



## Islamic State Plants Landmines Around Palmyra Ruins

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Militants of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) laid landmines around the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Palmyra in Syria.<sup>1</sup> The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a UK-based watchdog group monitoring the war in Syria, reports that it is yet unclear whether ISIL is planning to destroy the 2,000-year-old ruins or preparing for counterattacks to the air stri<sup>1</sup>

ISIL blew up two ancient shrines a mere 4 km (2.5 mi) away from Palmyra on 24 June 2015, sparking further international concern that the militant group may soon cause damage to the ruins of Palmyra.<sup>2</sup>

Territories formerly under ISIL control are also riddled with landmines and other unexploded ordnance (UXO). Kobani, the Kurdish city on the Turkish-Syrian border, was liberated from ISIL forces in late January 2015.<sup>3</sup> However, the refugees who are slowly returning to their homes are faced with the dangers of UXO that were left behind. Handicap International reported that explosives were planted in and around Kobani and even placed inside corpses, making it difficult to anticipate the extent of the contamination.<sup>4</sup> Kurdish fighters are now attempting to remove the mines left behind by ISIL using basic tools as no outside help has yet to make its way to Kobani with regards to clearance.<sup>3</sup> ©

~Luiza Pire, CISR Staff

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## Endnotes

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2. "ISIL blows up ancient shrines near Syria's Palmyra." Aljazeera, 24 June 2015. <http://bit.ly/1K9vHhD>
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ISSN 2154-1485

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