

Damascus دمشق

Damascus Governorate





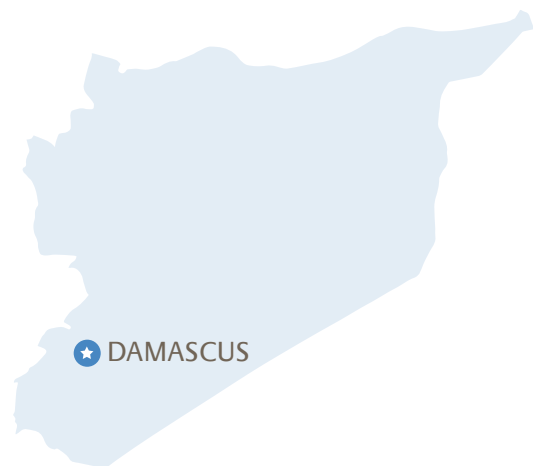
FIGURE 36. Overview of Damascus and locations where damage has occurred and is visible.



Site Description

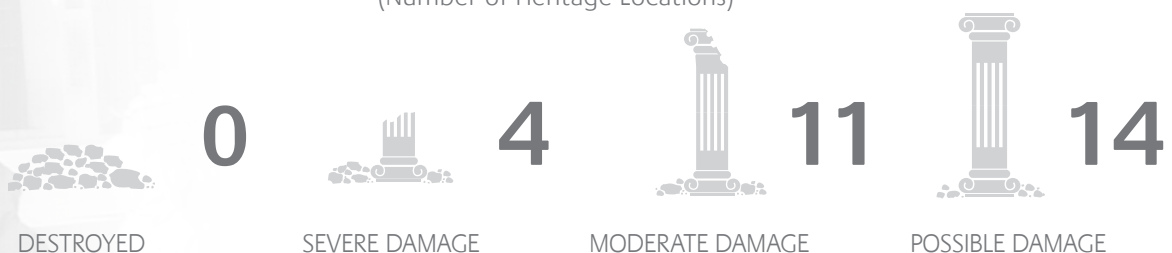
The area covers the UNESCO's World Heritage Property of the Ancient City of Damascus (inscribed in 1979 and added to the list of World Heritage in Danger by UNESCO in 2013).

Damascus is one of the (if not the) oldest continuously occupied cities in the world with 7,000 years of known occupation. It was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List as one of the oldest cities in the Arab region, with a flourishing craft industry and monuments dating from throughout its long history:



Damascus Damage Level

(Number of Heritage Locations)



“The city exhibits outstanding evidence of the civilizations which created it - Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine and Islamic. In particular, the Umayyad caliphate created Damascus as its capital, setting the scene for the city’s ongoing development as a living Muslim, Arab city, upon which each succeeding dynasty has left and continues to leave its mark. In spite of Islam’s prevailing influence, traces of earlier cultures, particularly the Roman and Byzantine, continue to be seen in the city.”⁽ⁱ⁾

Status Overview

This analysis examined 261 key buildings/locations within the World Heritage Property. These include the citadel, city walls and gates, 89 historic buildings, 156 religious buildings (mosques, madrassas, mausoleums, shrines and churches) and the souqs/markets (comprising 6 sections). Sites examined are listed in Annex 2.

Of these locations, 15 have sustained damage, a majority with moderate damage, and some severe, however none are completely destroyed. An additional 12 are reported as damaged or potentially damaged, but cannot be confirmed via satellite imagery.⁽ⁱⁱ⁾ For example, the mosaic façade of the Umayyad Mosque was struck by a shell, but this cannot be visually verified with satellite imagery.⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾ Three quarters of damaged or potentially damaged sites are located in or near the Old City. Due to the large number of sites observed as damaged (see figure 36), only a selection of key damaged sites will be discussed in this section. It should be noted that due to the limitations of the imagery available for Damascus, minor damage was difficult to identify in some cases. However, the damage assessment conducted here matches the levels of damage reported in other sources.^(iv)

DAMASCUS DAMAGE ASSESSMENT SUMMARY			DAMASCUS DAMAGE ASSESSMENT SUMMARY		
	LOCATION NAME	DAMAGE LEVEL		LOCATION NAME	DAMAGE LEVEL
1	Beit Al-Aqqad	Possible damage Possible structural damage visible on satellite imagery	13	Khan Al-Zait	Moderate damage
2	Beit Shirazi	Moderate damage	14	Khan Muridiye (Warehouse)	Possible damage Possible structural damage visible on satellite imagery
3	Citadel	Moderate damage	15	Khan Suleiman Pasha (Warehouse)	Possible damage Possible damage to the roof visible on satellite imagery
4	City Gate: Bab Al-Salaam	Possible damage Damage is visible on satellite imagery, but the size of the building is uncertain, so the damage may not affect it.	16	Madrassa Adiliye	Moderate damage
5	City Gate: Bab Sharqui	Possible damage Possible structural damage visible on satellite imagery	17	Madrassa Qahiriye	Possible damage Possible structural damage visible with satellite imagery
6	City Gate: Bab Tuma	Severe damage	18	Maktab Al-Sabuniye	Possible damage
7	Hadith Al-Qalanisiye	Possible damage Possible structural damage visible on satellite imagery	19	Maristan Al-Qaimaniye	Severe damage
8	Hammam Bakri (Public Bath)	Moderate damage	20	Martyr Zidane Cultural Center	Moderate damage
9	Hammam Khanji (Public Bath)	Moderate damage	21	Mosque Khankiye	Severe damage
10	Hammam Nawfara (Public Bath)	Moderate damage	22	Mosque of Hisham	Moderate damage
11	Hijaz Railway Terminus	Possible damage Damage reported but not visible on satellite imagery [1]	23	Mosque of Manjak	Moderate damage
12	Khan Al-Haramain (Warehouse)	Moderate damage	24	Mosque Samadiye	Moderate damage
			25	Suq Midhat Pasha, Market	Possible damage Imagery shows that the buildings around it have been severely damaged. Damage to this building was not visible, but is possible

NOTE

This report provides a detailed analysis of significant changes to the cultural heritage of this site resulting from the ongoing conflict in Syria. Pleiades, World View 1 and 2 satellite imagery acquired on 04 June 2010, 27 August 2014 and 03 November 2014 was used for this report.

[1] Shelling damage reported in a BBC news article, November 2013 [6].

THE CHRISTIAN QUARTER: BAB TOUMA AND BAB SHARQI

Description

This section of the Old City contains many ancient and important religious buildings. For example, the street that runs through the centre of this area—Straight Street—has been a major east-west thoroughfare since the Hellenistic period (333 - 64 BC). Bab Sharqi is one of the original Roman gates and is the oldest known monument in Damascus (approximately 2000 years old). The Bab Touma gate is a 1227 AD reconstruction of the Roman original. This area also contains the Chapel of Ananias, reputed to be the Biblical house Saul stayed in after God blinded him on the road to Damascus.

Damage Assessment

Imagery analysis indicates the Bab Sharqi gate has potentially sustained damage, perhaps resulting from a reported explosion^(v) that affected the Armenian Orthodox Church—the neighbouring building—but damage to that building was not detectable via the satellite imagery. In addition, the Bab Touma gate has sustained severe structural damage—presumably from the explosions reported in this area.^(vi) The south-eastern part of the roof is gone, and rubble, indicative of major structural damage, is visible around it. Damage has also been reported at several other sites (for example, the Greek Orthodox Church), but due to the limitations of the imagery, not much damage was visible in this neighbourhood. It is possible the damage is focused primarily on the façades of buildings or is mostly internal damage.

MADRASA ADILIYE

Description

This building dates back to the twelfth through thirteenth century AD and has particularly fine architecture. It houses the burial of Salah El-Din's brother.

Damage Assessment

Imagery analysis has detected damage to a small section of the eastern part of the roof, potentially caused by shelling reported on 05 May 2014.^(vii) Additional damage was reported to the façade, but cannot be confirmed via imagery.^(viii)

DAMASCUS CITADEL

Description

A vast Islamic fortress, largely dating back to the eleventh century AD, heavily used during the Turkish, French and independence periods.

Damage Assessment

Imagery analysis detected minor impact damage in the centre of the courtyard and to the north-facing side of the south wall. Minor damage has also been reported to the western façade of the eastern gate and the northern wall of the Royal Hall,^(ix) however, no damage was observable in the imagery, so may likely be isolated to the façade and interior of the structure.



Damage to Damascus Citadel/Photo: Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums DGAM, 2013.



Car bombing at the entrance of the Damascus Citadel/ Photo: European Press Photo Agency; Syrian Arab News Agency.

(i) UNESCO Ancient City of Damascus World Heritage Inscription. Available at: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/20>

(ii) These are listed in the Annex

(iii) UNESCO State of Conservation Report, 38th Session [1]. Available at: <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/2014/whc14-38com-7A-Add-en.pdf>

(iv) UNESCO State of Conservation Report, 38th Session [1]. Available at: <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/2014/whc14-38com-7A-Add-en.pdf>

(v) UNESCO State of Conservation Report, 38th Session [1]. Available at: <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/2014/whc14-38com-7A-Add-en.pdf>

(vi) For example (in addition to the State of Conservation report), news reports of bombings in the area from: the BBC, 27 June 2013 [2]; the LA Times, 16 February 2013 [3]; and The Statesman, 01 December 2012 [4]. Other are available.

Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-23086213>, <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/middleeast/la-fg-damascus-atmosphere-20130216.0.6990340.story>, and <http://www.statesman.com/news/news/opinion/syrias-rich-cultural-treasures-become-casualty-of-ntGkr/>

(vii) Report on the Facebook page of the group Eyes on Heritage on 05 May 2014 [5]. Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/eyesonheritage>

(viii) UNESCO State of Conservation Report, 38th Session [1]. Available at: <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/2014/whc14-38com-7A-Add-en.pdf>

(ix) UNESCO State of Conservation Report, 38th Session [1]. Available at: <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/2014/whc14-38com-7A-Add-en.pdf>