



**Republic of Iraq**  
**Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Antiquities**  
**State Board of Antiquities & Heritage**  
**International Organizations Department**  
**State of Conservation report**  
**Samarra**

**In response to the extended 44<sup>th</sup> session of the Committee,  
Fuzhou, China 2021**

**Decision 44 COM 7A.8**

**By**

**Saba S. Omari**

**Sufian J. Muhammed**

**Intl. Organizations Department**

**Samarra WH Site**

**Head**

**Manager**

**Baghdad**

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**FORMAT FOR THE SUBMISSION OF  
STATE OF CONSERVATION REPORTS  
BY THE STATES PARTIES**

**Name of property (State(s) Party(ies)) (Identification number)**

**Samarra site**

Samarra ID: 276

ID	Name & Location▼	State Party	Coordinates	Property	Buffer Zone
276rev-006	Qubbat al-Sulaibiyya	Iraq	N34 13 39.54 E43 47 56.09	0.6 ha	31,414 ha
276rev-002	Samarra Centre Zone	Iraq	N34 13 34.59 E43 52 57.26	1,265 ha	
276rev-001	Samarra North Zone - al-Mutawakkiliyya	Iraq	N34 20 27.56 E43 49 24.76	4,478 ha	
276rev-003	Samarra South Zone	Iraq	N34 7 21.42 E43 55 50.23	8,953 ha	
276rev-008	Tell Umm al-Sakhr	Iraq	N34 15 59.82 E43 48 6.33	2 ha	
276rev-010	al-Huwaysilat Lower	Iraq	N34 17 56.90 E43 47 21.64	4 ha	
276rev-009	al-Huwaysilat Upper	Iraq	N34 17 40.06 E43 47 19.81	5 ha	
276rev-004	al-Istablāt	Iraq	N34 4 49.04 E43 54 56.12	155 ha	
276rev-007	al-Ma'shuq	Iraq	N34 14 31.14 E43 48 34.02	20 ha	
276rev-005	al-Quwayr	Iraq	N34 13 55.63 E43 50 23.53	11 ha	

**Samarra WH site Information**  
**Samarra Township, Salah al-Din Governorate**  
**Coordinates N34 20 27.562 E43 49 24.755**  
**Date of Inscription: 2007**  
**Criteria: (ii)(iii)(iv)**  
**Property: 15,058 ha**  
**Buffer zone: 31,414 ha**  
**Ref: 276rev**  
**Region: ARB**  
**Country: IQ**  
**Type: C**

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## **1- Executive Summary**

This report is submitted in response to the Committee Decision (44 COM 7A .8) in its 44<sup>th</sup> extended session (Fuzhou, 2021), which requests the State Party to submit a State of Conservation Report.

In this report, we will review the details of the property (Samarra) and the sections that have been encroached upon within Samarra site. We will also mention the corrective measures implementation details in response to the recommendations and requests given in decision (44 COM 7A.8) together with the legal measures taken by the Iraqi government to stop the encroachments and urban sprawl, in accordance with the Iraqi Antiquities Law N. 55 in 2002.

Samarra was inscribed on the list in danger for reasons related to conflict and lack of security that affected the property in general. With the improvement of the security situation, hopefully there will be another decision with the help of the UNESCO to remove Samarra from the List in Danger. Especially, if we know that the Outstanding Universal Values of Samarra are still preserved and so its integrity and authenticity.

The proposed simple conservation and management plan, which will be the beginning of a long term one, is of great importance, as despite of the lack of funding, we are able to prepare a good one.

### **2. Response to the Decision of the Committee**

[Note: The State(s) Party(ies) is/are requested to address the most recent Decision of the Committee for this property, paragraph by paragraph.]

If the property is inscribed on the List of Danger, please provide detailed information on the following:

a) Progress achieved in implementing the corrective measures adopted by the Committee

[Note: please address each corrective measure individually, providing factual information, including exact dates, figures, etc.]

If needed, please describe the success factors or difficulties in implementing each of the corrective measures identified

b) Is the timeframe for implementing the corrective measures suitable? If not, please propose an alternative timeframe and an explanation why this alternative timeframe is required.

c) Progress achieved towards the desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of Danger (DSOCR)

## **2- Response to the Committee Decision (44 COM 7A.8)**

**Decision: 44 COM 7A.8**

**The Committee,**

- 1. Having examined Document WHC/21/44.COM/7A,**
- 2. Recalling Decisions 43 COM 7A.20 and 44 COM 7A.21, adopted at its 43rd session (Baku, 2019),**
- 3. Taking into account Decision 44 COM 7A.9, on the properties of Iraq,**
- 4. Expresses again its concern about the condition of the property and the lack comprehensive information on its state of conservation, and reiterates its request to the State Party to submit documentation of the damage done to the property as a whole and its affected monuments, for review by the Centre and the Advisory Bodies;**
- 5. Also reiterates its request to the State Party that a full and comprehensive assessment be carried out as soon as security conditions permit and before any remedial actions are undertaken, with the aim of identifying any necessary emergency stabilization work and establishing a road map for longer-term conservation and management actions;**
- 6. Further reiterates its previous request that interventions be addressed within the framework of the overall assessment of damage and risks and a comprehensive conservation plan prepared in full consultation with the Centre and the Advisory Bodies;**
- 7. Reminds the State Party to submit to the Centre, for evaluation by the Advisory Bodies, detailed information of any future works that may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, in conformity with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines;**
- 8. Requests the State Party to invite a joint Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission, once security conditions permit, to assist in assessing**

damage at the property, preparatory to the development of a comprehensive conservation plan, the identification of corrective measures, and the development of a Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of in Danger (DSOCR);

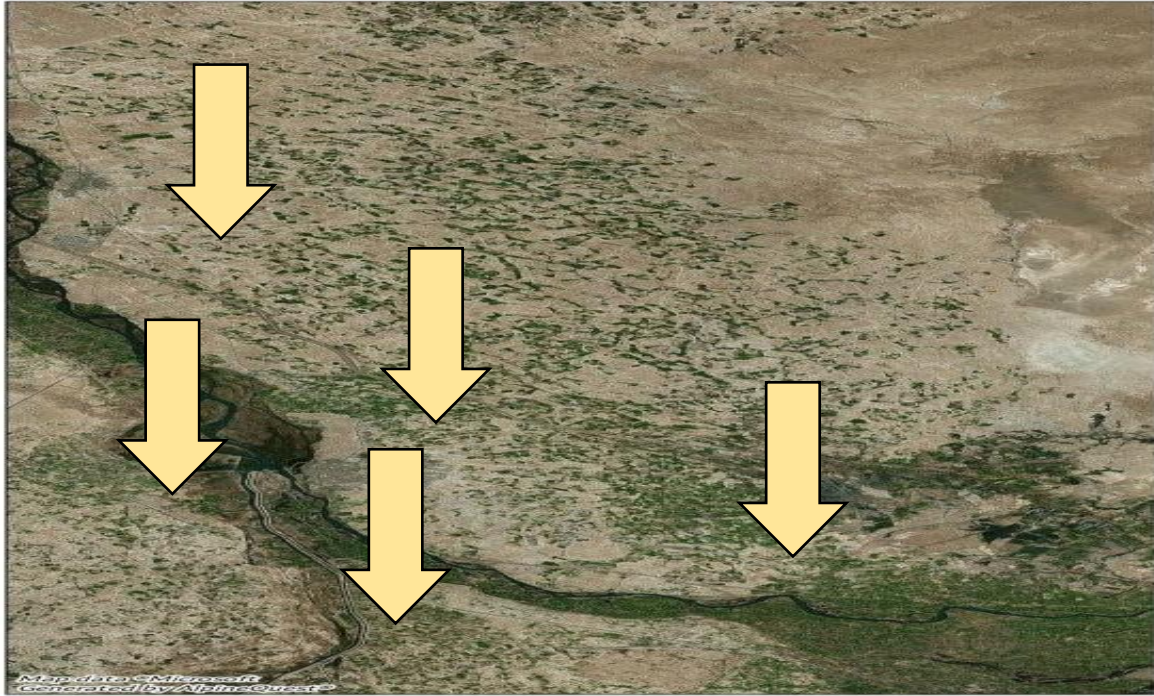
**9. Reiterates its appeal to all States Parties to cooperate in the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural heritage coming from Iraq as per the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 2199 of February 2015, 2253 of December 2015 and 2347 of March 2017;**

**10. Calls again on all States Parties to support emergency safeguarding measures, including through the UNESCO Heritage Emergency Fund;**

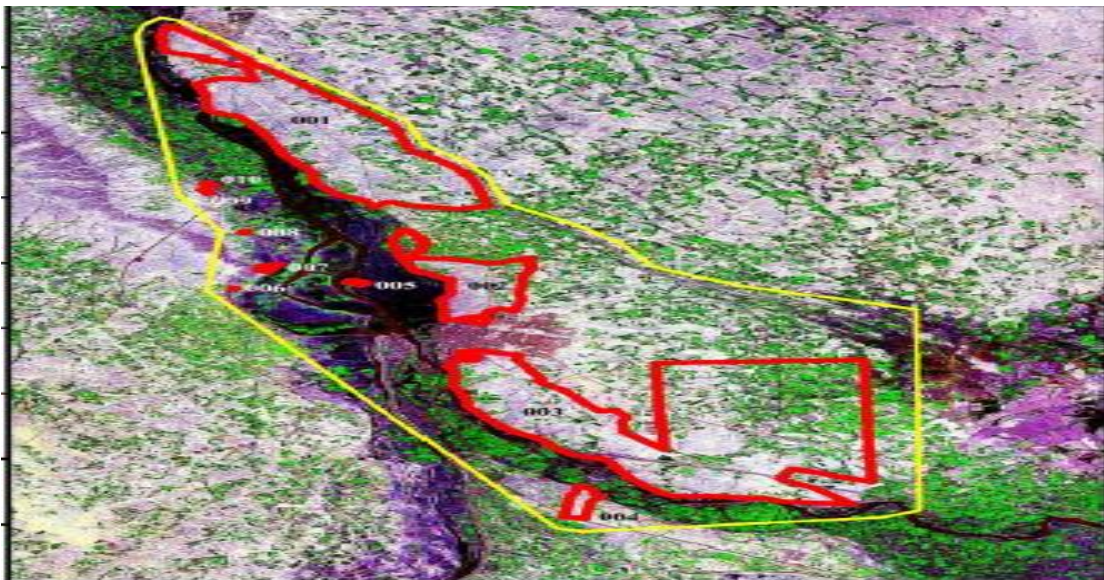
**11. Also requests the State Party to submit to the Centre, by 1 February 2022, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the Committee at its 45th session;**

**12. Decides to retain Samarra Archaeological City (Iraq) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.**

## Samarra Site



**Samarra site boundaries**



**Plan illustrates Samarra WH site Sections**

## Samarra Site

The site is divided into sections, each of which includes a group of covered and uncovered (Tells/hills) archaeological features, as follows: -

Series	Section Name	Number
1.	Umm al-Talaib	1
2.	Alkala'a	4
3.	Qadiriya	6
4.	Samarra Centre Zone	14
5.	Tell al-Quwayr	17
6.	Banat Alhasan	21
7.	al-Jubairiya	22
8.	al-qadisiya	23
9.	Taqtaq	24
10.	Alarmoshia	25
11.	Tell al-Alij	26
12.	Hawi Albisat	27
13.	Ashnas	29
14.	Alzangour	30
15.	Abo Dulaf	31
16.	Alrafee'a	37

### Samarra Site Sections:

Samarra property includes a large number of archaeological sites and archaeological Tells approximately 40, the most prominent of which are distributed according to the sections as in the following table: -

Series	Property and archaeological hills (Tells)	Section
1.	Great Mosque	14/ Aldakhil
2.	al-Isba'ain	14/ Aldakhil
3.	Abu Dulaf Mosque	31/ Abu Dulaf
4.	Al-Ja'faria Palace	31/ Abu Dulaf
5.	Ashnas Wall (Sur Ashnas)	29/ Ashnas
6.	Shaikh Wali Wall (Sur Shaikh Wali)	29/ Ashnas
7.	Tell Tokan	29/ Ashnas
8.	Caliphal Palace (Qasr Alkhalifa)	27/ Hawi Albisat



## Samarra Site

9.	Alzakharif Palace	27/ Hawi Albisat
10.	Madaq Altabul Palace A-B-C-	27/ Hawi Albisat
11.	Esa Wall (Sur Esa)	27/ Hawi Albisat
12.	Tell al-Alij	26/ Tell Al-alij
13.	Tell al-Khazaf	20/Zarir
14.	Tell Aswad	20/Zarir
15.	Tell Shaykh Mohammed	20/Zarir
16.	Tell al-Aith	20/Zarir
17.	Archaeological Tells and monuments adjacent to the river	30/Zangour
18.	Tell al-Suwwân	22/ Al-Jubairiya
19.	al-Qa'im Minaret (Burj al-Qâ'im)	22/ Al-Jubairiya
20.	al-Manqur palace (Balkuwara)	22/ Al-Jubairiya
21.	al-Jubairiya Wall (Sur Al-Jubairiya)	22/ Al-Jubairiya
22.	Almateera Tells and monuments	22/ Al-Jubairiya
23.	Hayr al-Wohoosh	22/ Al-Jubairiya
24.	Octagonal Fort al-Qadisiyyah	23/ Qadisiyyah
25.	Tell Al-Musharrahahat	23/ Qadisiyyah
26.	Tell Alora	18/Tell Alora
27.	Tell al-Quwayr	17/Tell al-Quwayr
28.	Alharoni Palace	5/ Al- al-Quwayr
29.	Tell Masoud	1/Um Altalaeb
30.	Tell Al-Bandari	2/ alraga wa Ma'ejil
31.	Al-Istablat	1/Um Altalaeb
32.	Al-Ma'shuq Palace	6/ Al-Qadriya
33.	Qubbat al-Sulaibiyya	6/ Al-Qadriya
34.	Al-Huwaysilat (Qasr al-Juss)	7/Sumoom
35.	Tell Muhajir	8/ Mukashifa
36.	Tell Jama'an	8/ Mukashifa
37.	Tell Alwazir	27/ Hawi Albisat
38.	Bab Alwastani	22/ Al-Jubairiya
39.	Complex of al-Mutawakkiliyya Palaces	31/ Abu Dulaf+30/Zangour
40.	Khan Alsa'ewiah	16/ Alsa'ewiah

4. Expresses again its concern about the condition of the property and the lack of comprehensive information on its state of conservation, and reiterates its request to the State Party to submit documentation of the damage done to the property as a whole and its affected monuments, for review by the Centre and the Advisory Bodies;

5. Also reiterates its request to the State Party that a full and comprehensive assessment be carried out as soon as security conditions permit and before any remedial actions are undertaken, with the aim of identifying any necessary emergency stabilization work and establishing a road map for longer-term conservation and management actions;

## **Initial assessments and review of potential risks**

### **Status of the current situation of Samarra WH site sections:**

The archaeological sections that form Samarra WH site subjected to vandalism and bulldozing through the last years of conflict together with the global crisis of Covid 19 pandemic as follows:

#### **A. Vandalism**

A bombing car blast used by terrorists close to (Ashnas Wall) in Arabic (Sur Ashnas), on February 28, 2015, caused a great damage to the ancient wall (figure 1).

#### **B. Bulldozing:**

Sections affected by bulldozing:

- 1- 22/ Al-Jubairiya district, where a large land was bulldozed and converted into residential area.
- 2- Another bulldozing took place in the 23rd district of al-Qadisiyyah Octagonal Fort.
- 3- Inside al-Manqur Palace (Image 5).
- 4- Part of the outer wall in the southwest side of Sur Esa (figure 6).
- 5- 30/Zangour (Archaeological Tells and monuments adjacent to the river).
- 6- Inside and outside the Mutawakiliya Palaces complex.
- 7- Al-Isba'ain archaeological site (figure 2,3,3).
- 8- Al-Istablat site, bulldozing carried out by farmers (figure 7).

**The good news is that all these encroachments and bulldozing acts that increased through the last 5 years, as a result of instable security condition, conflicts and finally Covid 19 pandemic, were stopped with the help of the Iraqi government and the security forces. We are of the opinion that conservation interventions can now be considered, due to the current encouraging security situation. We are ready to request a UNESCO mission to conduct damage assessments, conservation works in addition to identifying corrective measures.**

### **Samarra Excavations:**

#### **1. Excavations inside Samarra site**

No excavations were carried out inside Samarra Site, as the last excavation took place in 2009 and was on the annex building of the archaeological house of decorations (Alzakharif Palace), preceded by the excavation of the rest house of the Great Mosque (Al-Malwiya imam) (religious man), in 2002. These were the last activities on Samarra site.

#### **2. Sections that need exploration**

a-The central wall, which is located in 22 al-Jubairiya section, needs an urgent salvage excavation due to the large number of encroachments upon the perimeter of the Tell and on the Tell itself (Image 8).

b- Al-Isba'ain archaeological site needs an urgent salvage excavation due to the large number of encroachment upon it (Image 9)

c- One of the most prominent archaeological spot of Samarra Site is Tell al-Suwwân, which its half excavated areas, are in need of extensive excavation work, knowing that the last excavation work in the site back to the second half of the last century.

d-The area extending to the south of the Caliphal Palace (Qasr Alkhalifa), with an estimate area of 2500 m and a width exceeding 2 km, is in need of excavations for that it includes a group of important palaces and ancient buildings. Being a major destination for tourists, the Great Mosque (Al Malwiya) with its annexes are in need to continue excavations and so the rest of the Caliphal Palace annexes. More Samarra sections like Tell Toukan, Ashnas Wall (Sur Ashnas), Shaikh Wali Wall (Sur Shaikh Wali), Abu Dulaf Mosque, Al-Ja'faria Palace are in need of excavations for many reasons like revealing facts, studying, knowing the historical period ...etc. (Image 9-10).

#### **Restoration works inside Samarra site**

The restoration work constitutes a difficult challenge in such an important archaeological city. Samarra endured lack of security and stability that affected all

its aspects. Therefore, for years, there were no restoration, conservation and preservation work carried out in Samarra despite the vital need to do so.

### **Samarra monuments in need of urgent restoration:**

#### **1-The ancient Palace of Al-Baraka, part of the Caliphal Palace (Qasr Alkhalifa)**

A number of factors contributed in the deterioration and damage of the palace features such as relative humidity, rain water, climate change, temperature extremes. As a result, the palace walls cracked at their weakest stress points. Their four Iwans severely battered, they will collapse if not urgently figure out a solution.

#### **2- Abu Dulaf Mosque**

The archaeological site is in need of comprehensive restoration and conservation. A number of its parts have affected by environmental factors and water pooling that damaged the mosque supporting elements and wall's foundations, through the last years.

### **The future restorations**

After announcing Samarra as (the Capital of Islamic Civilization), by the Iraqi government, two sites were chosen as priorities on the list of restoration and rehabilitation, namely the Great Samarra Mosque and the Caliphal Archaeological Palace. It will include fencing off the two sites to protect them from tampering, building tourists lounge and finally completing the Great Mosque restoration and conservation work back to 2013 which was not completed due to the terrorist operations that took place at that time.

### **Tourism- Samarra Site**

Through the last two years, Samarra witnessed influx in local and international tourism in an unprecedented way, though the affection of Covid 19 lockdown that paralyzed the entire life aspects and so the tourism in Iraq comprising Samarra archaeological site.

## **Progress made in implementing corrective measures**

Due to the security situation stability, we have taken some corrective measures, but they were insufficient. Despite that, we will be able to do more and more in the future with UNESCO and ICOMOS help.

### **Al-Malwiya Mosque - Samarra Site**

As a site protective measure funded locally by Samarra Governorate Drainage System project as a donation to the site due to its importance, approved by the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage, six months ago al- Malwiya Mosque was fenced off taking into consideration the site prohibited area.

### **The need for a comprehensive conservation plan**

Samarra Site conservation plan should address threats to the archaeological heritage, the concept of heritage values and a methodology for the conservation and management of archaeological sites. Samarra site just like the archaeological sites around the world are threatened by population growth, development, urbanization, pollution, tourism, vandalism and looting. Site management planning emerged as a critical element not only for the conservation of this heritage, but also to address issues such as tourism and sustainable development.

### **The conservation plan can be summarized as follows:**

1. Forming an integrated work team comprises experts, specialists in different aspects from the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage, in cooperation with the UNESCO.
2. Conducting a field research.
3. Gathering and organizing as many in –situ data as possible of Samarra WH site.
4. Conducting a site comprehensive documentation as much as possible especially Photographic.
5. Determining the site rehabilitation priorities.
6. The use of appropriate conservation materials and techniques, to preserve the site condition as it was found, as well as a better understanding of the site original condition and in rare cases rebuild where things have fallen

over. The basic goal is simply as afore mentioned, to preserve its authenticity and the way it was found.

7. Preparing an awareness campaign aiming at knowing the benefit of Samarra as a Site.
8. Protecting the site from vibration caused by vehicles movement. It is necessary to build a parking space in a far location.
9. The plan should adhere to the principle of minimal intervention.
10. Preparing an awareness campaign aiming at knowing the benefit of Samarra as a Site.
11. Consultations with the security authorities to facilitate and support the work plan.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Continue the related authorities plan to remove encroachment upon Samarra site.
2. As a site protective measure, we stress on the need to fence in the sections that form Samarra site regardless whether they are excavated or unexcavated.
3. Enhance cooperation with the world institutions by increasing archaeological co expeditions, taking into consideration that most of the archaeological areas inside or outside Samarra have not been yet totally or partially excavated since long time before.
4. Working on establishing an archaeological site museum or rehabilitating the old one, which constitutes one of the main site requirements, due to its importance and the large number of artifacts.
5. Working on the conservation and restoration of the archaeological sites that suffer severe damage as a result of the natural factors that affected them throughout the previous periods, especially the House of Decorations (Alzakharif Palace), which is considered one of the most important archaeological section within the site, the house of the Altabul Palace A-B-C- (Madaq Altabul Palace A-B-C-), Bab al-Amma belonging to the Caliphate Palace, and the archaeological Abu Dulaf Mosque.

Reiterates its appeal to all States Parties to cooperate in the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural heritage coming from Iraq as per the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 2199 of February 2015, 2253 of December 2015 and 2347 of March 2017;

**Iraq status in regards to the second protocol 1999 (Hague convention 1954):**

1- The Iraqi parliament voted on the law of Iraq's ratification to the Second Protocol 1999 - Hague Convention on 11-7-2020, The law was published in the official Gazette of Iraq (Al-Waqai Al-Iraqiya), No. 4619 on 1/3/2021.

**2- Resolution No. 19**

Based on what was approved by the Iraqi Council of Representatives in accordance with the provisions of Clause (First) of Article (61) and Clause Two of Article (73) of the Constitution.

On December 16, 2020, the President of the Republic decided to issue the following law:

No. (21) year 2020.

3- Only one step left which is to sign and seal a ratification instrument to be deposited with the Director-General of UNESCO, for three months, thus Iraq becomes a full party to the Convention.

**Iraq status in regards to (UNIDROIT) 1995**

The General Secretariat of the Iraqi Council of Ministers announced that the Council decided, in its forty-seventh regular session, held on 12/11/2013, to approve a draft law on the ratification of the Republic of Iraq to the Convention of the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT)1995, regarding stolen or illegally exported cultural property that has entered into force On 1/7/1998, and referred it to the Council of Representatives based on the provisions of Articles (61/First Clause) and (80/Second Clause) of the Constitution.

Republic of Iraq ratification law to the Convention of the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT)-1995, regarding stolen or illegally exported cultural property No. (2) of 2021, The law was published in the official Gazette of Iraq (Al-Waqai Al-Iraqiya), No. (4630) on 5/10/2021.

## Samarra Site

### Iraqi recovered artifacts (2019-2020-2021)

S. number	recovered artifacts number	Country returning artifacts	year
1	1407	Jordan	2019
2	9	Britain	2019
3	106( pottery fragments)	Japan	2019
4	9 boxes contain textile	Japan	2019
5	14	Sweden	2019
6	81	Turkey	2019
7	1 marble piece back to the time of Saddam Hussein	Iraq foreign Ministry	2019
8	156 clay tablets	Britain	2020
9	1 ( pendant)	Switzerland	2020
10	1( pottery jar)	Seoul	2020
11	1 document	Saudi Arabia	2020
12	17000 artifacts( Hobby Lobby auction house )	USA	2020
13	7	Holland	2020
14	1	Italy	2020
15	1 Gilgamesh dream	Hobby Lobby auction House - USA	2021
16	5 artifacts	USA	2022

Dr. Laith M. Hussein  
State Board of Antiquities and Heritage / Chairman  
/1/2022

Eng. Muhsen S. Alsuwidi  
D.G of Administrative, Legal, and Financial Directorate  
30 /1/2022

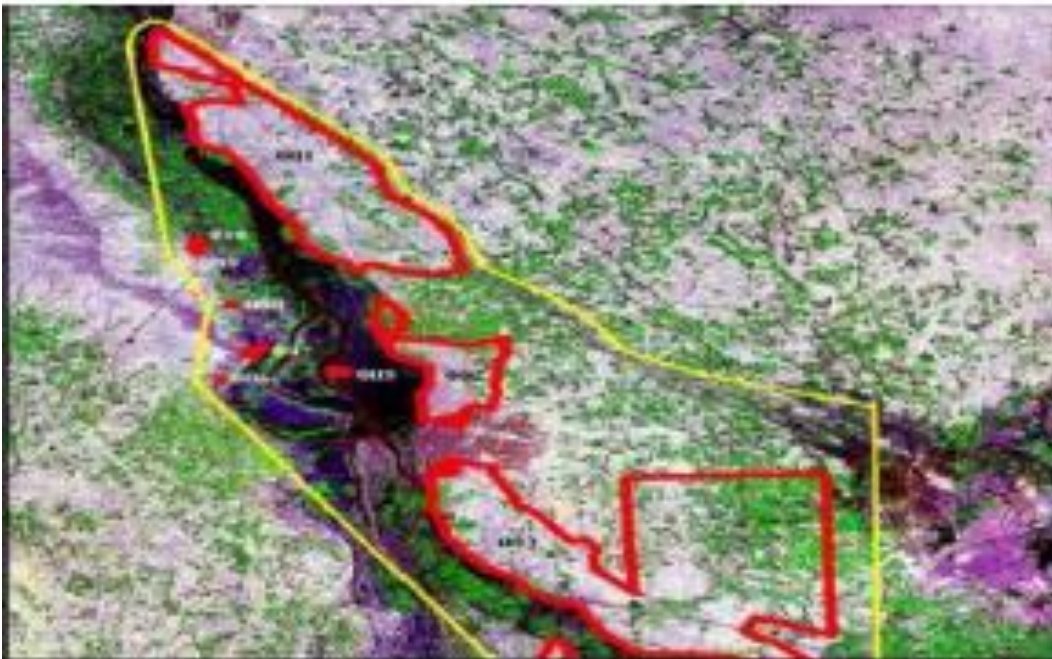




## Samarra Site

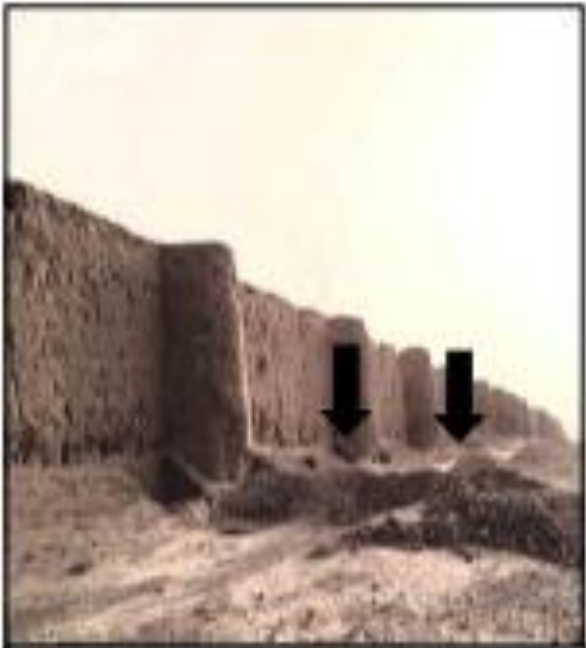


**Plan shows Samarra World Heritage site boundaries**



**plan illustrates the boundaries of Samarra World Heritage site and its attendant territories**

pictures



سور شناس

Image and figure show the location of Ashinas and the damage caused by the blast close to it (n. 1)



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Image illustrates (22 al-Jubairia) site before and after bulldozing

## Samarra Site



**(figure 3) shows the location of al-Istablal and encroachments upon the site caused by people in 10 years that increased in the last five years**

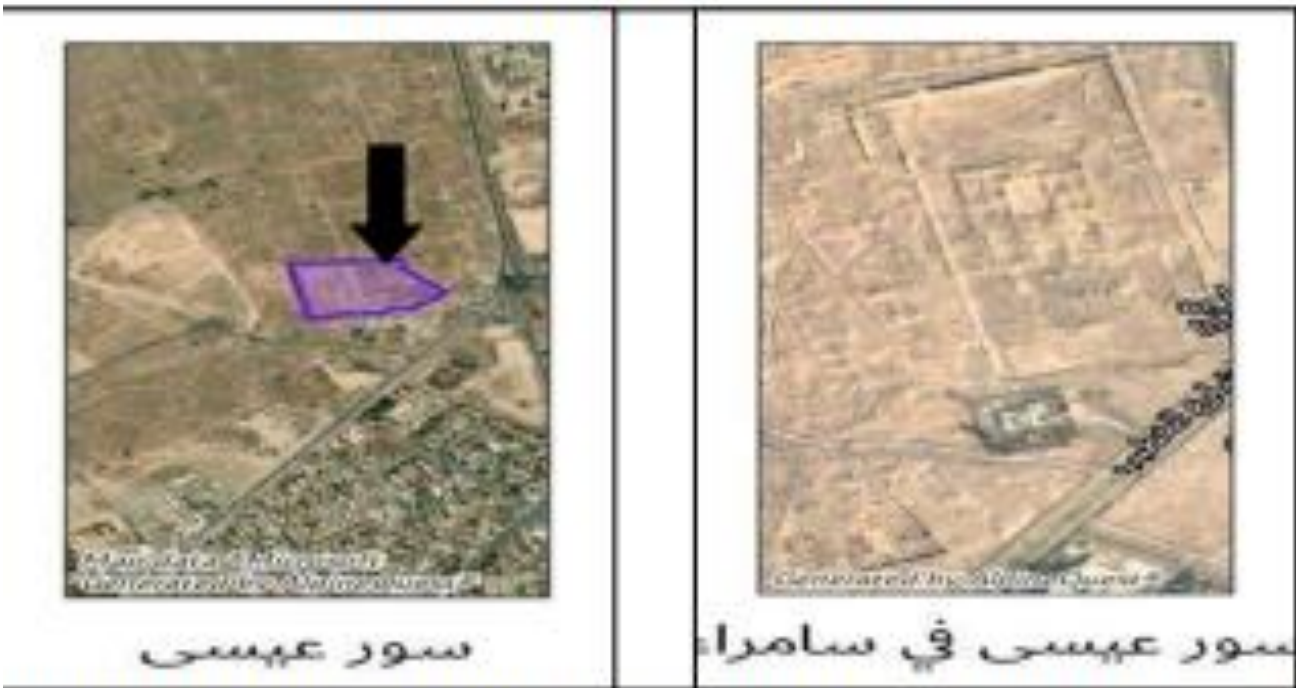


**(figure 4) showing the location and land grabbing**

Samarra Site



(figure 5) illustrates al-Mankoor Palace (Belquara Palace) location before and after land grabbing caused by farmers



(figure 6) illustrates Esa Wall (Sur Esa) before and after bulldozing



لاسطبلات بعد التجاوز

(figure 7) illustrates al-Istablat location before and after land grabbing



الباب

(figure 8) al-Wastani Gate and the crabbing close to it



(figure 9) illustrates al-Isba'ain section and the land grabbing



(figure 10) illustrates, the south side of Al-Khilafa Palace and the archaeological areas in need of excavation



**(figure 11) illustrates Shaikh Wali Wall and state offices that is in need of excavation**