

Makhmour escapee screening

3 March, 2016 – meeting with Peshmerga commander of Makhmour forces.

- Although the screening is conducted by a separate committee (comprised of Asayesh and anti-terrorism forces), the Peshmerga oversee the whole area and activities.
- People escaping ISIS in Ninewa began passing through Makhmour a year ago but in the past month numbers have increased dramatically. This is for numerous reasons – build-up of ISF in Makhmour, economic situation in ISIS land, recent ISIS statements of ‘with us or against us’.
- They have been recording **250-500 people a week**. One evening last week they had around 300 arrivals – men, women and children. All arrive at night for cover as ISIS actively hunts those leaving.
- When they arrive the screening committee takes them for interrogation asking questions such as an affiliation to ISIS? Family history? Job? **No one has failed the screening**, but although they have not had anyone affiliated with ISIS come through, some have family members that are and are then taken to the Security Council for more questioning.
- Additionally, all that have come through require a sponsor from within the KRG as well as being vouched for by Kurdish agents operating within ISIS controlled areas.
- Screening can take a matter of hours or days depending on how well known the case is and a small camp of containers has been set up. This is supplied with food and clothing from Peshmerga and Barzini Charity Foundation. When asked in private, one family said **they had been treated very well**.
- People are generally free to go after the screening – usually to the areas of their sponsors. Many have gone to Laylan camp in Kirkuk but others make their own way to family or friends elsewhere. There was no mention of controlled transportation to Kirkuk city. One family met was going to Erbil.
- Some wounded are coming through – reports of some families fighting their way out of ISIS land or falling into defensive trenches. They are taken to the hospital in Makhmour by the Peshmerga. All are arriving at night in the cover of darkness and some in a very poor condition.

Example cases:

Ghada, 39 from Mosul.

- Paid a smuggler in Mosul \$1,500, was taken out of city and given a map.
- Walked four hours to get to Makhmour and was shot at twice by ISIS.
- ISIS said civilians are either with us or against us. Choice had to be made.
- Claims all people in Mosul want to leave but have no means.
- Women under ISIS only sleep, eat and wait.

Omar, 29 from Mosul.

- Men being pressured by ISIS to fight especially at Friday prayer.
- No jobs or salary in city, any money is only for ISIS.
- Everyone in Mosul is against ISIS.
- Fell in a defensive trench on the way and was injured.
- Militias on ‘right hand side’ of Mosul are fighting against ISIS.

Saha, 24 from Qayyarah

- Peshmerga treatment of escapees has been good (asked in private).