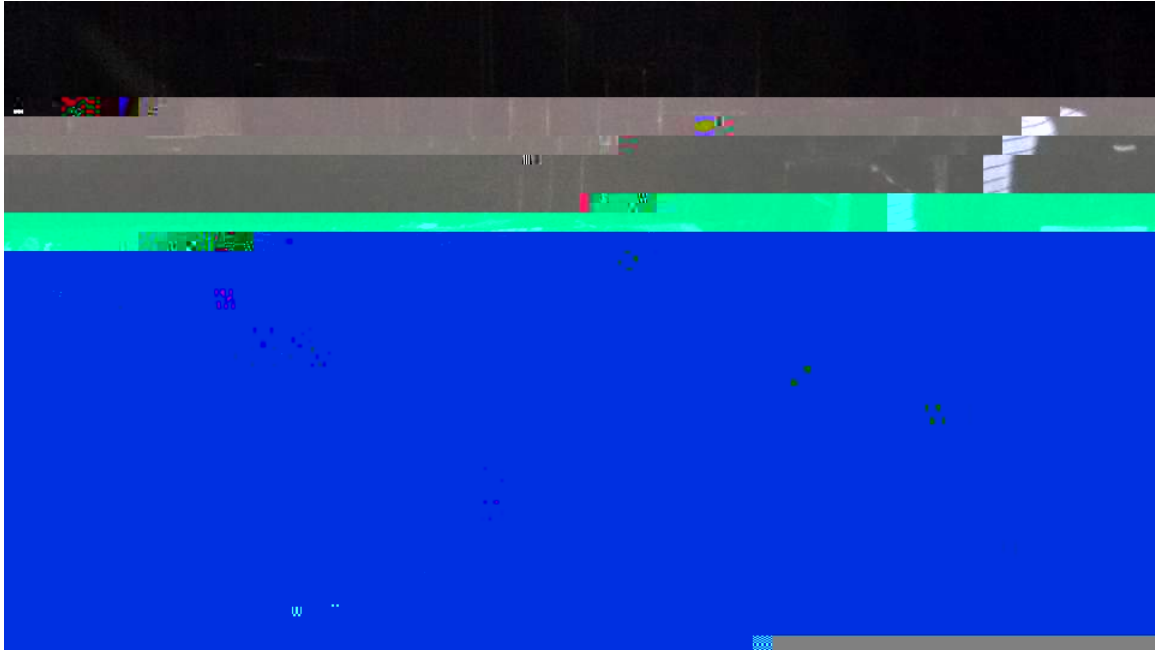
The area outside Mar Gewargis Church, with the statue of the Virgin Mary now not visible (Bartella Cafe; October 25, 2016)



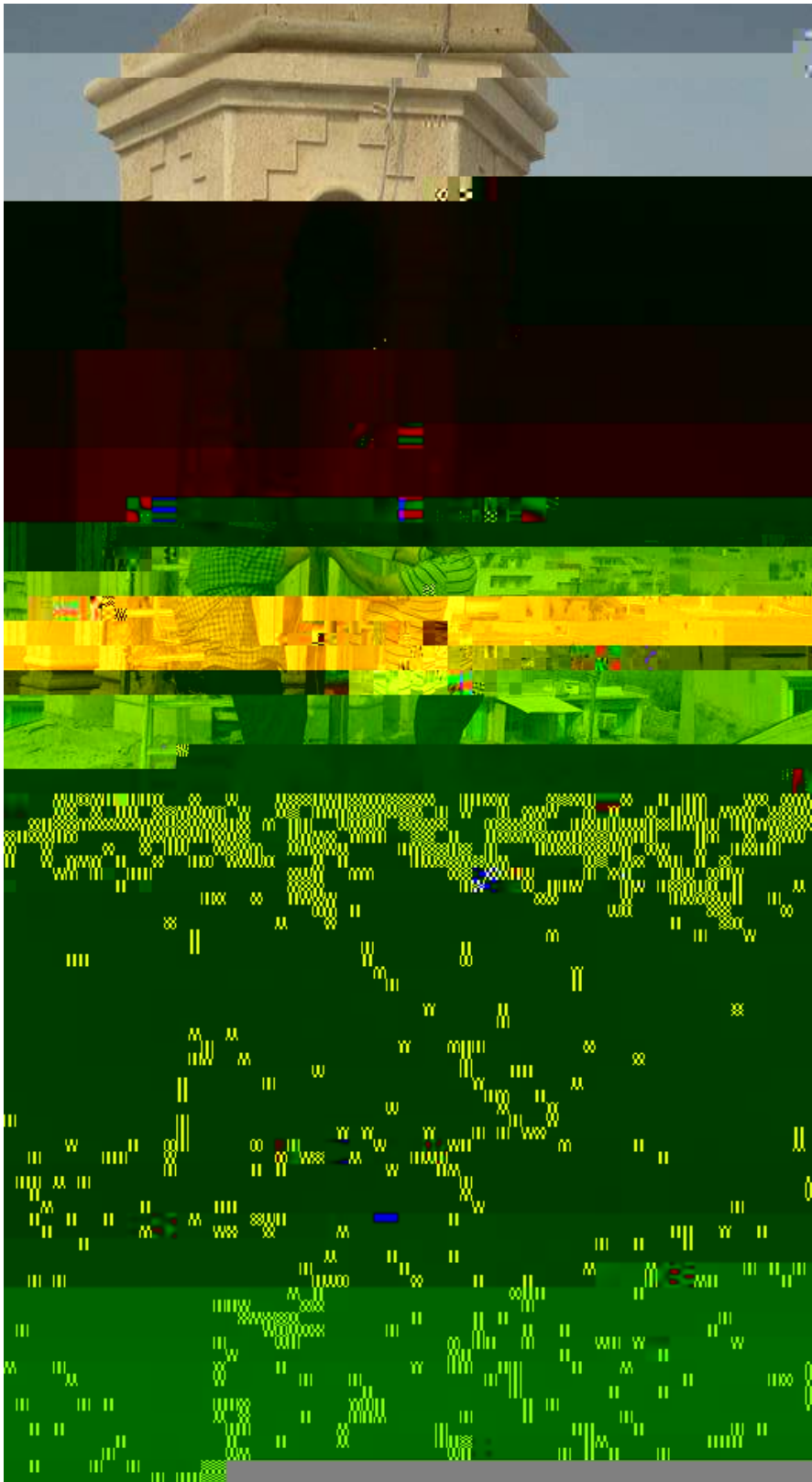
The gate as it stands today, a makeshift cross and a flag visible atop Mar Gewargis Church (Bartella Cafe; October 25, 2016)



Iraqi soldiers stand atop the roof of Mar Gewargis Church (Bartella Cafe; October 25, 2016)



The burned altar inside Mar Gewargis Church (Bartella Cafe; October 25, 2016)



Men place a makeshift cross above Mar Gewargis Church (Bartella Cafe; October 25, 2016)

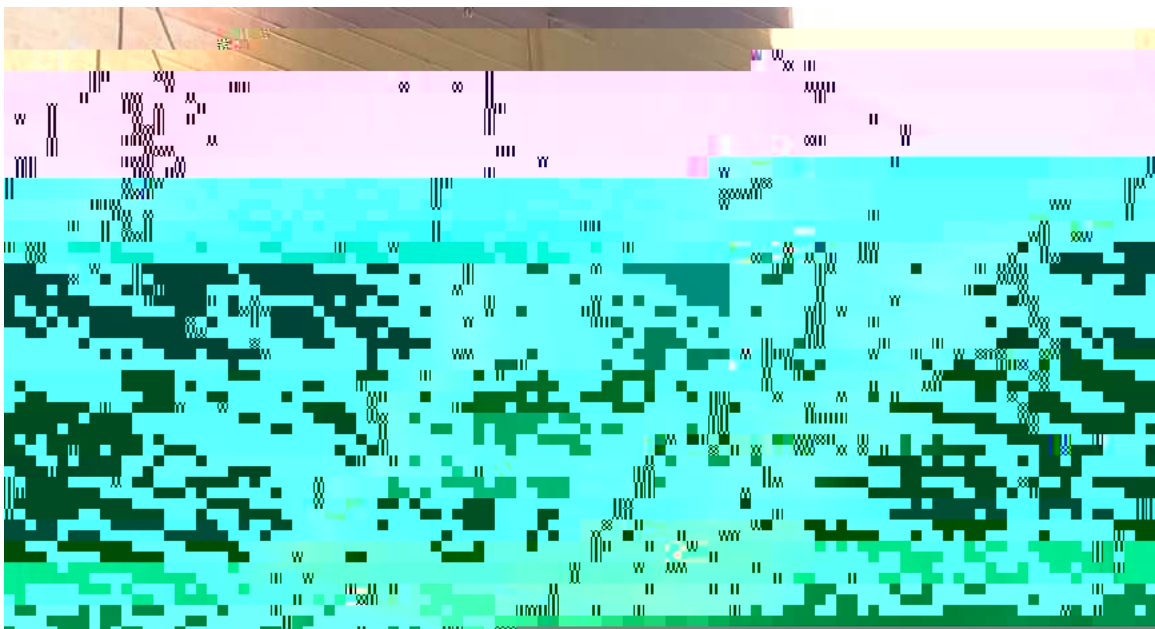


An Iraqi soldier stands with a flag atop Mar Gewargis Church (Bartella Cafe; October 24, 2016)

Maryam al-Azra Church ()



Video still of extensive damage to the exterior of Maryam al-Azra Church (Channel 4; October 23, 2016)



Video still of bullet holes and fire damage outside Maryam al-Azra Church (Channel 4; October 23, 2016)



The interior of Maryam al-Azra Church as it stands today (Bartella Cafe; October 25, 2016)



Video still of interior damage at Maryam al-Azra Church (Channel 4; October 23, 2016)



Damage to the interior of Maryam al-Azra Church (Bartella Cafe; October 25, 2016)



Damage to the altar at Maryam al-Azra Church (Jonathan Rugman/Twitter; October 23, 2016)

Video still of the priest of Maryam al-Azra Church removing religious texts (Channel 4; October 23, 2016)

Video still of the priest of Maryam al-Azra Church removing religious texts (Channel 4; October 23, 2016)

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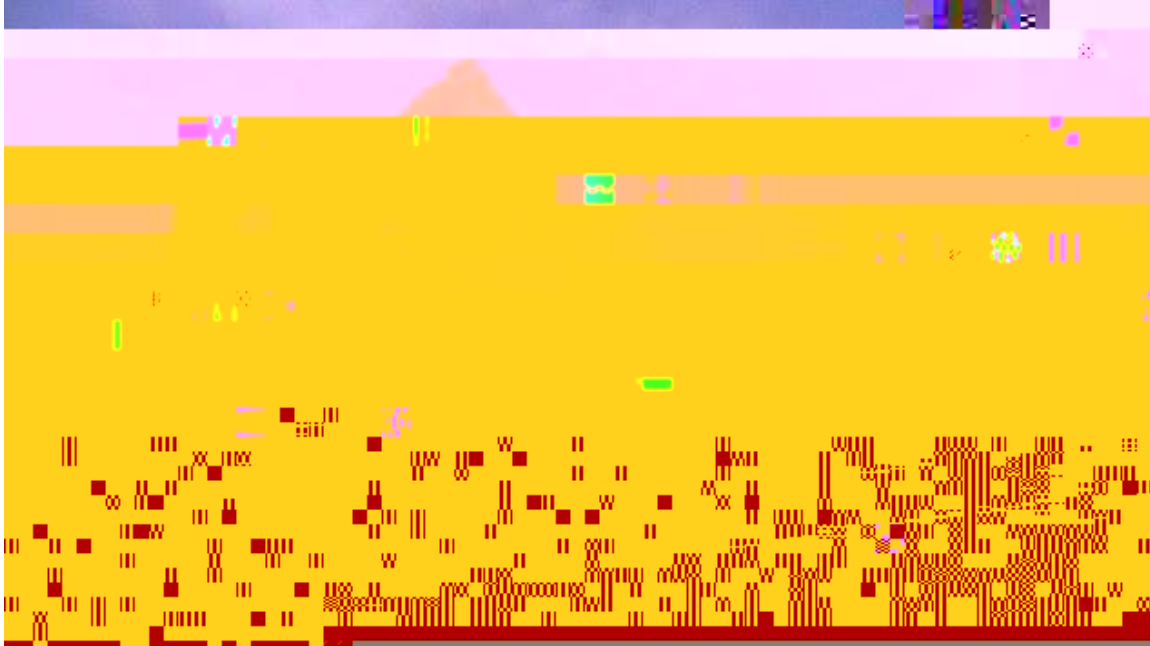
Mart Shmone Church (



Mart Shmone Church following the recapturing of Bartella (Bartella Cafe; October 25, 2016)



Another view of Mart Shmone Church following the recapture of Bartella (BBC; October 24, 2016)



A close photo of the bell tower of Mart Shmone Church, showing that the cross is missing (Daily Mail/Reuters; October 24, 2016)



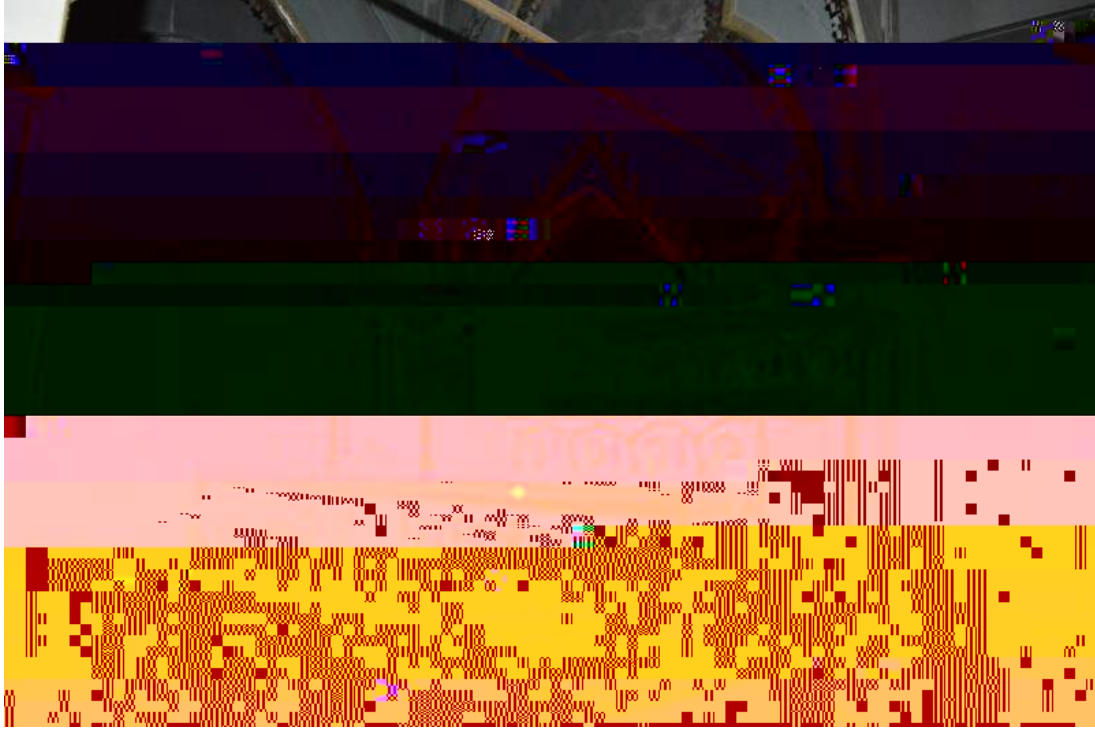
Iraqi forces stand on Mart Shmone Church (Bartella Cafe; October 25, 2016)



A damaged altar inside Mart Shmone Church (Baretly.net; October 22, 2016)



The same damaged altar inside Mart Shmone Church, extensive fire damage is clear (Twitter; October 23, 2016)



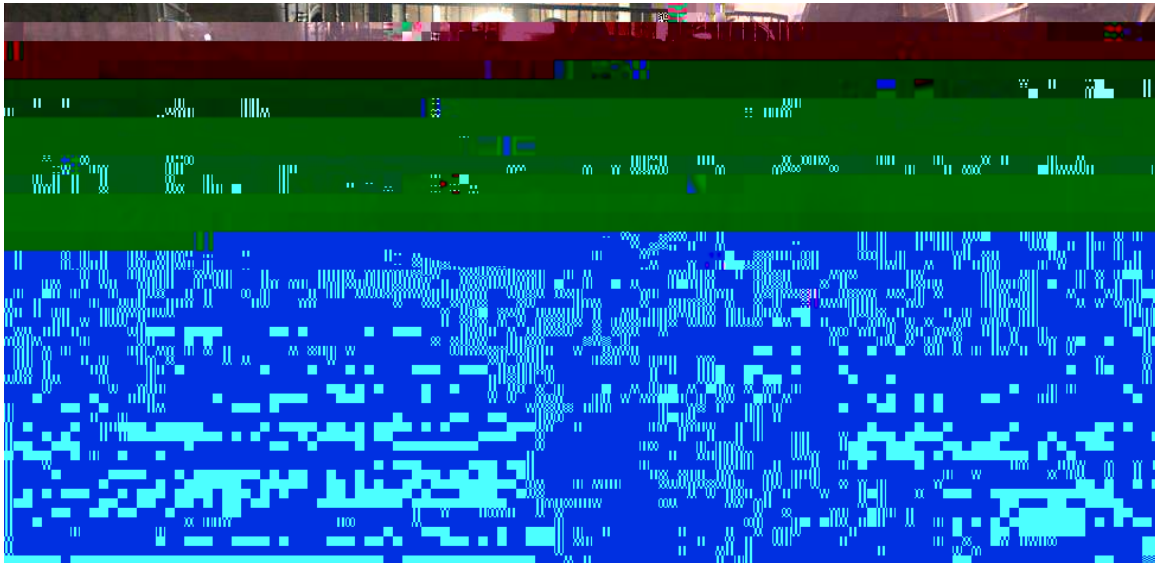
A damaged altar inside Mart Shmone Church (Baretly.net; October 22, 2016)



Mart Shmone Church as it appears today (Daily Mail/EPA; October 24, 2016)

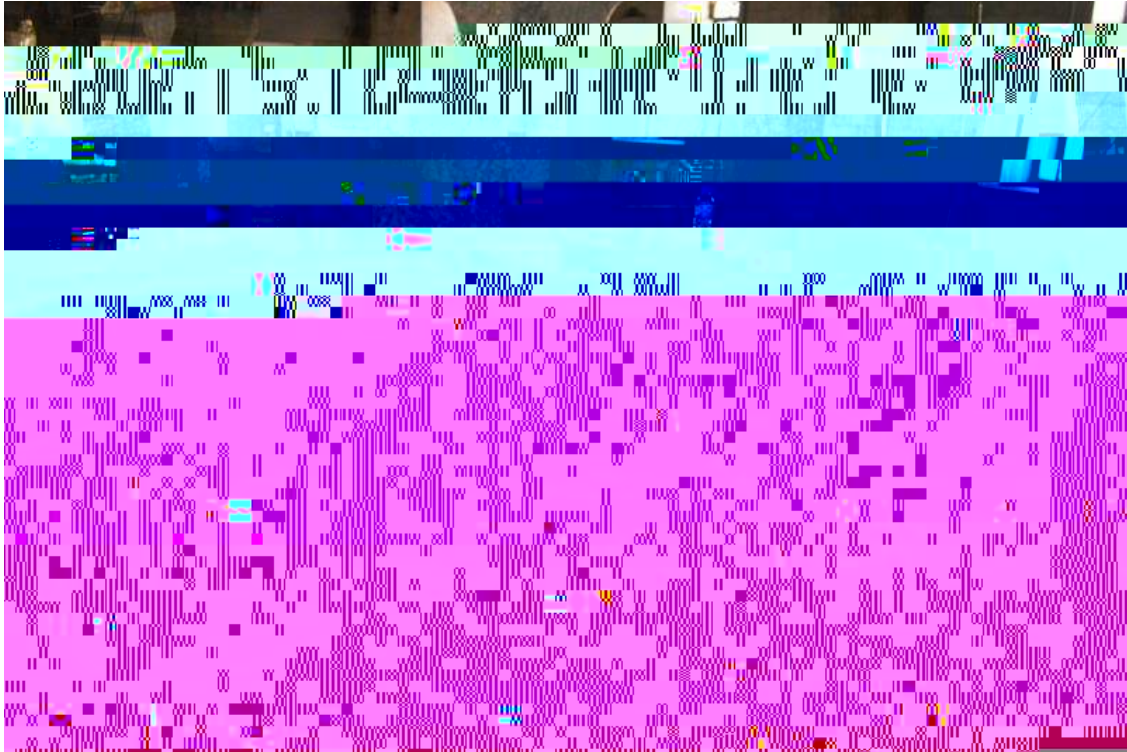


Damage to the interior of Mart Shmone (Christians of Iraq/Twitter/Al Sumaria News; October 21, 2016)



A soldier inspects the damage inside Mart Shmone Church (BBC/Reuters; October 23, 2016)

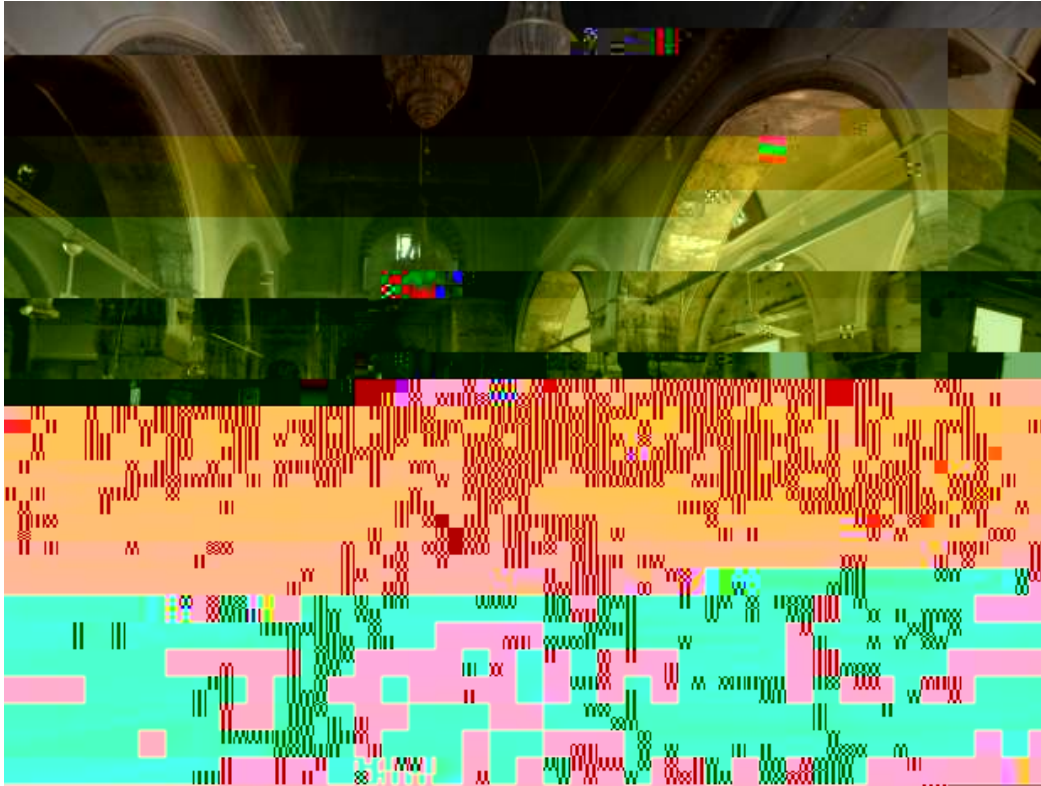
Church leaders and Iraqi forces inside Mart Shmone Church (Christian Today/ADFA; October 24, 2016)



Severe damage to Mart Shmone Church (Bareilly.net; October 22, 2016)



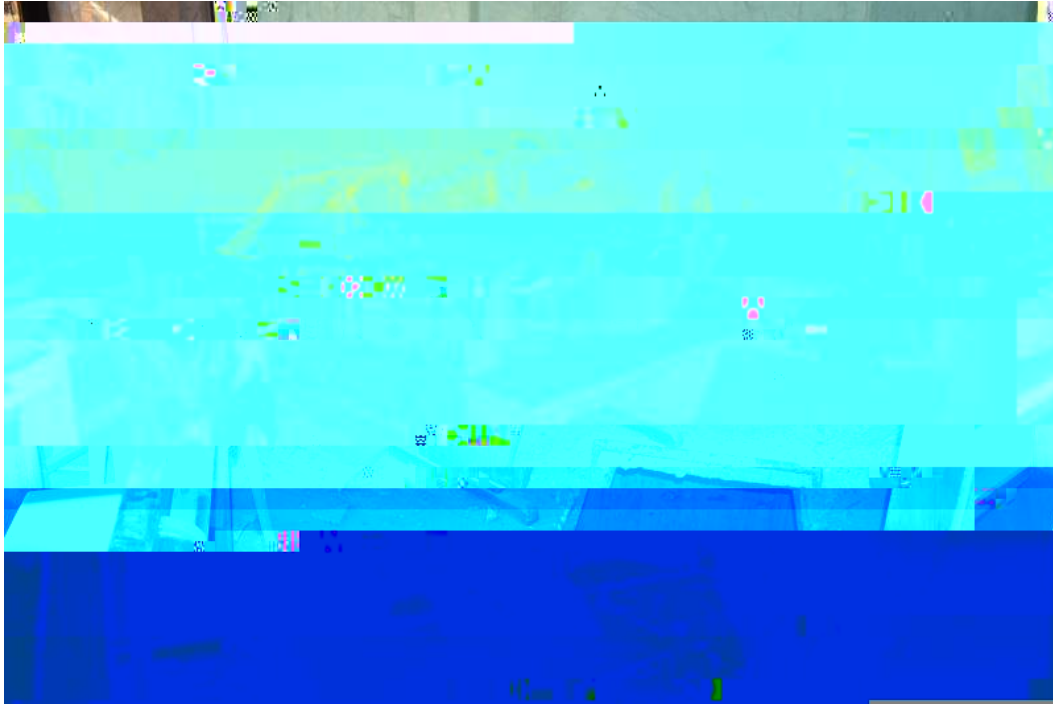
A member of the Iraqi Special Forces inspects a Christian religious text inside Mart Shmone Church (Reuters; October 21, 2016)



The damaged interior of Mart Shmone Church (The Telegraph; October 24, 2016)



A soldier flashes a victory side inside the damaged Mart Shmone Church (Reuters; October 22, 2016)



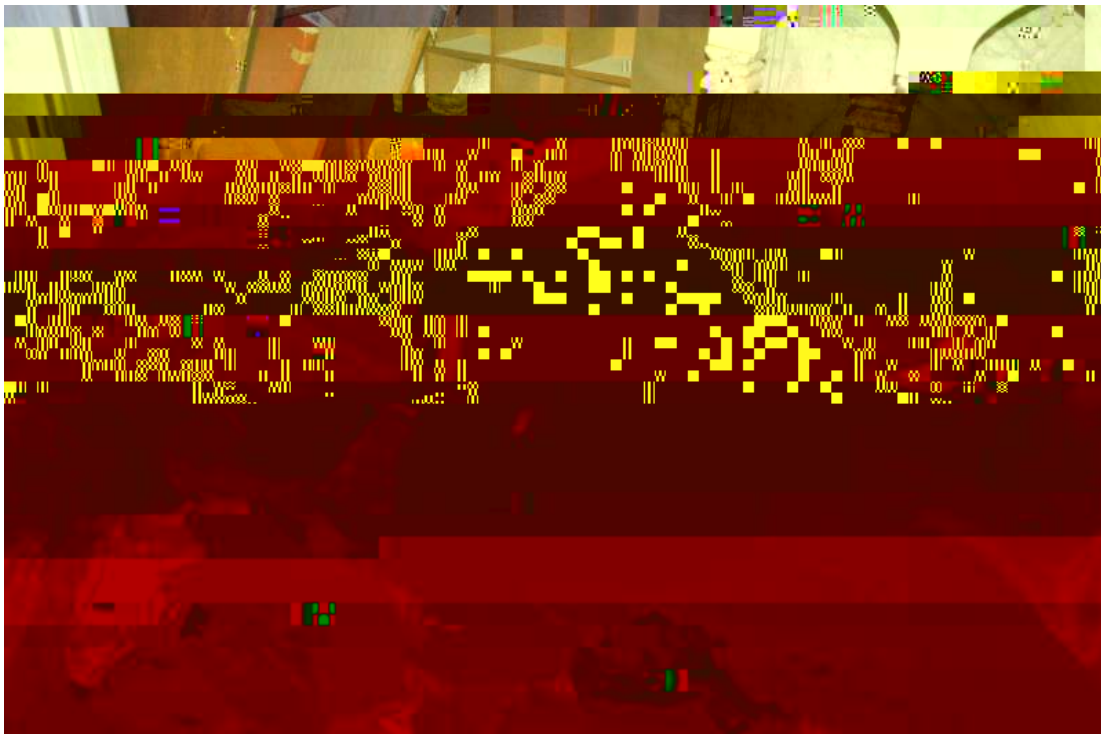
Interior damage and what appears to be an entrance to a tunnel inside Mart Shmone Church (Baretly.net; October 22, 2016)



Severe damage to Mart Shmone Church (Baretly.net; October 22, 2016)



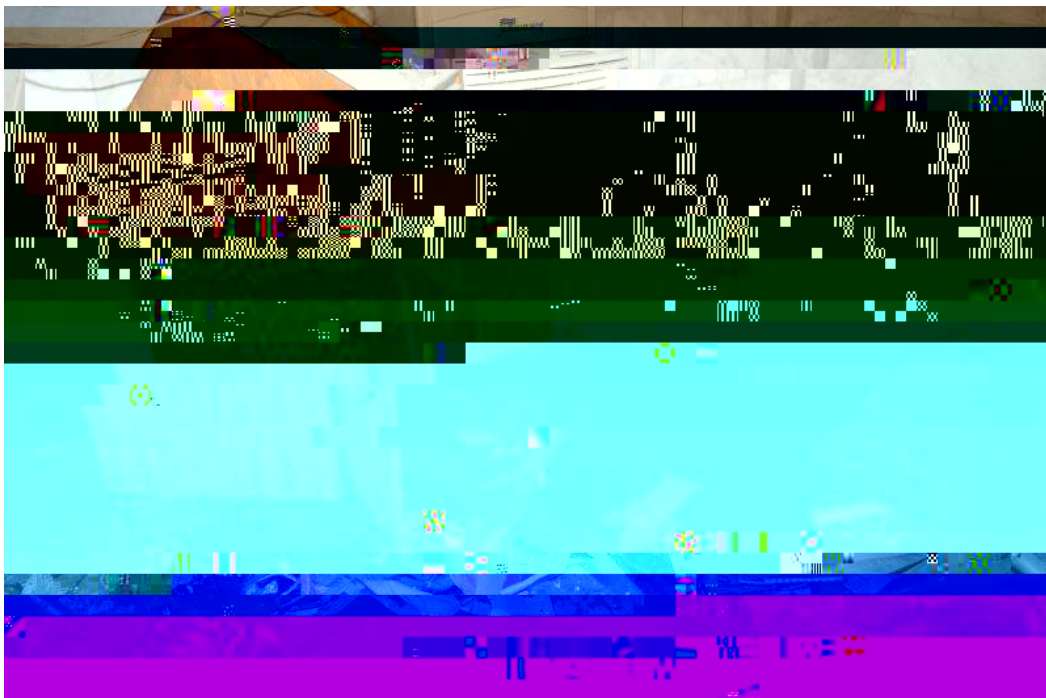
A priest inspects damaged religious material at Mart Shmone Church (Baretly.net; October 22, 2016)



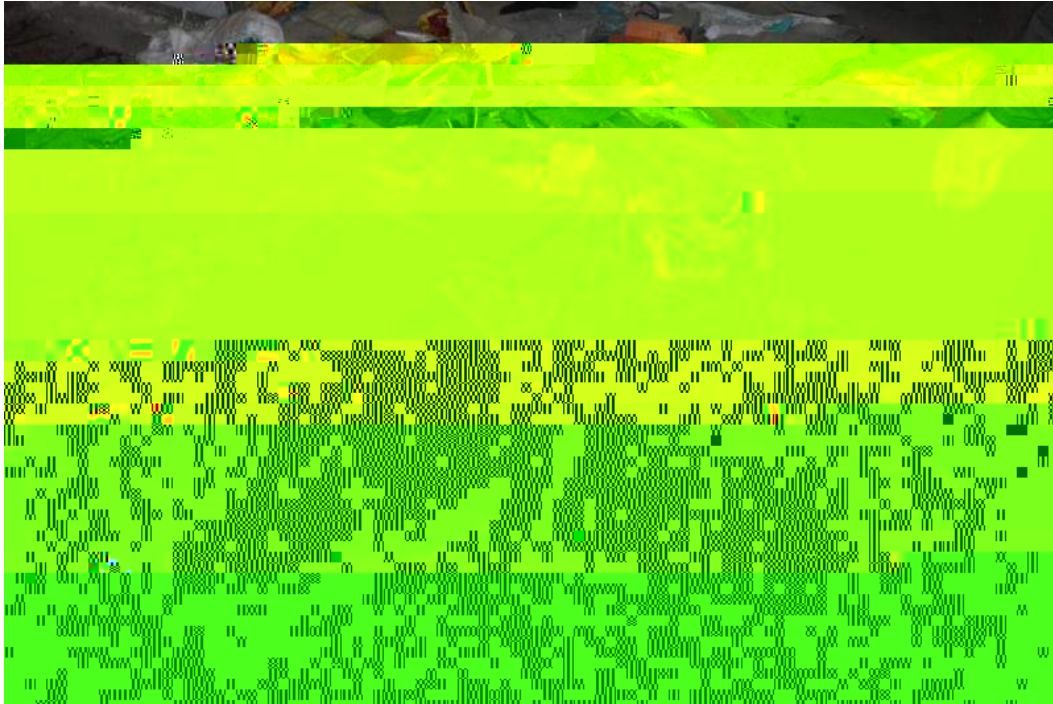
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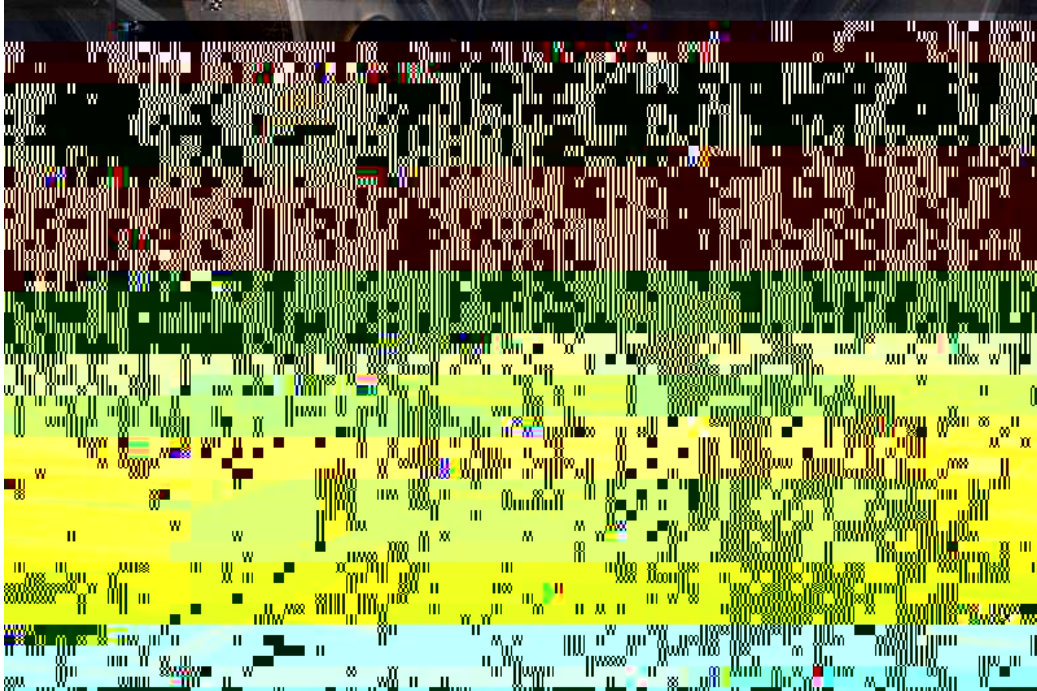
A priest inspects damaged religious material at Mart Shmone Church (Baretly.net; October 22, 2016)



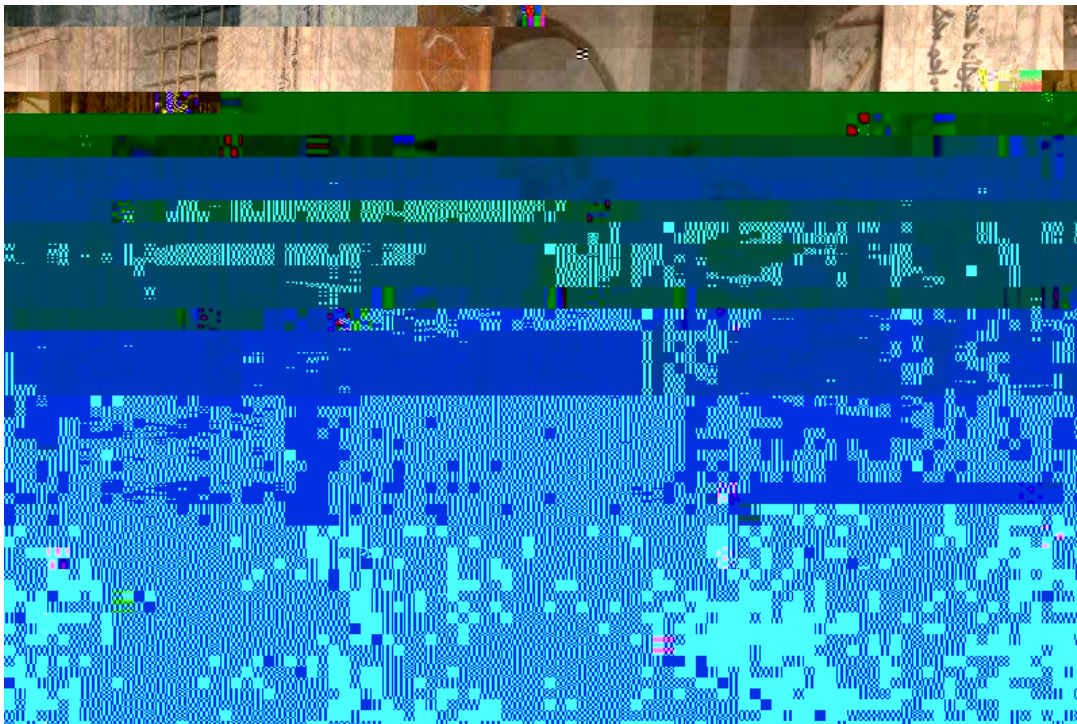
Severe damage to religious materials inside Mart Shmone Church (Baretly.net; October 22, 2016)



The removing of religious materials at Mart Shmone Church (Christian Today/ADFA; October 24, 2016)



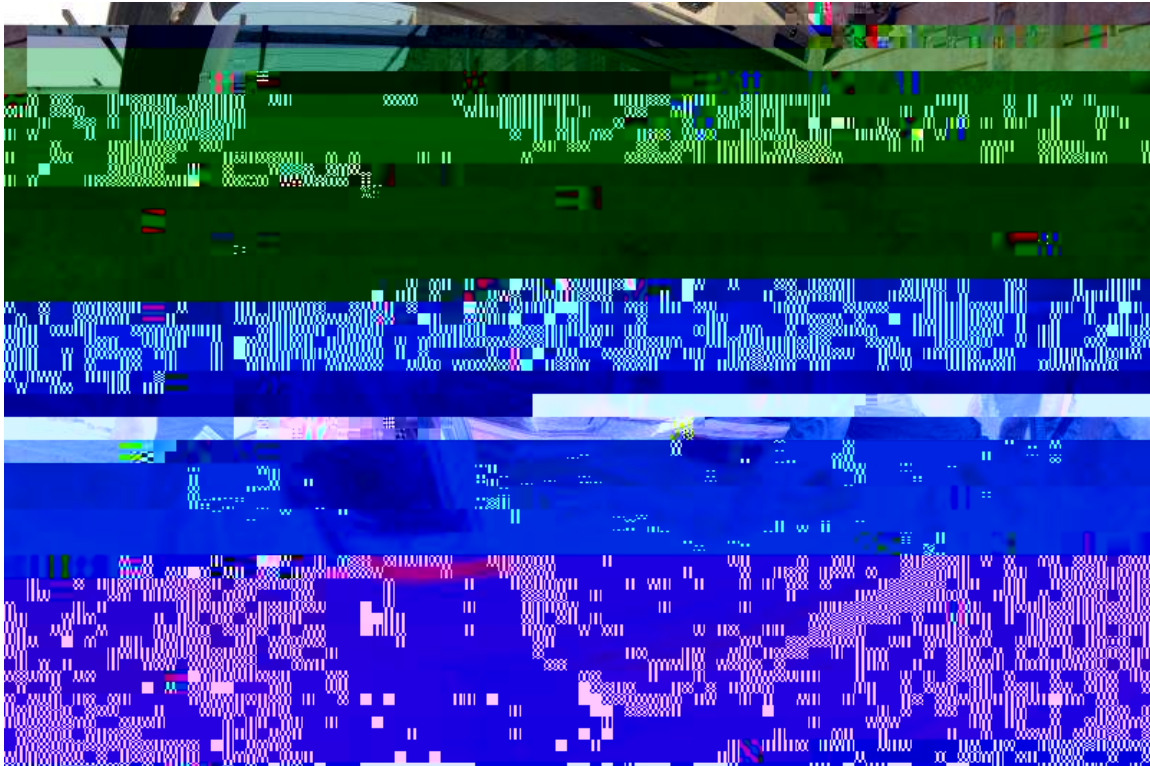
Religious materials are removed from Mart Shmone Church (Bareilly.net; October 22, 2016)



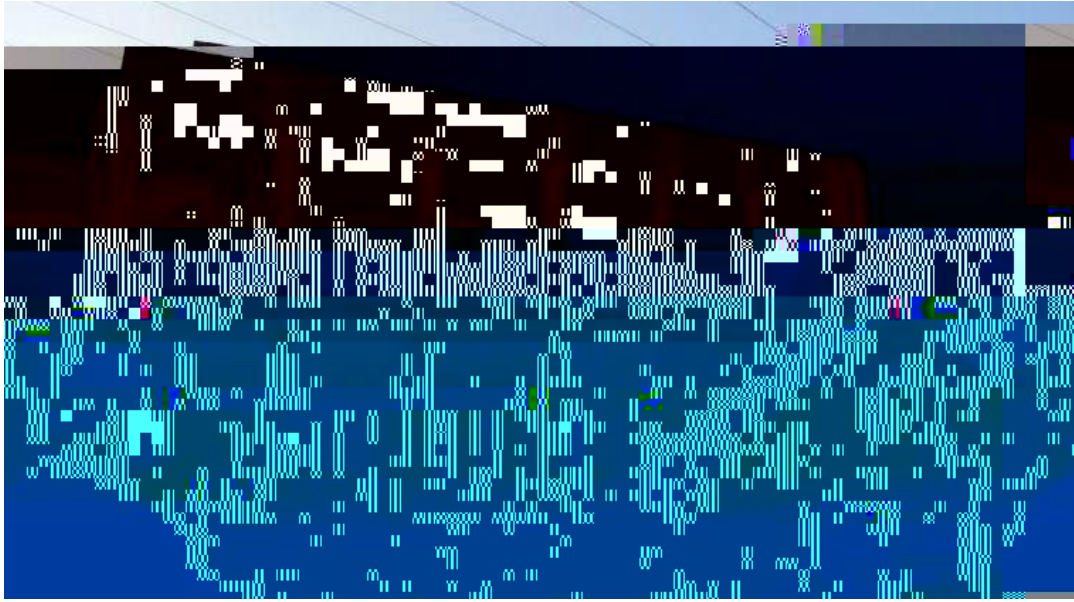
Religious materials are carried out of Mart Shmone Church (Christians of Iraq/Twitter/Al Sumaria News; October 23, 2016)



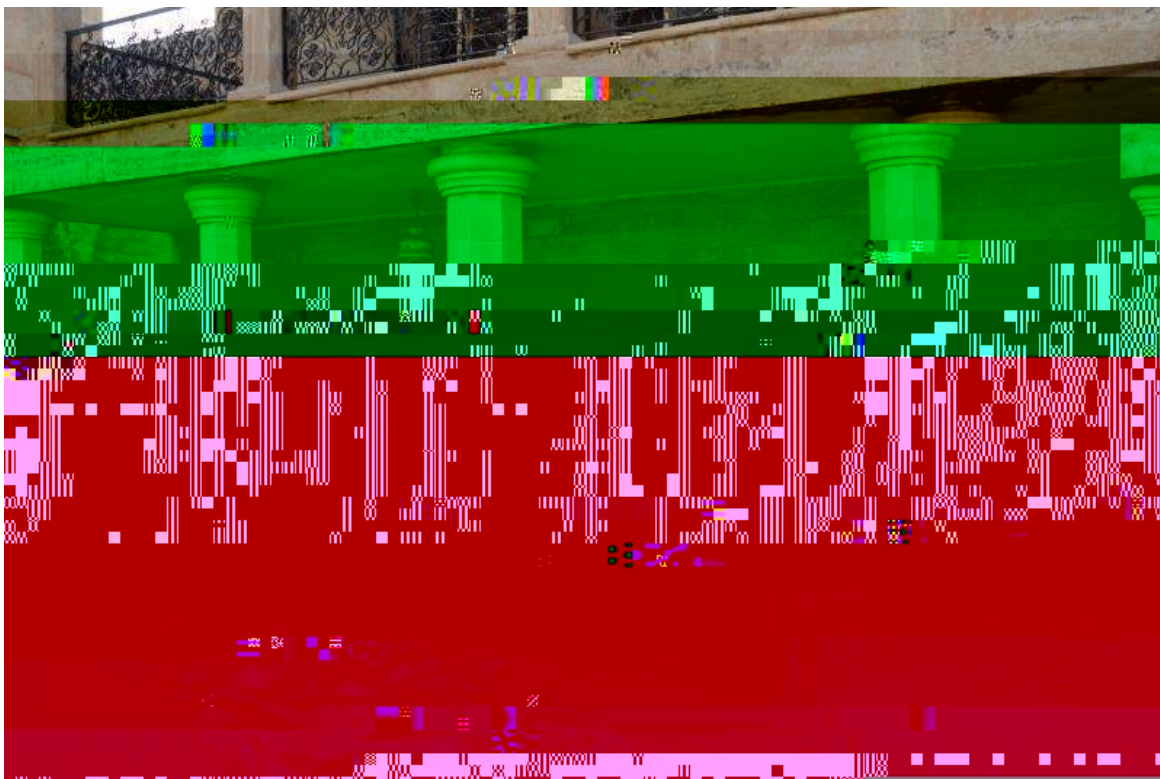
Religious materials are removed from Mart Shmone Church (Baretly.net; October 22, 2016)



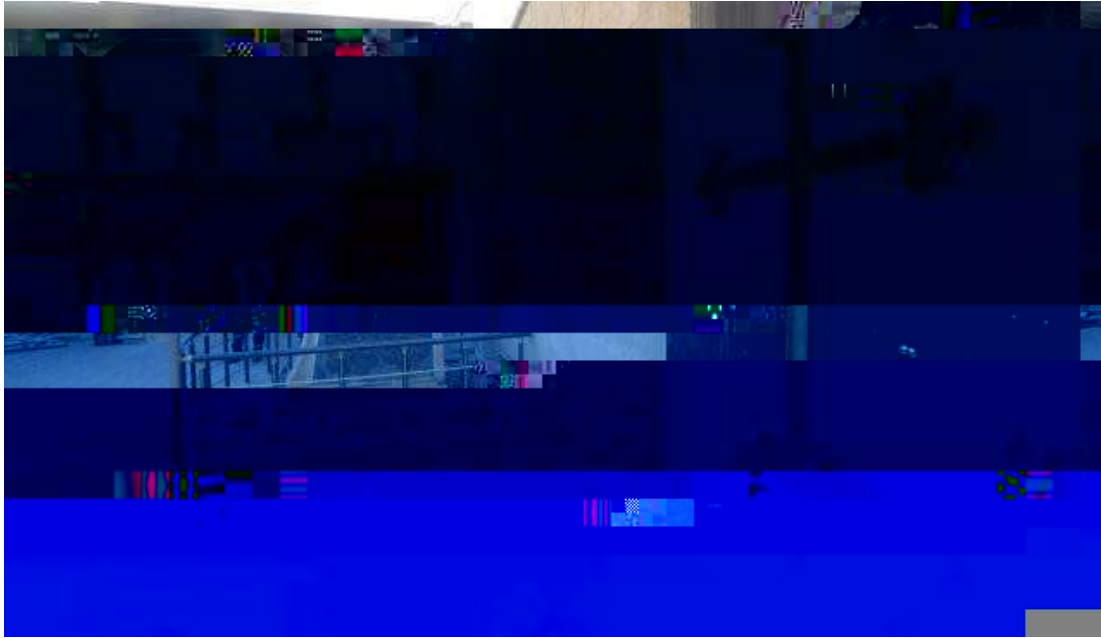
Religious materials are removed from Mart Shmone Church (Baretly.net; October 22, 2016)



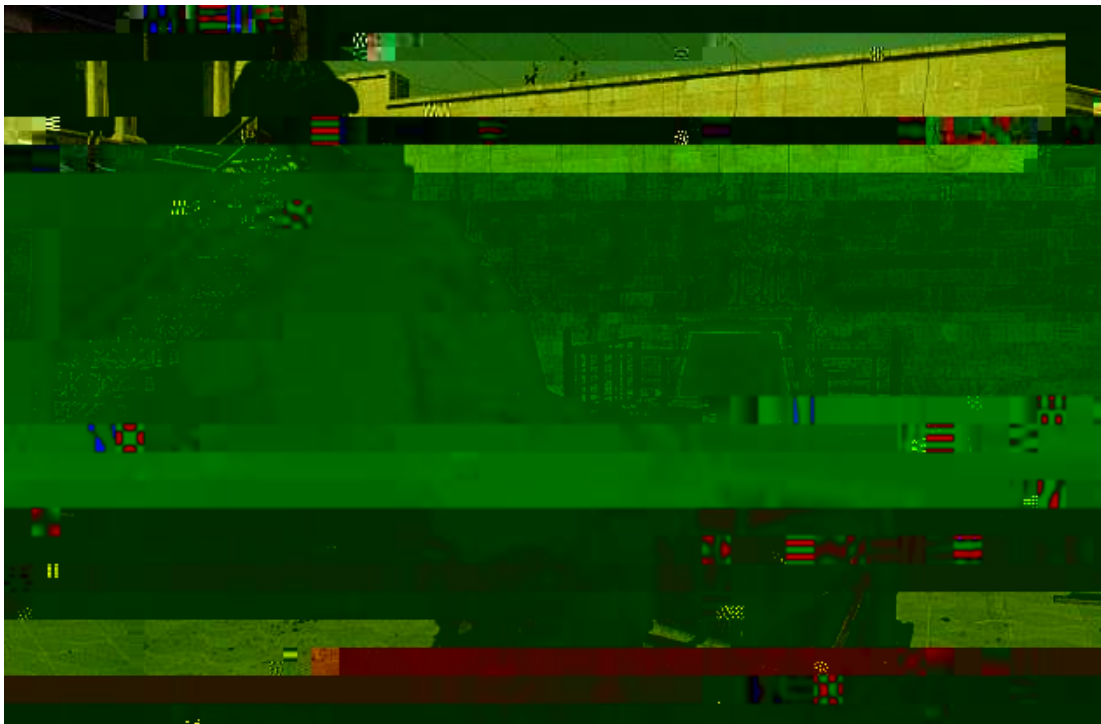
Damage to the complex of Mart Shmone Church (Christian Today/ADFA; October 24, 2016)



Damage to the complex of Mart Shmone Church (Baretly.net; October 22, 2016)



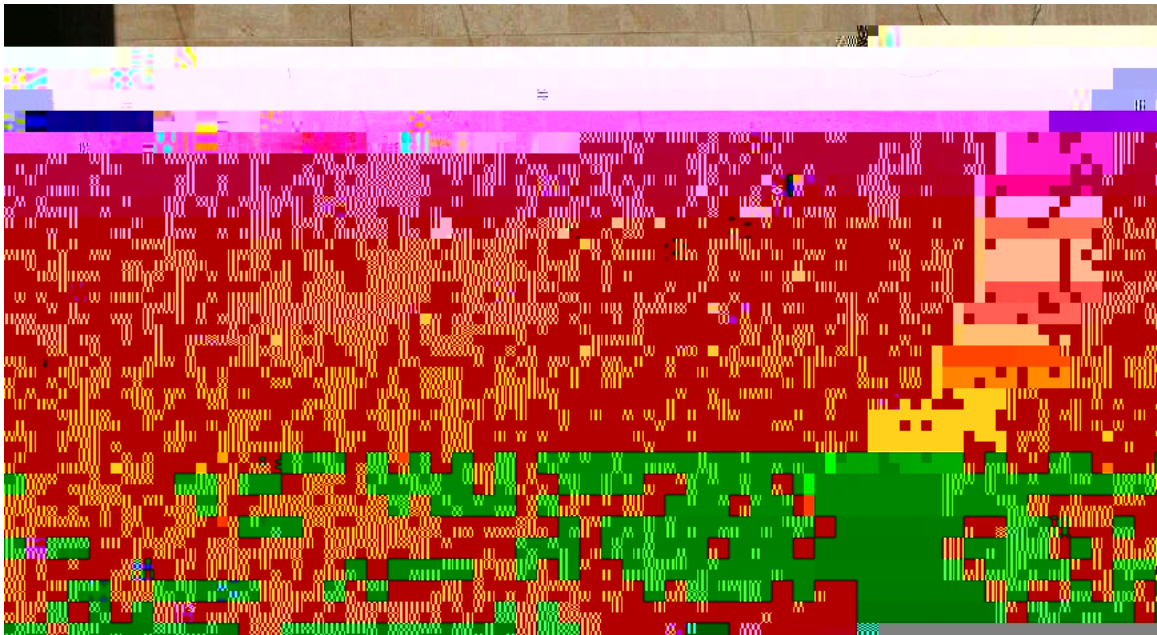
Damage to the complex of Mart Shmone Church (AISumaria News/Aramaic ; October 21, 2016)



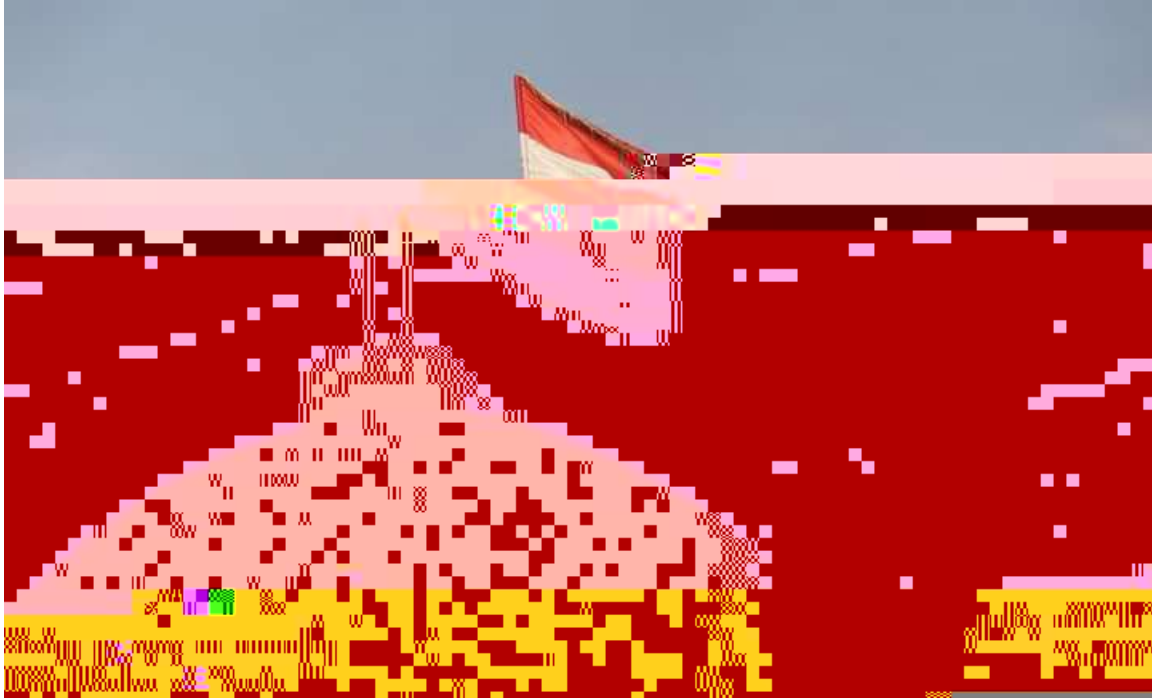
A soldier next to a defaced religious statue outside of Mart Shmone Church (Daily Mail/Getty Images; October 24, 2016)



The defaced statue at Mart Shmone Church compound (Baretly.net; October 22, 2016)



Detail of the defaced statue at Mart Shmone Church (Suroyo TV; October 22, 2016)



An Iraqi flag flies above Mart Shmone Church (AISumaria News/Aramaic ; October 21, 2016)



A cross and flag atop Mart Shmone Church (Bareilly.net; October 22, 2016)

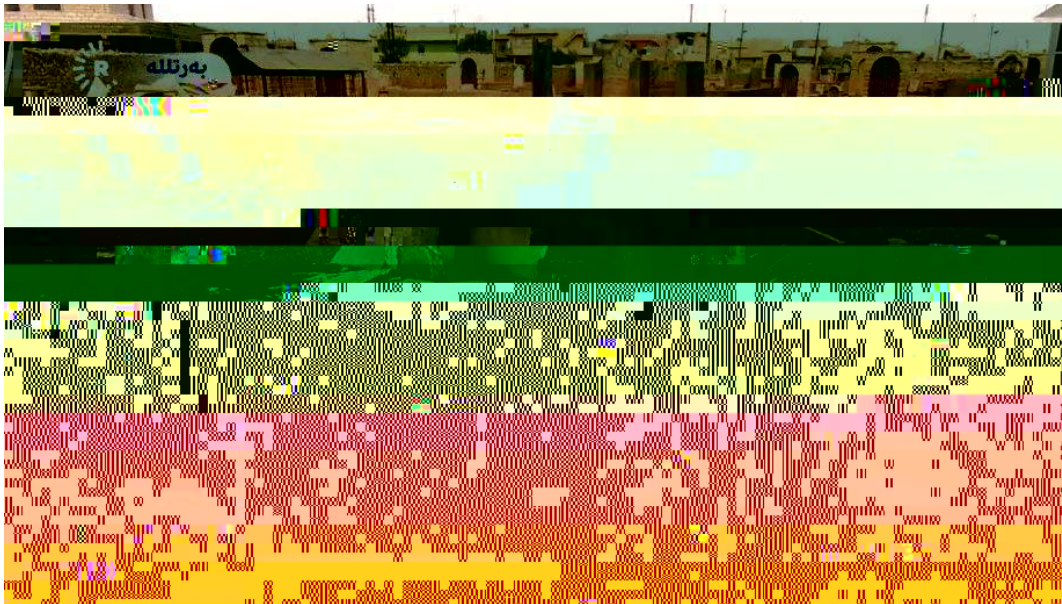
Syriac Orthodox Cultural Center ()

Damage to the Syriac Orthodox Cultural Center (October 24, 2016)

A broken statue of the Virgin Mary in the town of Bartella (Daily Mail/Getty Images; October 24,



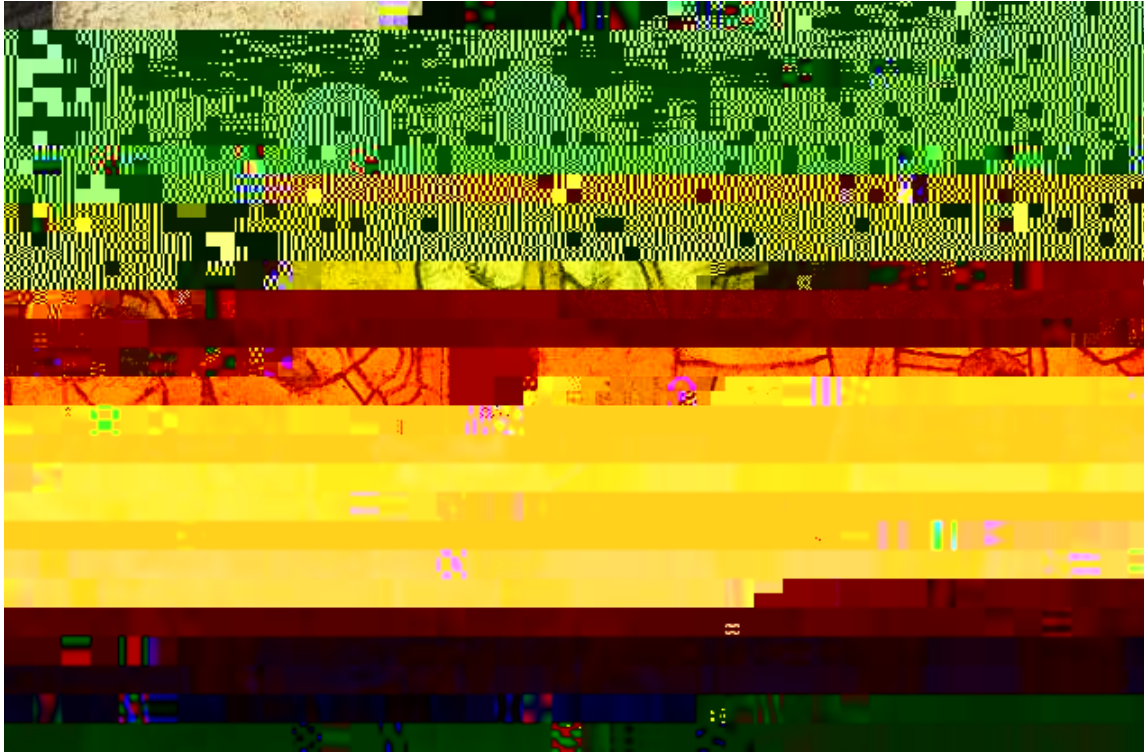
Religious men and soldiers examine the damage to Christian cemetery in Bartella (Bartella Cafe; October 25, 2016)



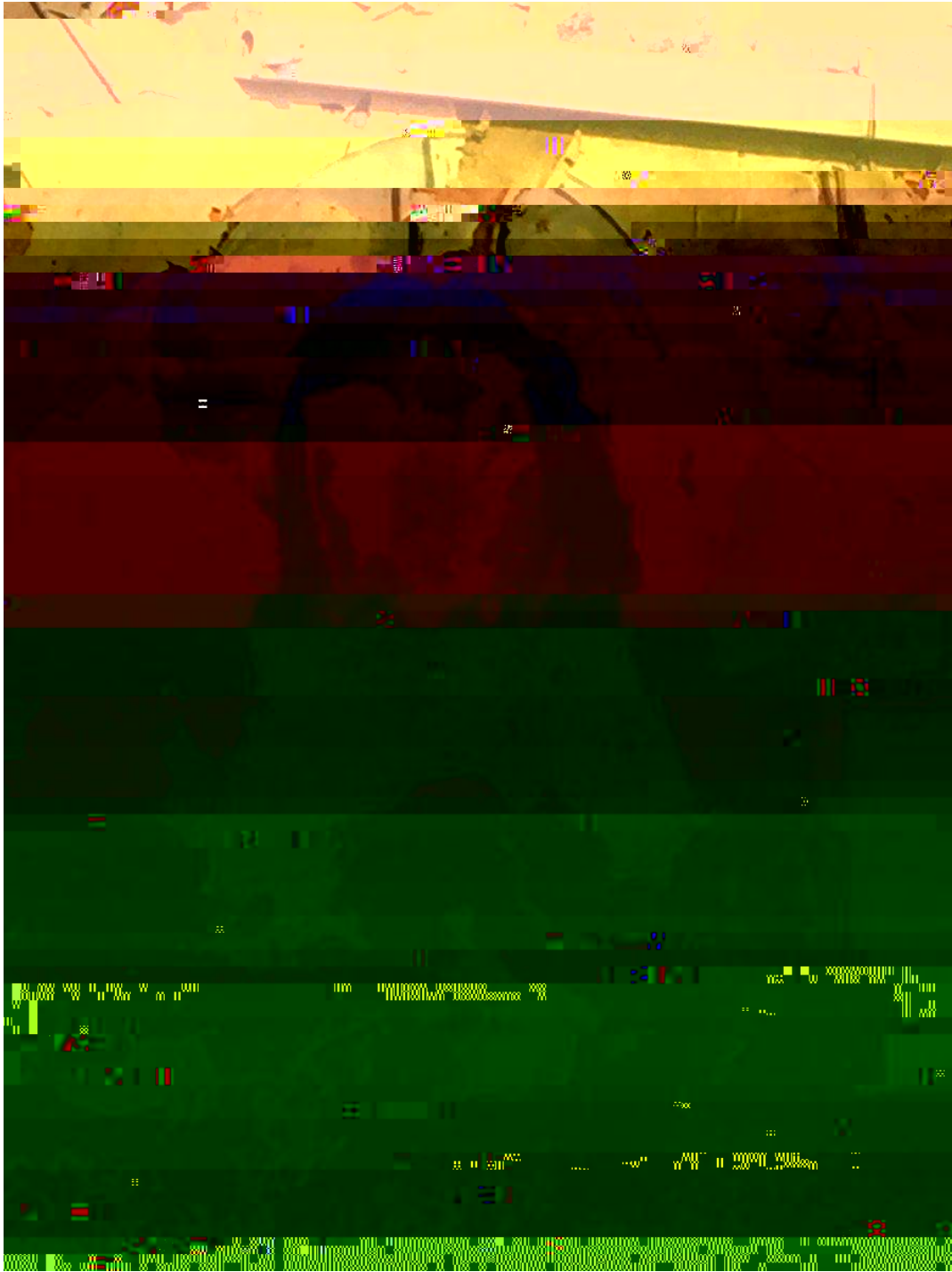
A rocket positioned inside the Christian cemetery in Bartella (Rudaw Arabic; October 24, 2016)

A rocket positioned inside the Christian cemetery in Bartella (Bartella Cafe; October 25, 2016)

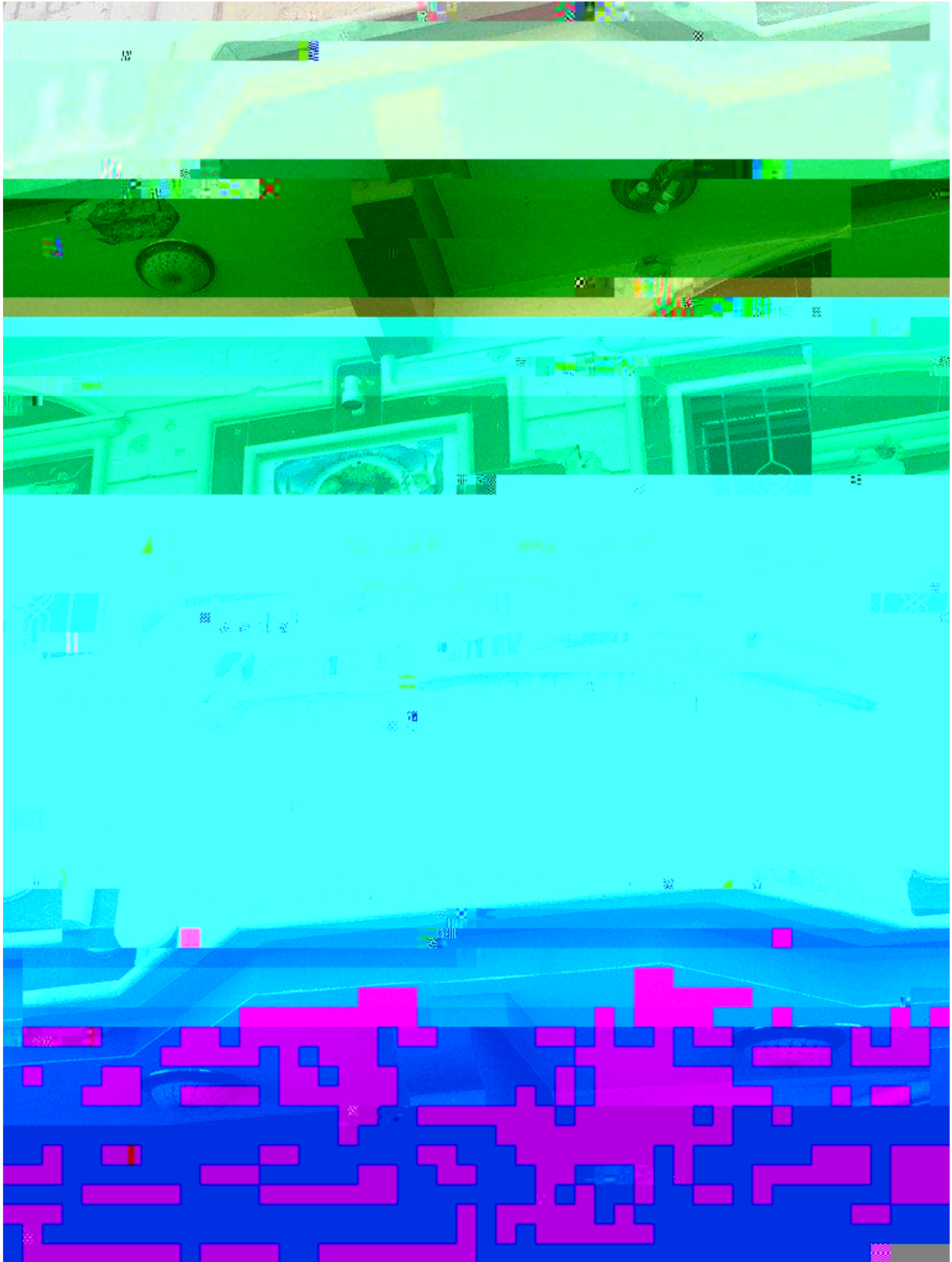
The defacement of a religious mural near Mart Shmone Church (Daily Mail/Getty Images; October



Detail of a defaced religious mural near Mart Shmone Church (Daily Mail/Getty Images; October 24, 2016)



Defacement of a religious image near Mart Shmone Church (Benjamin Hall/Twitter; October 26, 2016)



Defacement of a religious image in Bartella (Jonathan Rugman/Twitter; October 23, 2016)

Al Jazeera: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/10/battle-mosul-iraq-forces-close-villages-161024135052576.html>

Al Monitor: <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/afp/2016/10/iraq-conflict-kirkuk-raid.html>

CBC News: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/iraq-mosque-daquq-airstrike-1.3818378>

Human Rights Watch: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/10/24/iraq-investigate-mosque-strike-killed-civilians>

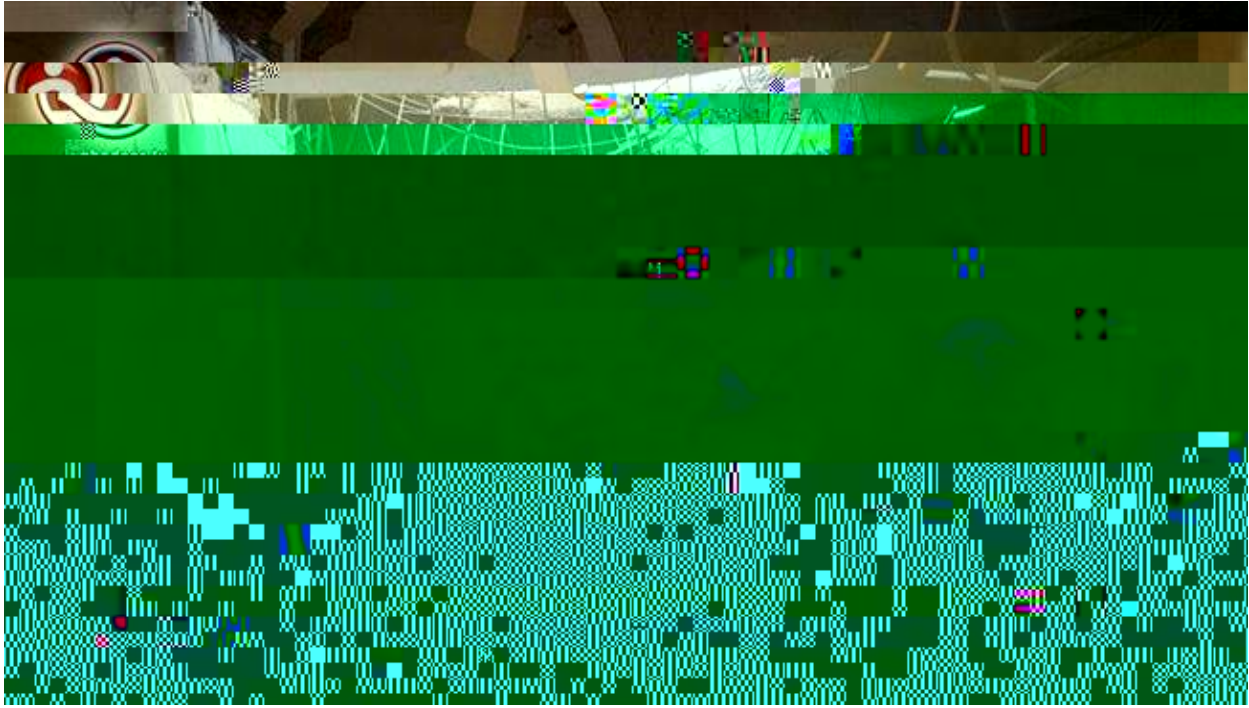
Inherent Resolve Website:

<http://www.inherentresolve.mil/Portals/1/20161021%20Strike%20Release%20Final.pdf?ver=2016-10-21-095044-627>

Kurdistan 24: <http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/39322d36-4d8e-4a67-a40c-d2aa35ea5cc2/Unidentified-warplane-targets-civilians--HRW-calls-for-investigation>

NBC News: <http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/isis-terror/iraq-violence-u-s-denies-attacking-mosque-daquq-near-kirkuk-n671601>

News Talk: <http://www.newstalk.com/Russia-accuses-USled-coalition-of-war-crimes-in-Iraq>

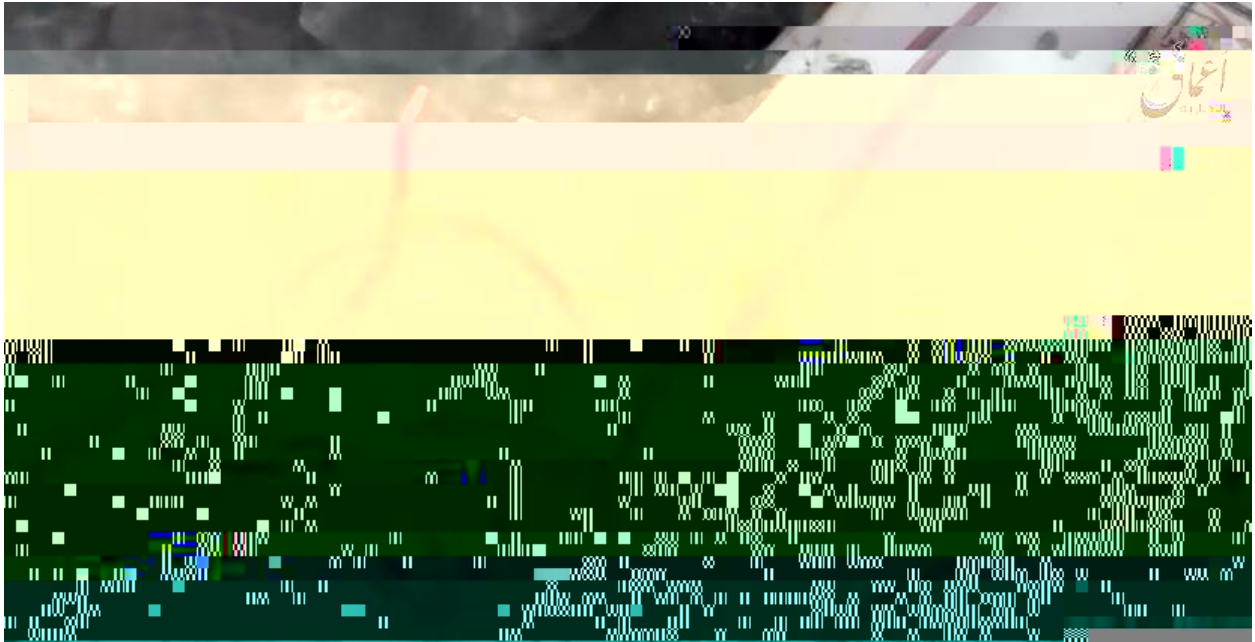


Damage inside al-Khanli Mosque following the airstrike (Iraqi al-Ghadeer/Press TV; October 21, 2016)

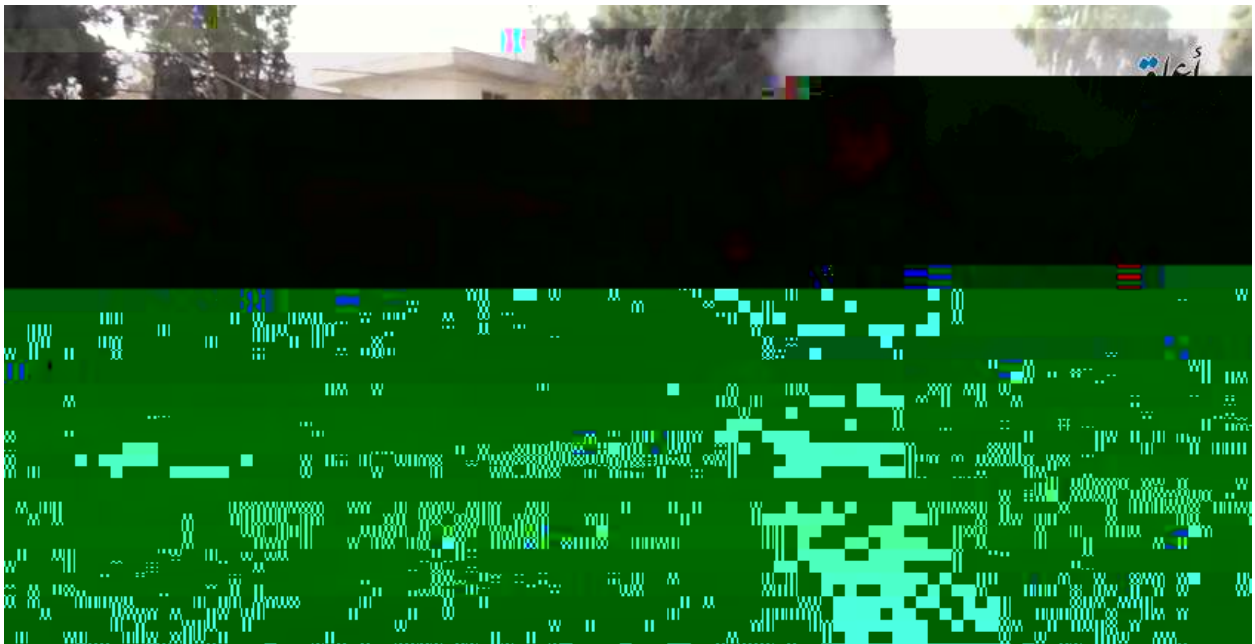
IHI 16-0037

Report Date: October 29, 2016

Site Name: Unnamed Mosque



Video still of damage to religious materials (Amaq News Agency; October 29, 2016)



Video still of an ISIL member gesturing to the destroyed mosque (Amaq News Agency; October 29, 2016)



Video still of the remains of a mosque, possibly the minaret and/or the mosque's speaker system (Amaq News Agency; October 29, 2016)



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



Severe damage to the Mosque (DigitalGlobe; October 30, 2016)