

Islamic State blows up three Palmyra funerary towers

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Damascus: The Islamic State (IS) terror group has blown up three funerary towers at the ancient Syrian city of Palmyra, an antiquities expert said on Friday.

The three tombs are Jamblique, built in 83 A.D. and well preserved; the Elhbel, built in 103 A.D. and consisted of a bottom floor and top four floors, also well preserved; and Kithot built in 44 A.D.

The detonation took place 10 days ago, before the IS terrorists blew up the 2,000-year-old Temple of Bel, according to Maamoun Abdulkarim, head of the Antiquities and Museums Department in Damascus.

"The news was confirmed by testimonies that we have been receiving over the past week in addition to satellite imagery released by the University of Boston," Abdulkarim told Xinhua news agency.

In an earlier statement, Abdulkarim said the latest bombings in Palmyra, mainly the blast of the temple, means the beginning of the end of this millennia-old oasis city.

The IS terror group has also detonated the temple of Baal Shamin, a second-century structure, which was condemned by the UNESCO as a war crime.

The IS also committed public executions of government soldiers and people who were accused of working for the government.

Their latest execution was Khaled Asaad, a prominent Syrian archeologist who has lived in Palmyra for most of his life and dedicated himself to the study of the archeological sites.

Palmyra contains the monumental ruins of a great city that was one of the most important cultural centres of the ancient world.

Syria has many prehistoric, Greek, Byzantine and Islamic heritages. Before the crisis, Syria had attracted many multinational archaeological missions in searching new clues of historical facts on the development of civilizations.

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