

## **ASOR Cultural Heritage Initiatives Executive Summary**

In Year 2, ASOR CHI will shift to producing reports every two weeks.

During the most recent reporting period, reported cultural heritage damage in Syria and Iraq showed signs of an increase with the release of new information on ISIL deliberate destructions of heritage places. Tragically, two prominent heritage professionals lost their lives in Syria. On August 18, Khaled al Asa'ad (83), former Director of Palmyra Antiquities, was publically executed in Tadmor by ISIL militants. Al Asa'ad was famous for his life long study of Palmyra (Tadmor) and service to the DGAM. On August 12, Qassim Abdullah Yehya (37), a DGAM Deputy Director, was killed in a rocket attack on the Damascus Citadel reportedly launched from the suburb of Douma — the attack also allegedly targeted the National Museum. Other DGAM employees were reportedly injured in the attack. Yehya was especially known for his important work in the conservation of mosaics. On August 7, a regime airstrike caused serious damage to the Khan Assad Pasha in Maarat al Nu'man and damage was reported to the Daraa National Museum.

In Iraq, tumultuous political conditions and rapid government restructuring have the potential of adversely impacting an already stressed State Board of Antiquities and Heritage and exacerbating the existing unstable situation for cultural heritage assets and infrastructure. On August 9, ISIL released images of deliberate destructions of Sufi shrines and graves in the area of Fallujah on the internet.

### **Key Points**

- On August 18, 2015, ISIL executed Syrian archaeologist Khalid al Assad, former Director of Palmyra Antiquities.
- On August 12, 2015, Syrian DGAM Deputy Director Qassem Abdullah Yahya was killed in a rocket attack on the Damascus Citadel. Rockets also struck the National Museum (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15 0115**).

<sup>F</sup> This report is based on research conducted by the “Cultural Heritage 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.

- On August 7, 2015, an airstrike caused substantial damage to the Khan Assad Pasha in Maarat al Nu'man, which dates to the Ottoman period. ASOR CHI is preparing a detailed incident report and a special report in conjunction with The Day After organization (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15 0120**).
- The Daraa National Museum in southern Syria continues to suffer combat damage (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15 0106 UPDATE**).
- On August 18, 2015 airstrike damage to the Tadmor Museum was reported (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15 0116**).
- In the week leading up to August 10, 2015 ISIL's "Bureau of Propaganda for the District of Fallujah" posted 19 photos to Justpaste.it by showing the destruction of multiple Sufi shrines and graves in the Fallujah, Iraq area (**ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 15 0091**).

## Heritage Timeline

- |                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| August 18, 2015 | <p>DGAM published an article titled “<b>DGAM announce the passing of the archaeology researcher Khalid al Asaad former Director of Palmyra Antiquities</b>”</p> <p><a href="http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&amp;id=1773">http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&amp;id=1773</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=177&amp;id=1772">http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=177&amp;id=1772</a></p>     |
| August 17, 2015 | <p>DGAM published an article titled “<b>The Eastern Countryside in Daraa: Damage at the Jmarein Village</b>”</p> <p><a href="http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&amp;id=1770">http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&amp;id=1770</a></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| August 14, 2015 | <p>published their newsletter titled “<b>Damage to Syria’s Heritage 14 August 2015</b>”</p> <p><a href="http://www.heritageforpeace.org/syria%20culture%20and%20heritage/damage%20to%20cultural%20heritage/previous%20damage%20newsletters/">http://www.heritageforpeace.org/syria culture and heritage/damage to cultural heritage/previous damage newsletters/</a></p>                                                  |
| August 13, 2015 | <p>published an article titled “<b>Inside Syria: The wasteland of Yarmouk that sums up four years of civil war</b>” (by Frederik Pleitgen). This video and article show the destruction to the district of Yarmouk inside of Damascus.</p> <p><a href="http://www.cnn.com/2015/08/13/middleeast/syria_yarmouk_front_line/index.html">http://www.cnn.com/2015/08/13/middleeast/syria_yarmouk_front_line/index.html</a></p> |
| August 12, 2015 | <p>published an article titled “<b>ISIS wages cultural warfare on Syria’s heritage</b>” (by Halla Diyab).</p> <p><a href="http://english.alarabiya.net/en/views/news/middle_east/2015/08/12/ISIS_wages_cultural_warfare_on_Syria_s_heritage.html">http://english.alarabiya.net/en/views/news/middle_east/2015/08/12/ISIS_wages_cultural_warfare_on_Syria_s_heritage.html</a></p>                                          |

published an article titled “**Syria regime air raids, rebel fire on Damascus kill 50**” (by AP). This article records alleged damage to the Damascus Citadel and Damascus National Museum. <http://news.yahoo.com/deadly rocket fire hits syrian capital state news 072329501.html>

DGAM published an article titled “**The DGAM announce the passing of our colleague Qassem Abdullah Yehya**” This article also mentions that rockets fell near the **Damascus Citadel** and **Damascus National Museum** **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15 0115**. <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1764>

published an article titled “**A Virtual Tour Through Ruined Syrian City Aleppo**” (by Derrick Lang). This article contains a video with 360 degree views of different areas of Aleppo. <http://www.stuff.co.nz/technology/digital living/71058989/a virtual tour through ruined syrian city aleppo>

August 10, 2015

DGAM published an article titled “**Maraat al Numan: Damage at the Khan Assad Pasha**” **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15 0106 UPDATE**. <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1762>

August 8, 2015

APSA published a photograph album titled “**Rif Dimashq al Zabadani: Destruction of the minaret of the Al Jisr mosque**” <http://apsa2011.com/apsanew/rif dimashq al zabadani destruction of the minaret of the al jisr mosque 08 08 2015/>

APSA published a video titled “**Aleppo – Destruction in the old city**” <http://apsa2011.com/apsanew/aleppo destruction in the old city 08 08 2015/>

August 7, 2015

published an article titled “**These Academics Are Outracing (and Outwitting) ISIS**” (by Danny Lewis). <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart news/academics outracing outwitting isis 180956193/?no ist>

August 6, 2015

published an article titled “**Saving Middle East Relics Needs Less Talk, More Action**” (by Vitaly Naumkin). <http://www.al monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/07/russia efforts save monuments middle east.html>

published an article titled “**International Conference in Germany to protect Syrian culture and heritage**” <http://www.syriaonline.sy/?f=Details&pageid=17782&catid=27>

August 5, 2015

published an article titled "**Iraq Rejects Iran's Proposal for Safekeeping of Artifacts**"

[http://www.tehrantimes.com/index\\_View.asp?code=248473](http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=248473)

published an article titled "**El Conflicto Armado en Siria Y Su Repercusión Sobre El Patrimonio Cultural: L: Deir 'ez Zor**" (by Anas Al Khabour).

[http://www.arqueologiaoriental.com/publicaciones/ANAS\\_VOL\\_I.pdf](http://www.arqueologiaoriental.com/publicaciones/ANAS_VOL_I.pdf)

Wellesley College is hosting a conference titled "**Erasing the Past: Da'esh and the Crisis of Antiquities Destruction**" on September 24, 2015. Speakers include Morag Kesrel, Clemens Reichel, Jytte Klausen, Patty Gerstenblith, Salam Al Kuntar, Jeremy Hutton, Stephenne Mulder, Charles Jones, Nina Burleigh, and Hugh Eaken.

July 29, 2015

published an article titled "**Is the Phoenix Rising from the Ashes in Syria?**" (by Franklin Lamb)

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### 3. Damascus Governorate

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users in Syria. Previously, Syrian President Bashar al Assad had q

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#### 4. Ninawa Governorate

On Friday, August 7, Iraq's defense minister stated that the ISIL has executed more than two thousand Iraqis in Ninawa, a region in the

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intelligence agencies continue to investigate the matter, but officials such as one German Defense Ministry spokesman stated that the Peshmerga fighters suffered injuries consistent with those of a chemical attack after fighting with ISIL. In discussing the source of the weapons, officials postulated that ISIL could have obtained the mustard agent from Syrian President Bashar al Assad's stockpiles or possibly from former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's old stockpiles. During the reporting period, there were also allegations of chemical weapons attacks by ISIL in northern Syria that U.S. officials are now investigating. Some believe the introduction of chemical weapons to ISIL's military tactics could push the United States to increase its involvement in fighting ISIL on the ground.<sup>19</sup>

## **Key Heritage Recommendations and Actions**

- ASOR CHI is currently reviewing several funding proposals submitted by in country Syrian heritage groups to conduct damage mitigation/preservation and site assessment projects.
- We predict recent territorial gains by Kurdish (YPG) forces in northern Syria at the expense of ISIL will result in reductions in the frequency of deliberate destructions of heritage ww in tes hÊ gaashÊ hÊ tens ø2 teq gaasfin h hÊ ga

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## **Incident Reports: Syria**

### **SHI 15 0106 UPDATE**

**Report Date:** July 5, 2015; August 13, 2015

**Site Name:** Daraa National Museum

**Date of Incident:** July 3, 2015; July 30, 2015; August 13, 2015

**Location:** Daraa, Daraa Governorate, Syria

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

**Site Date:** Modern

**Incident Summary:** Multiple combat related explosions have caused damage to the garden, building structure, and interior spaces of the museum. The building facade, windows, doors, and walls, as well as interior ceilings and furniture have been affected; artifacts in the museum grounds/garden have also likely been damaged.

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

On July 30, 2015, the Director General of Antiquities and Museums stated that the museum suffered new minor damage to the building and the outer wall of the garden.

On August 13, 2015, the Director General of Antiquities and Museums stated that the museum has suffered new minor damage to the eastern entrance of the Museum. Images show damage to the roof, ceiling and walls in areas that appear to be used for administrative purposes. Medium to large sized holes in walls and ceilings are present with corresponding collapse and damage to at least one drop ceiling. Debris from the damage is scattered on top of desks, shelves, and floors. On the exterior of the building, debris from the damage is scattered over an entrance stairway, ramp, and walkways. Large fragments of ancient stone sculptures that surround these exterior spaces are visible in photos and have likely been impacted.

**Pattern:** Combat related damage from explosives.

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

**Sources:**

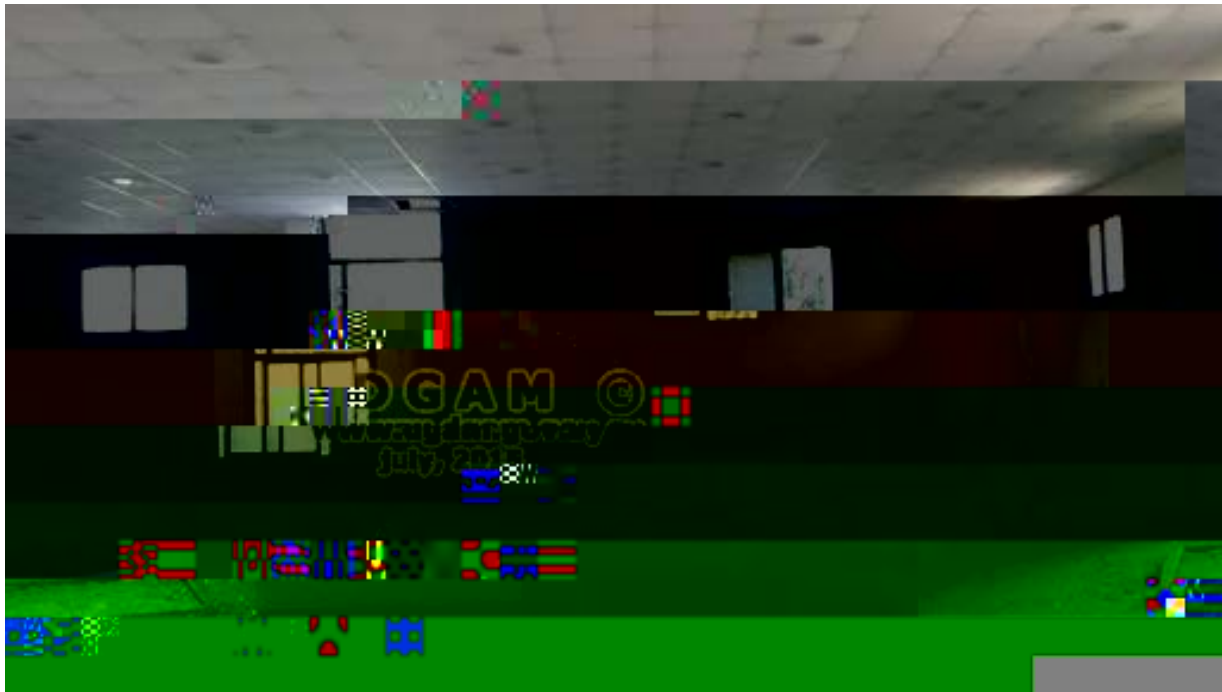
Online Reporting:

DGAM (July 3, 2015): <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1735>

DGAM (August 13, 2015): <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=1766>



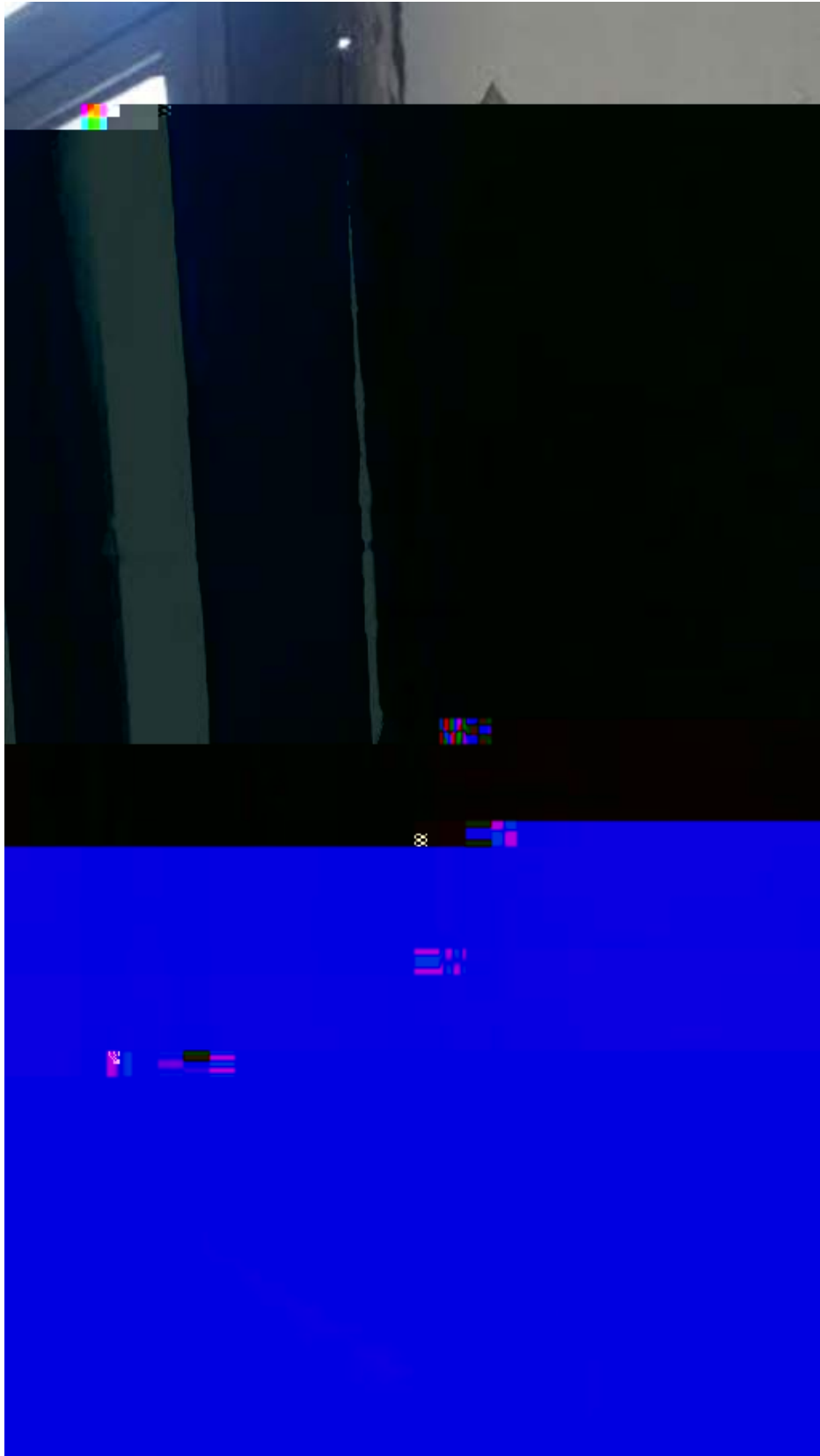
Museum of Daraa, interior damage (DGAM; July, 3, 2015)



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



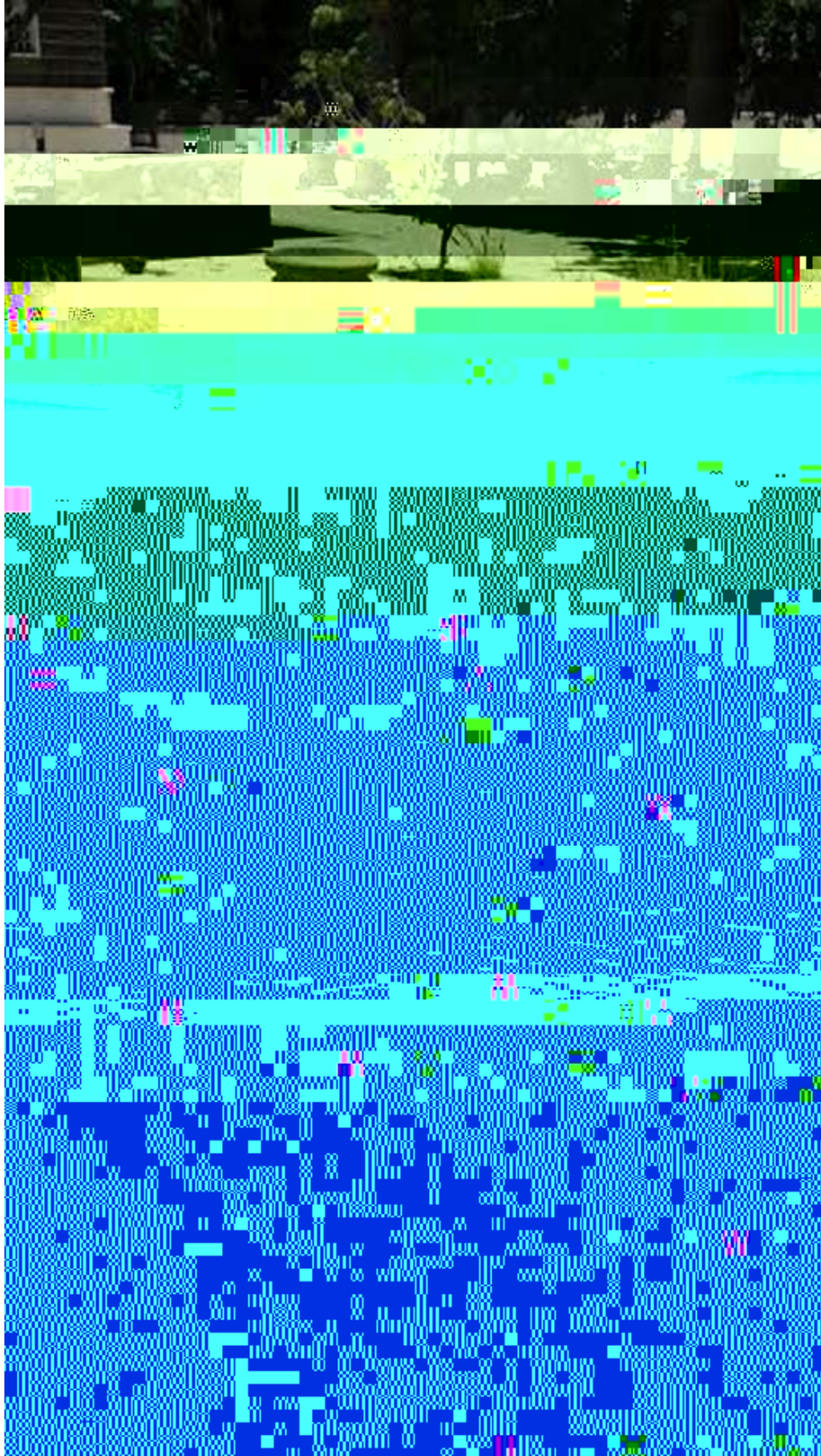
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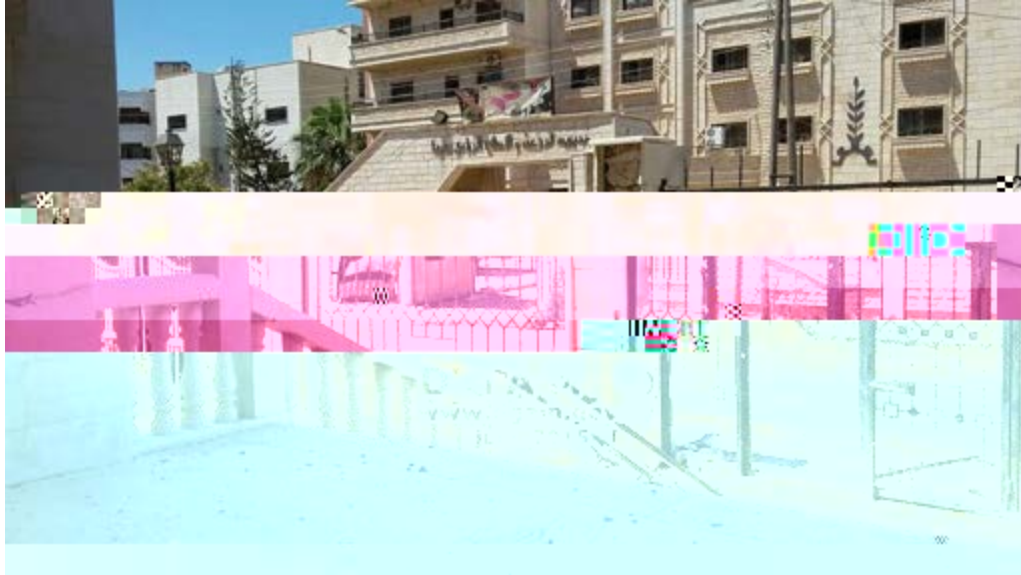


Museum of Daraa, exterior damage (DGAM; July, 3, 2015)

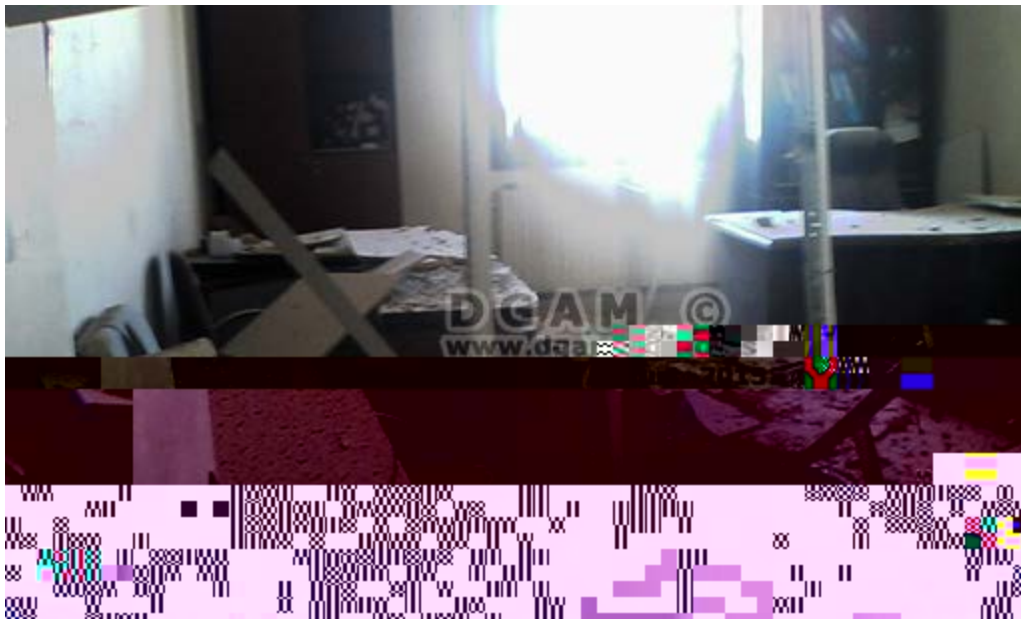


Museum of Daraa, exterior damage (DGAM, July, 3, 2015)





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

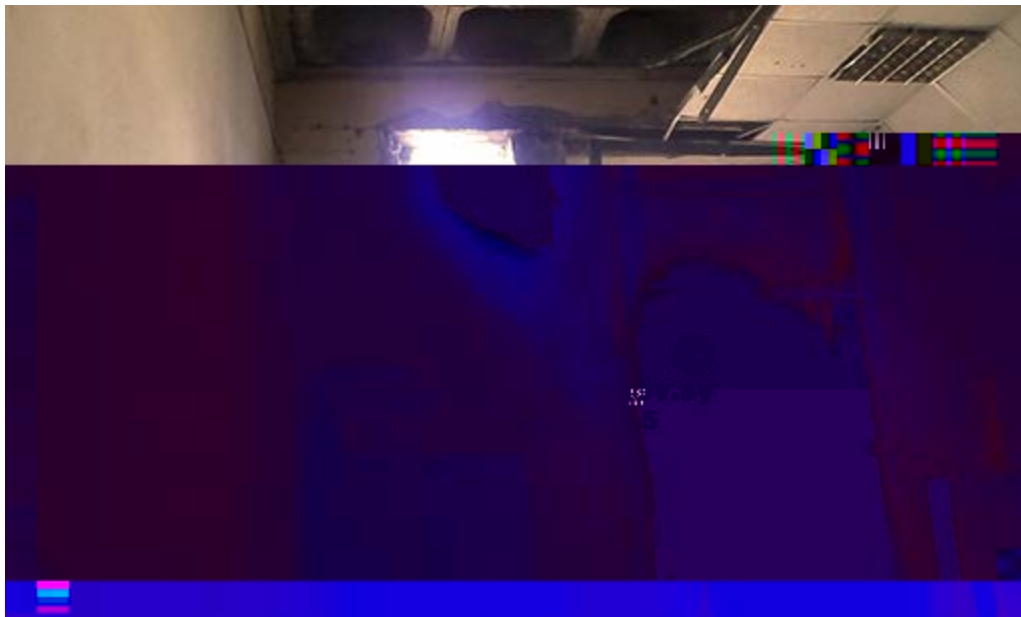


Museum of Daraa, interior damage (DGAM; August 12, 2015)

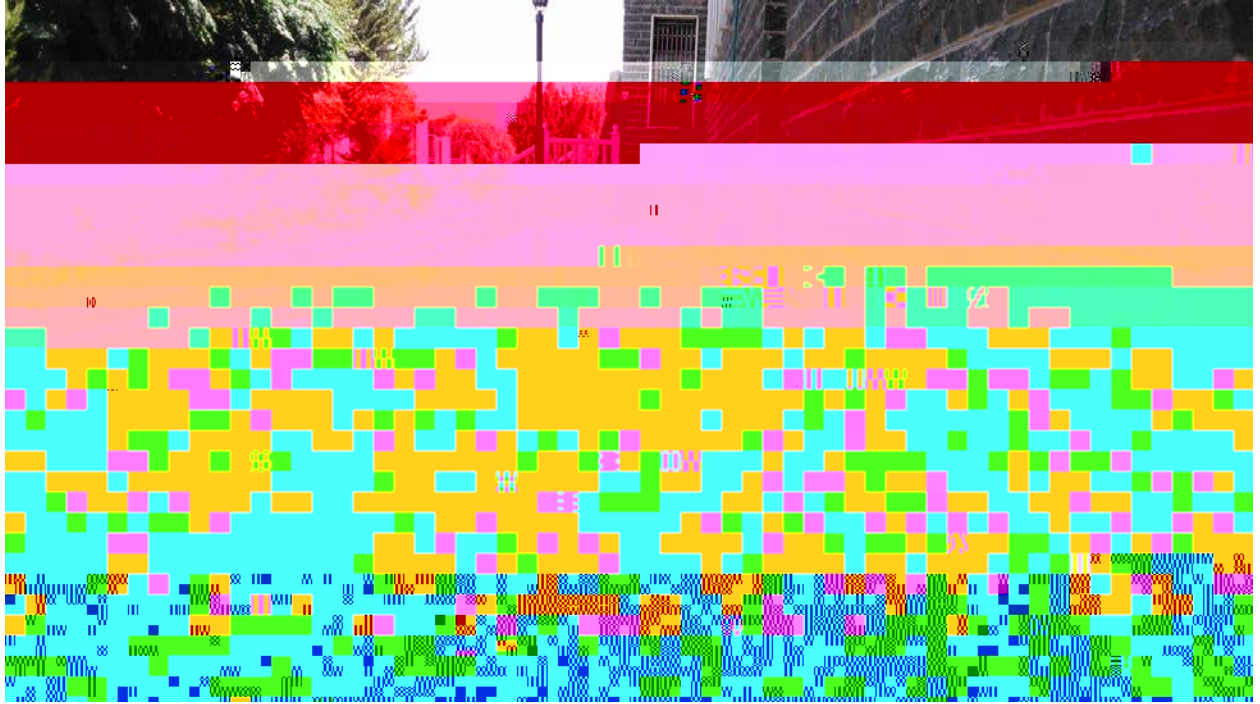




Museum of Daraa, interior damage (DGAM; August 12, 2015)



Museum of Daraa, interior damage (DGAM; August 12, 2015)



Museum of Daraa, exterior



Museum of Daraa, exterior damage (Anonymous source; August 12, 2015)



historic underground tunnels had been documented. Previously documented condition issues include unstable slope and significant erosion, which lessen the stability of the foundations of the nearby wall and towers. These issues have been compounded by lack of drainage within the citadel and now by explosions and associated vibrations. The recent explosive damage on July 11th appears to have caused an element of the flanking wall between the towers to have collapsed outwards. Some of the fresh losses along the upper areas of the walls and towers are to areas that had recently been restored with replacement stone blocks. Diagonal cracking patterns observed on the towers due to previous tilting and foundation issues will now be even more susceptible to• due to Di to

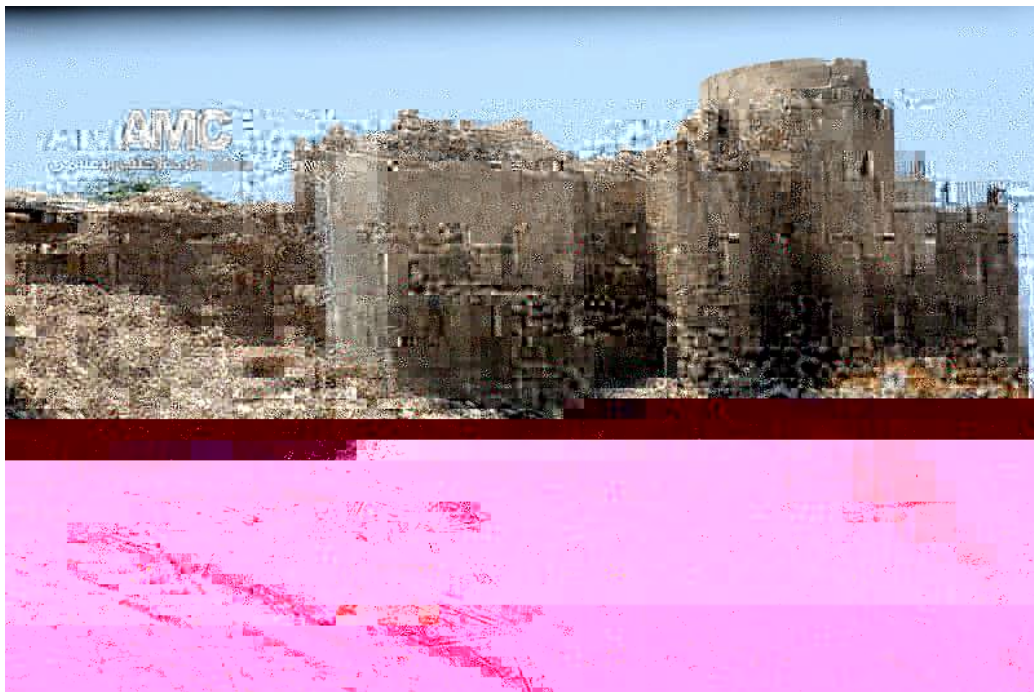
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ABC News:

[http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/tunnel explosion lightly damages syrias citadel a leppo 32393114](http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/tunnel-explosion-lightly-damages-syrias-citadel-a-leppo-32393114)



Aleppo Citadel, before and after (APSA; July 12, 2015)



Aleppo Citadel, after bombardment (APSA; July 12, 2015)





Aleppo Citadel, after bombardment (APSA; July 12, 2015)



Aleppo Citadel, after bombardment (APSA; July 12, 2015)



## SHI 15 0115

**Report Date:** August 18, 2015

**Site Name:** Damascus Citadel and Damascus National Museum

**Date of Incident:** August 12, 2015

**Location:** Damascus Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** The Damascus Citadel is a large medieval fortified palace/citadel, and is part of the Ancient City of Damascus World Heritage Site as of 1979. This citadel was fortified in 1076 by the Turkman Atsiz bin Uvak, but a citadel dating to the Hellenistic and Roman Periods may have also stood on this ground. The Citadel has been rebuilt multiple times throughout its history.

The Damascus National Museum was founded in 1919 at the Madrassah al Adiliyeh, and the current building was constructed in 1936 with wings being added in 1956 and 1975. The museum contains artifacts from across Syria, spanning from the Neolithic to Modern Ages.

**Site Date:** Citadel dates to 1076 BCE to Present; Museum built in 1936 with collections from the Neolithic to modern period.

**Incident Summary:** Rocket fire landed near the citadel and the front entrance to the museum with multiple casualties, including the DGAM deputy director responsible for mosaics, Qasim Abdullah Yahya.

**Incident Source and Description:** On August 12, 2015, Yahoo News reported that opposition forces had fired rockets into Damascus, killing 50 people and wounding many more. Rockets struck near the Citadel and the entrance to the National Museum. The DGAM deputy director responsible for mosaics, Qasim Abdullah Yahya, was also killed.<sup>25</sup>

**Pattern:** Military Activity: Explosives.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will attempt to confirm reports via in country sources and is continuing to monitor the condition of ancient cultural heritage in Syria and Iraq. Additionally, ASOR CHI offers its sincerest condolences to the family and colleagues of Mr. Qasim Abdullah Yahya.

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<sup>25</sup> <http://news.yahoo.com/deadly-rocket-fire-hits-syrian-capital-state-news-072329501.html> ; <http://sana.sy/en/?p=51212>

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

DGAM: <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1764>

Yahoo: [http://news.yahoo.com/deadly-rocket S](http://news.yahoo.com/deadly-rocket-S) .

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**SHI 15 0116**

**Report Date:** August 18, 2015

**Site Name:** Palmyra Museum

**Date of Incident:** August 18, 2015

**Location:** The Museum at Palmyra, built to house artifacts from Palmyra and the surrounding area, Tadmor, Homs Governorate, Syria

**Site Date:** Modern

**Incident Summary:** On August 18, 2015, damage was reported to the Palmyra Museum and Prof. Khalid al Asaad was executed by ISIL militants. A 1 Palmyra Ry: Palmy

**Incident Source and Description:** On July 29, 2015, the DGAM posted photos of damage at DGAM Palmyra p

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# Incident Reports: Iraq

IHI 15 0091

**Report Date:** August 11, 2015

**Site Name:** Shrines in Fallujah

**Date of Incident:** Sometime between mid July and mid August, 2015

**Location:** Fallujah, Al Anbar Governorate, Iraq, Azb&o — %B— • - á A midFallujahidFalluja betwee

**Date** 2015 fõ 0v A

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Unidentified shrines, Fallujah (JustPaste.It; August 10, 2015)



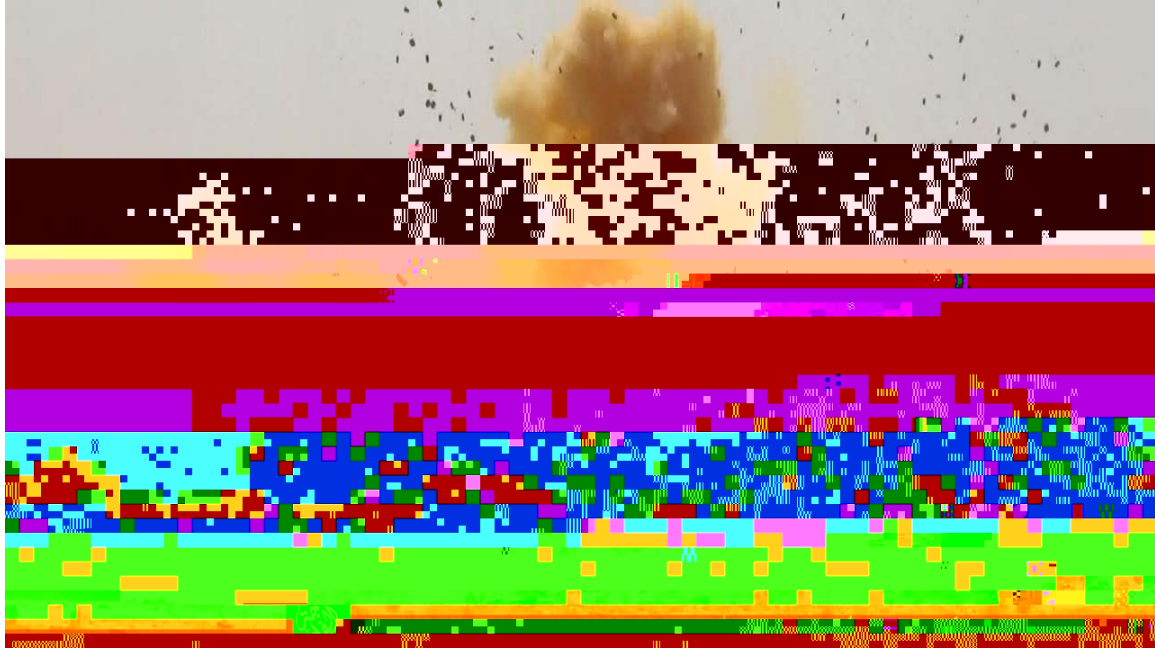
Unidentified shrines, Fallujah (JustPaste.It; August 10, 2015)











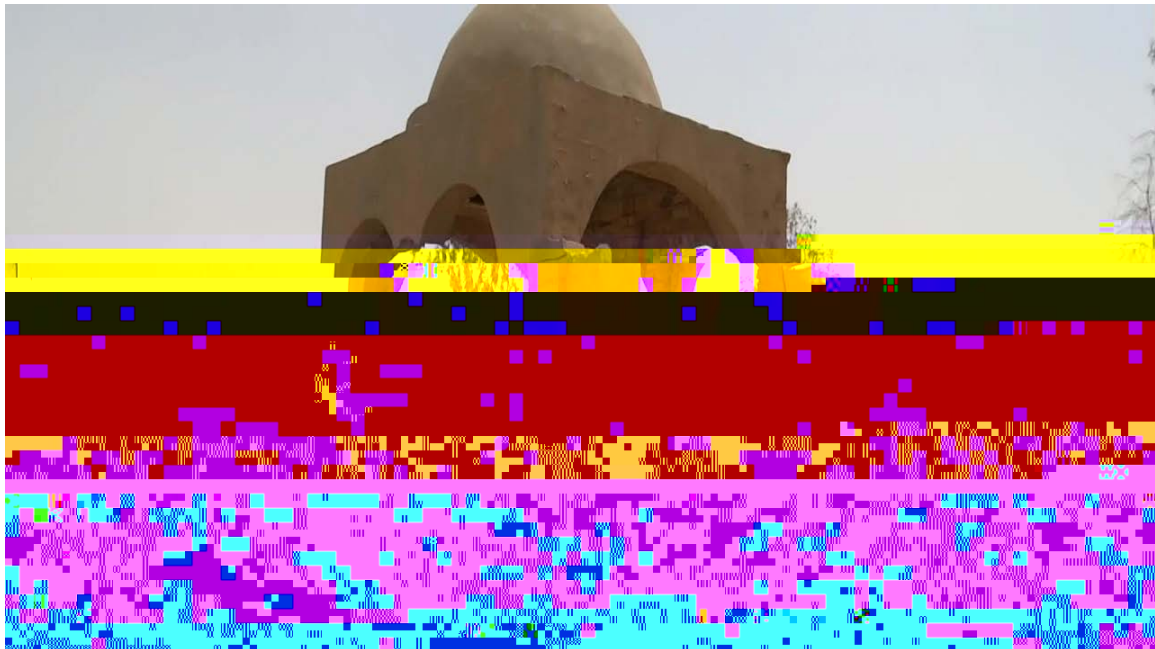
Unidentified shrines, Fallujah (JustPaste.It; August 10, 2015)



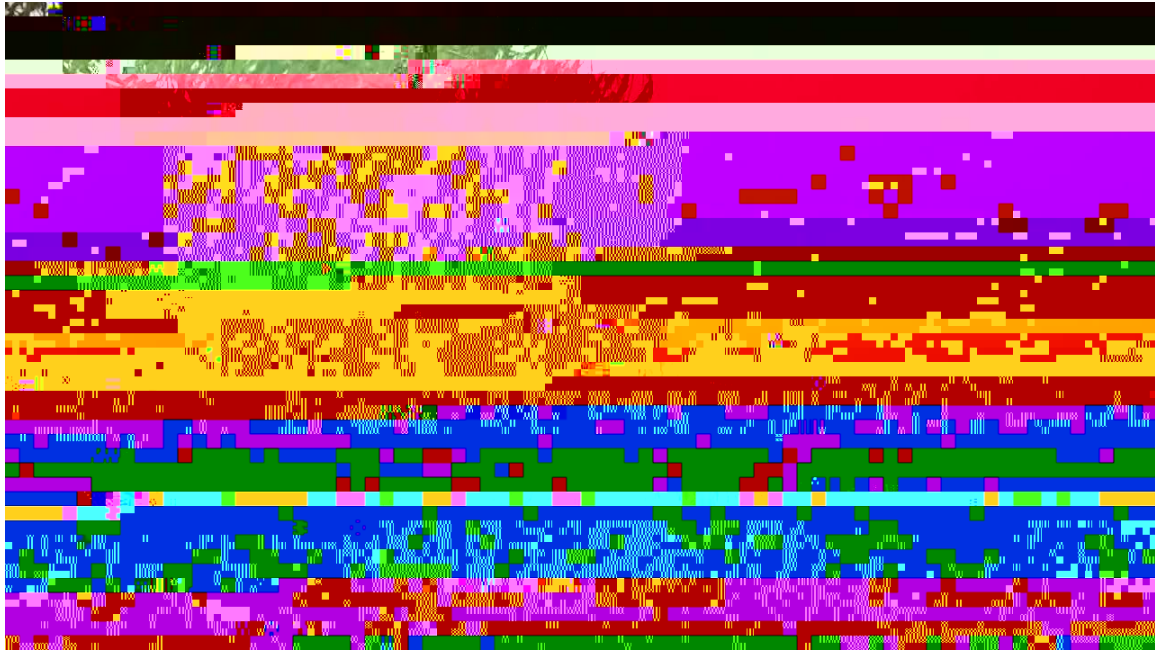
Unidentified shrines, Fallujah (JustPaste.It; August 10, 2015)



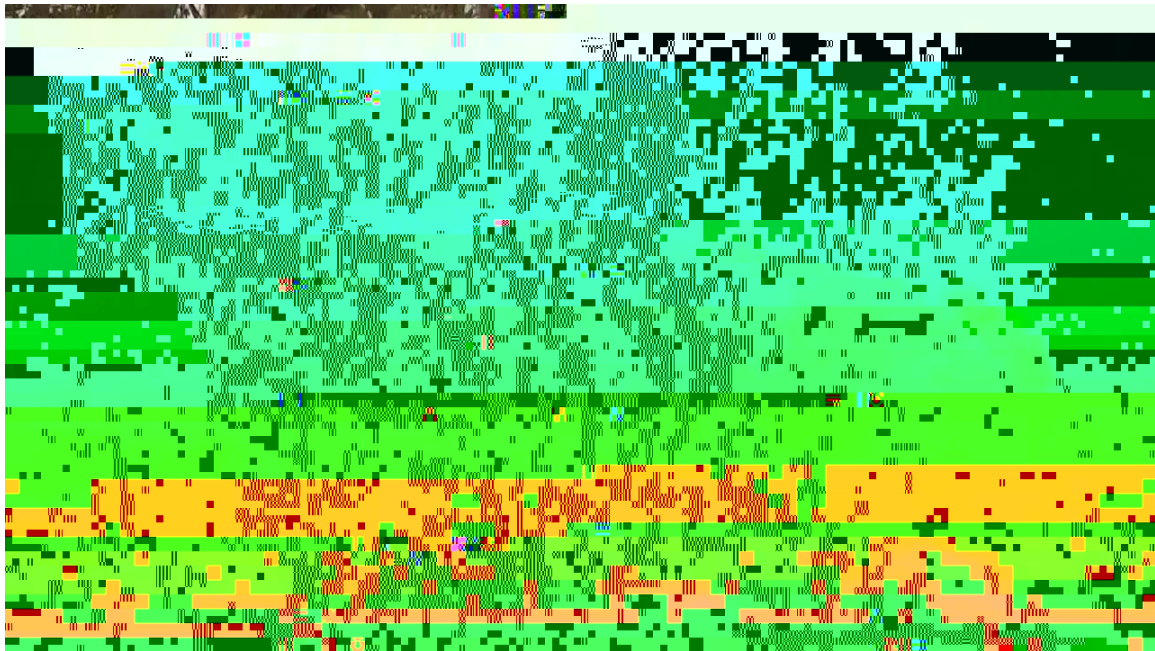
Unidentified shrines, Fallujah (JustPaste.It; August 10, 2015)



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Unidentified shrines, Fallujah (JustPaste.It; August 10, 2015)