

《记者参观遭激进分子蹂躏的叙利亚古镇》

Amid the cessation of hostilities, the Russian government organized a trip for journalists to the previously besieged town of Maaloula, located some 60 kilometres northeast of Damascus.

The town still bears the scars of the fierce fighting that devastated it two years ago, when the Syrian army recaptured it from the Nusra Front, al-Qaida's branch in Syria, and other militants, in 2014.

Maaloula is home to a number of ancient Christian churches...most now riddled with shrapnel and empty after being pillaged by jihadists.

At St. Takla Convent, a Greek Orthodox monastery that dates back to the early centuries of Christianity, the dome and walls of the church were gutted by fire, and its frescoes damaged by bullets.

