

---

# DIYARBAKIR SURIÇİ URBAN PROTECTED SITE BANNED AREA TECHNICAL ANALYSIS REPORT 17 JANUARY 2020

**Prepared By:**

Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects, Chamber of Architects Diyarbakir Branch

Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects, Chamber of Survey and Cadastre Engineers  
Diyarbakir Branch

Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects, Chamber of Urban Planners Diyarbakir Branch  
Former Head of World Heritage Site

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. INTRODUCTION: .....	3
B. TECHNICAL ANALYSIS .....	4
C. CONCLUSION:.....	14

## A. INTRODUCTION:

Curfew and prohibition of entry declared for 6 neighborhoods of the urban protected area Surici on 2 December 2015 still continue on 28 January 2020. Reliable information on what is happening in the area cannot be obtained since declaration of these bans. Information and documents shared with the public show that six neighborhoods of Sur in this period have experienced a great destruction.

Being registered as an Urban Protected Site with Diyarbakir Cultural and Natural Heritage Conservation Board's Decision No. 38 dated 29/09/1988, Diyarbakir's Suriçi region is requested to be investigated by the Chamber of Architects Diyarbakir Branch, Department of World Heritage Sites and Chamber of Urban Planners Diyarbakir Branch through many written applications submitted to Governorate of Diyarbakir. However, these requests were rejected every time. This area has to be conserved entirely, as this region is registered as an urban protected site, as per the Law on Cultural and Natural Heritage Conservation No. 2863 and conservation rules. Therefore, Diyarbakir Cultural and Natural Heritage Conservation Board's permission must be obtained for all projects and applications in this site. However, it is determined that the projects disrupting the integrity of the heritage sites and buffer zones such as Tigris Valley Project were implemented with Conservation Development Plan (CDP) 2016 Revision, without obtaining the necessary permissions from Conservation Board or the UNESCO World Heritage Center. It is also determined that the permissions set forth in the applicable laws are not obtained from the relevant Municipality or the Conservation Board for demolition activities which affect and change the entire site.

As a result of the last Application No. 635 made by the Chamber of Architects Diyarbakir Branch on 13.12.2019 to the Governorate of Diyarbakir, a committee was allowed to enter the site. Based on this permission, a technical committee consisting of Diyarbakir Branches of Chamber of Architects, Chamber of Survey and Cadastre Engineers and Chamber of Urban Planners as well as Former Head of World Heritage Sites entered the site and visited Dabanoğlu, Fatihpaşa, Savaş and Hasırlı neighborhoods to investigate the remains of registered buildings. Investigation to determine the current status of the overall urban structure as well as remains of registered buildings in the site, which has become a flat ground, was made.

In the damage determination report and the chart attached thereto prepared by the Damage Determination Committee established by the Ministry of Culture in July 2016 in order to determine the damages on the registered buildings, it is seen that 332 registered buildings in 6 different neighborhoods were evaluated and 147 of these buildings were determined to be damage-free, 42 of them were slightly damaged, 37 of them were moderately damaged, 55 of them were severely damaged, 9 of them were demolished and 42 of them were extinguished. However, in the report prepared by the Department of World Heritage Sites on 16 June 2017 and sent to UNESCO World Heritage Center which included the results of the comparison of satellite images with cadastral sheets, it is seen that 36 registered buildings and 50 environmental buildings were completely destroyed, 36 buildings were partially demolished and 48 buildings were damaged. In the 2015-2017 Sur Report published by the Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects Diyarbakir Provincial

Coordination Committee in February 2018 which included the results of the comparison of satellite images dated 11 July 2017 with cadastral sheets, it is seen that 87 registered buildings and 247 environmental buildings were demolished and therefore the destruction continues to extend systematically. In the same report, it is seen that the total area of 6 neighborhoods is 75.3 hectares and a total of 46.3-hectare area, which corresponds to 61% of the total area, is destroyed as of July 2017.

However, it is seen from the list attached to the Letter No. 19661 sent by Diyarbakir Provincial Directorate of Environment and Urban Planning to the Chamber of Architects Diyarbakir Branch on 03.12.2019 that 1 unregistered and 36 registered buildings remain standing and 43 buildings are completely destroyed among the 86 buildings included in the list.

## B. TECHNICAL ANALYSIS

36 registered buildings in Dabanoğlu, Fatihpaşa, Savaş and Hasırlı neighborhoods were analyzed with their surroundings by our committee on 17 January 2019. Accordingly;

1. It is confirmed that 43 (forty-three) registered buildings, which were determined to be demolished according to the Document No. 19661 issued by Diyarbakir Provincial Directorate of Environment and Urban Planning on 03.12.2019, are completely gone, including their remains. Integrity of the remaining registered buildings is disrupted due to careless approach to these buildings during demolition process, the urban protected site has become a flat ground, street, block and lot boundaries are not conserved, building materials of the demolished or damaged registered buildings are not found on the site and environmental buildings identified in CDP 12 are not conserved but destroyed completely.



Photo 1: Satellite image of the 6 neighborhoods under blockade taken on 11.07.2017



Photo 2: General view from the Location No. 1 shown in Photo 1.





*Photo 3: Current status of the registered building on Block No. 30 and Lot No. 2-3*



*Photo 4: Current status of the registered building on Block No. 385 and Lot No. 14*

2. Our committee has determined from the studies on satellite images taken on different dates that, although the buildings on the site were damaged from heavy weaponry, the destruction on the site has become irreversible after initiation of demolition activities with construction equipment. Likewise, it is seen from the report dated July 2016 issued by our Damage Determination Committee established by the Ministry of Culture as well as the attached lists and photos of the registered buildings on the site in addition to the satellite images that tens of streets, which did not receive a single bullet on its buildings, have become a flat ground as a result of the demolition activities.



*Photo 5: Satellite image of the 6 neighborhoods under blockade taken on 08.11.2015*



*Photo 6: Satellite image of the 6 neighborhoods under blockade taken on 10.05.2016*



*Photo 7: Satellite image of the 6 neighborhoods under blockade taken on 29.07.2016*





Photo 8: Satellite image of the 6 neighborhoods under blockade taken on 08.11.2016



Photo 9: Satellite image of the 6 neighborhoods under blockade taken on 11.07.2017



Photo 10: Satellite image of the 6 neighborhoods under blockade taken on 09.10.2019



Photo 11: Photo of Cemal Yılmaz Neighborhood, Şair Sırrı Street taken in May 2016 (on the left), satellite image of the street after demolition for urban transformation purposes after the conflicts taken on 8 March 2020 (on the right)



Photo 12: Photo of Savaş Neighborhood, Şeftali Street taken in June 2016 (on the left), satellite image of the street after demolition for urban transformation purposes after the conflicts taken on 8 March 2020 (on the right)



3. Current status of the buildings on the site are observed and it is determined that the present picture is a product of the fact that demolishing activities are not done under supervision of the experts from the Ministry of Culture, institutions responsible for demolition activities on the site are unregulated and sloppy and lack coordination or communication. This can be clearly seen from the records and reports of the Damage Determination Committee of the Ministry of Culture.
4. Some of the registered buildings that are examples of Civil Architecture and the registered buildings to be conserved due to their environmental value are demolished and used as an actual road for vehicles. In addition, it is determined that many streets, especially Yenikapi Street that has been transformed from a 7-meter street preserving its characteristic structure to a 15-meter street, have been extended against the traditional urban plan of Sur and as a result, many registered buildings and buildings with environmental value are demolished.



*Photo 13: Current status of the registered buildings on Block No. 673 and Lot No. 98-99 that has lost its texture as a result of street expansions.*

5. Following the destruction, it is seen that the block, lot and street boundaries that had been preserved for hundreds of years were changed, footprints and story heights allowed for the lots are increased to allow construction of commercial buildings and characteristic street texture, integrity and authenticity of Sur, an urban protected area, are completely destroyed with the Conservation Development Plan (CDP) 2016 Revision.



Photo 14: 2012 Conservation Development Plan



Photo 15: Conservation Development Plan 2016 Revision



Photo 16: New commercial buildings built through amalgamation as a result of changing the original building block form

6. It is observed that many excavations were made for treasure hunting purposes and some of the buildings were damaged due to this reason on the site, which has been under blockade and for which entry and exit are under control of security forces since March 2016, after the end of conflicts in the area.



*Photo 17: 2016 Unlicensed excavation made on Block No. 190 and Lot No. 3-16*



7. It is seen that up to 4-meter-deep excavations were made for infrastructure of new buildings on the site and archeological layers in Sur were damaged. Original boundaries of streets, building blocks and lots are damaged and construction activities are carried out with a partitive approach. This also can be seen from the fact that the manholes and telecommunication inspection holes on the original streets were stuck in courtyards of some of the buildings.



*Photo 18: New building and manhole in the courtyard*

8. It is seen that the heavy blocks of concrete that disrupt the scene and the perceptual continuity of the city wall, which is listed as a World Heritage, are still present. In addition, construction of the double lane asphalt road from the Keçi Bastion to İçkale (Inner Fortress) Walls right next to the city walls indicates that a heavy traffic flow is projected for the area. It is undeniable that the vibrations from the traffic right next to the eastern walls, which is the weakest link of the city wall, poses a great risk and will even cause collapse of the walls.



*Photo 19: Concrete blocks left next to the walls and new asphalt road.*



9. It is seen that the new buildings on the site contradict the original and traditional Diyarbakir architecture, are fully basalt covered reinforced concrete buildings and lack the most prominent characteristics of traditional Sur architecture such as bay window, basalt, wide courtyards, doors and windows facing the streets, courtyard wall details and ponds. In addition, it is seen that the basalt glued on the facades of new buildings on the site are not indigenous to Diyarbakir. It is determined that the new buildings with wide doors and windows facing the streets with large faces and porches completely contradict the original texture of the streets. In addition, it is determined that there are wide, painted and plastered facades, which are not included in the original texture of the streets.



*Photo 20: Facades of new buildings*

10. Original elevations are not followed and 1,5-meter elevation differences are created, as seen in Muallak Street where the Protestant Church is located. Likewise, there are many paddings consisting of debris and building materials up to 4 meters created by means of construction equipment in Yenikapi Street.



*Photo 21: Yenikapi Street new buildings and registered building facades*

11. Yenikapi Street that had managed to preserve its original street structure with many examples of monumental and civil architecture was transformed from a 7-meter street to a 15-meter street by demolishing the buildings on both sides of the street. In the meantime, stores of Surp Giragos and Keldani Churches and courtyard walls are destroyed, courtyard wall of Pasha Public Bath is removed, many houses are partially or completely demolished and the southern part of the road is completely demolished and destroyed. It is also seen that new buildings on the street fully contradict the traditional texture of the street and are built to a height more than the average story height of the mass designed for commercial use.



*Photo 22: Former state of Yenikapi Street and the buildings constructed after urban transformation and registered building facades.*

### C. CONCLUSION:

Assessing the process started with demolition of Sur, an urban protected site, and continue with building a new settlement, it is seen that a 'modern' and 'gentrified' new city without an identity that is a stranger to the original structure of the city of Suriçi is tried to be built on the site. Urban protected site Suriçi is subjected to a massive destruction, change and transformation. Reasons of such a large-scale damage include destruction of undamaged areas after the conflict, presence of decisions and practices that aim to change and transform the physical and sociocultural structure and management of this destruction and demolition processes with a central administration and through policies that fail to focus on participation.

Şerefhan Aydın

Chair of TMMOB Diyarbakir  
Chamber of Architects

Dilan Kaya Taşdelen

Branch Secretary of TMMOB  
Diyarbakir Chamber of Urban  
Planners

Volkan Yılmaz Erdoğan

Chair of TMMOB  
Diyarbakir Chamber of  
Survey and Cadastre  
Engineers

Nevin Soyukaya

Former head of the  
UNESCO  
World Heritage Site