

Events relating to civilians during the operations in and around Telskof, 3-4 May 2016

Civilians fleeing villages near Telskof, 3 May 2016

The ISIS attack on Telskof on 3 May caused some of the inhabitants of Doghat, Sirishkan and Khorsaba (Yezidi villages a few kilometres north of Telskof) to flee their homes to areas near Alqosh.

- Doghat (1000 families) – women and children fled, the men stayed, with some joining the Peshmerga on the frontline
- Sirishkan (700 families) – women and children fled, the men stayed
- Khorsaba (150 families) – all inhabitants fled, except for 50 men who stayed

All those who left these villages on 3 May returned either the same day or the next day upon receiving news that the Peshmerga had repulsed the attack.

Reports were initially heard that villagers in Hatara (Yezidi, 3000 families) and Nifirin (Yezidi, 175 families) had also fled on 3 May but these turned out to be false. Many of the men from Hatara went to fight with the Peshmerga.

20-25 Christian families also left Alqosh because of the fighting on 3 May, but returned shortly after.

The Yezidi villages north of Telskof

There are seven Yezidi villages in this area, spread longitudinally a kilometre or two apart. After the events of 6 August 2014, the populations of these villages fled to places such as Dohuk, Zakho, and Shekhan. Many did not return and continued their journey to Germany. In Khorsaba, 80% of the inhabitants did not return and most of this number are now based in Germany.

Despite the decreased populations, there is a water shortage in these villages and much of the water that is available is brackish. The nearest health centre is in Alqosh, 10-15 km away. There are few if any economic opportunities and with the frontline so close, the villagers never feel completely secure.

The Yezidi communities are surrounded by Sunni Arab and Christian villages. Local relations between the Yezidis and Arabs are good. While saying that Arabs in general are 'no good', the Yezidis we spoke to were eager to say that their Arab neighbours were an exception and that they trusted them. In the Peshmerga base in Telskof we witnessed the arrival of an Arab Sheikh with his entourage. He was warmly welcomed by the Peshmerga who told us that the local Arab community had been supplying the Peshmerga with food.

The villages lying within ISIS territory, just beyond the frontline, are all empty of civilians according to the Peshmerga, although this could be false. The first major population centre south of Telskof is Tel Kaif, 10 km away. Telskof itself contains no civilians.

Operations in and around Telskof, 3-6 May

INSO have a good summary of events

The majority of the fighting occurred on 3-4 May, and by 4 May the Peshmerga had the situation under full control

125 ISIS were killed during the operation

The Peshmerga listened in on ISIS radio communications to identify and seek out any remaining units hiding in the area

At 2.30 pm on 6 May, a Peshmerga force attacked Batnaya village (Christian, no inhabitants) and drove out any ISIS presence, but then withdrew from the village

Screening process in Telskof

The Asayish in Telskof reported that no families had attempted to escape through the frontlines in this area. When the Mosul operation starts, however, they expect large numbers to come through.

While they can security screen small numbers relatively quickly, the Asayish would be unable to handle a large influx of civilians coming at once to Telskof. There was no plan for how to cope if thousands of people were to arrive at once.

After screening, the Asayish expects to transport people to local camps like Garmarwa. There was no contingency plan for what should happen once this and other camps are full other than an expectation that the UN will build new camps.