

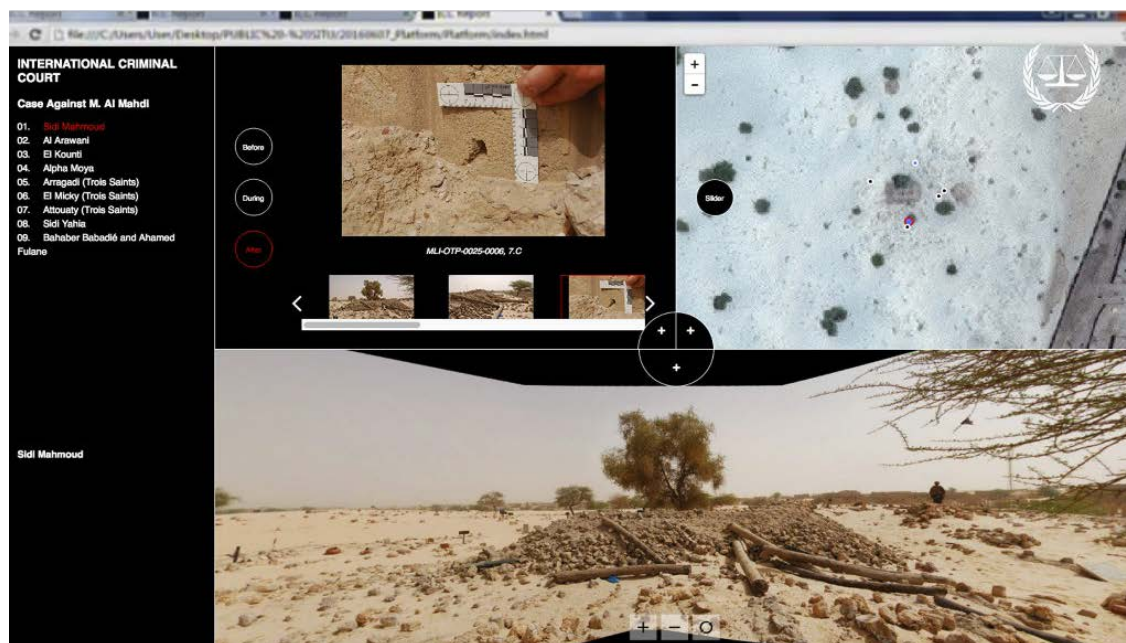
PRESS RELEASE  
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For Immediate Release

## New Platform Sheds Light on Destruction of World Heritage Sites in Mali

The Office of the Prosecutor of the [International Criminal Court](#) and [SITU Research](#) collaborate on interactive digital platform documenting destroyed sites of cultural heritage in Timbuktu, Mali.

[Click here](#) to see clips and images of the platform in action during the ICC's first day of trial.



Today the International Criminal Court (ICC) utilized a new digital tool as part of its groundbreaking trial on destroyed cultural monuments in Mali. Developed by [SITU Research](#), this platform represents an unprecedented integration of spatial and visual technology in the courtroom and serves as a critical evidentiary tool in the court's first case focused on the destruction of cultural heritage--specifically, the war crime of intentionally directing attacks against 10 historic monuments and buildings dedicated to religion in the ancient city of Timbuktu. The trial, which began today at The Hague, also marks the first time a defendant has pleaded guilty before the ICC.

This interactive digital platform has been designed to facilitate the organization, analysis and presentation of evidence documenting the destruction of these sites in Timbuktu. Combining geospatial information, historic satellite imagery, photographs, open source videos and other forms of site documentation, the tool has been used as part of trial proceedings against the defendant, Mr Ahmad Al

Faqi Al Mahdi, an alleged member of the armed group Ansar Dine, who is charged with participating in the intentional destruction of nine mausoleums and a mosque's door in 2012. This is the first time such a tool is used at the International Criminal Court and presents a visual and spatial evidentiary model in, inter alia, cases where sites of heritage have been damaged or destroyed.

In line with its enhanced focus on the use of technology in presenting its cases in court, the Office of the Prosecutor of the [ICC](#) collaborated closely with [SITU Research](#) on the development of this tool over a four-month period. The work focused on the development of this tool for use in the courtroom and, specifically, as a resource to be used during the trial of Al Mahdi. The development of this tool represents a move towards new and increasing applications of digital technologies in judicial proceedings aimed at bringing accountability for atrocity crimes.

The platform allows the user to explore information related to six separate sites across Timbuktu, each with material organized into before, during and after destruction. Once a site is selected, all of the attendant information can be easily accessed and viewed either simultaneously or as independent articles. With over 200 assets, the platform's ultimate function is to provide an intuitive yet comprehensive spatial and temporal account documenting the attacks against these structures.

The interdisciplinary approach to this project represents an emerging strategy in the application of international criminal law. This work was undertaken as part of the [Spatial Practice as Evidence and Advocacy \(SPEA\)](#) project, a SITU Research-led initiative.

[Click here](#) to see clips and images of the platform in action during the ICC's first day of trial.

If you're interested in learning more, please let us know. Access to the platform is available upon request. Please contact Amy Parker at [amy@situstudio.com](mailto:amy@situstudio.com) or [718 237-5795](tel:7182375795) for more information.

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[SITU Research](#) is an independent interdisciplinary design practice that operates at the intersection of architecture, law, science and human rights. SITU Research has worked with organizations such as Human Rights Watch, B'Tselem, and Fédération Internationale des Ligues des Droits de l'Homme and submitted previous work to international organizations such as the Council of Europe's Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons, and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on human rights and counter-terrorism.

SITU Research is a division of SITU, an interdisciplinary design practice located in Brooklyn, NY.