

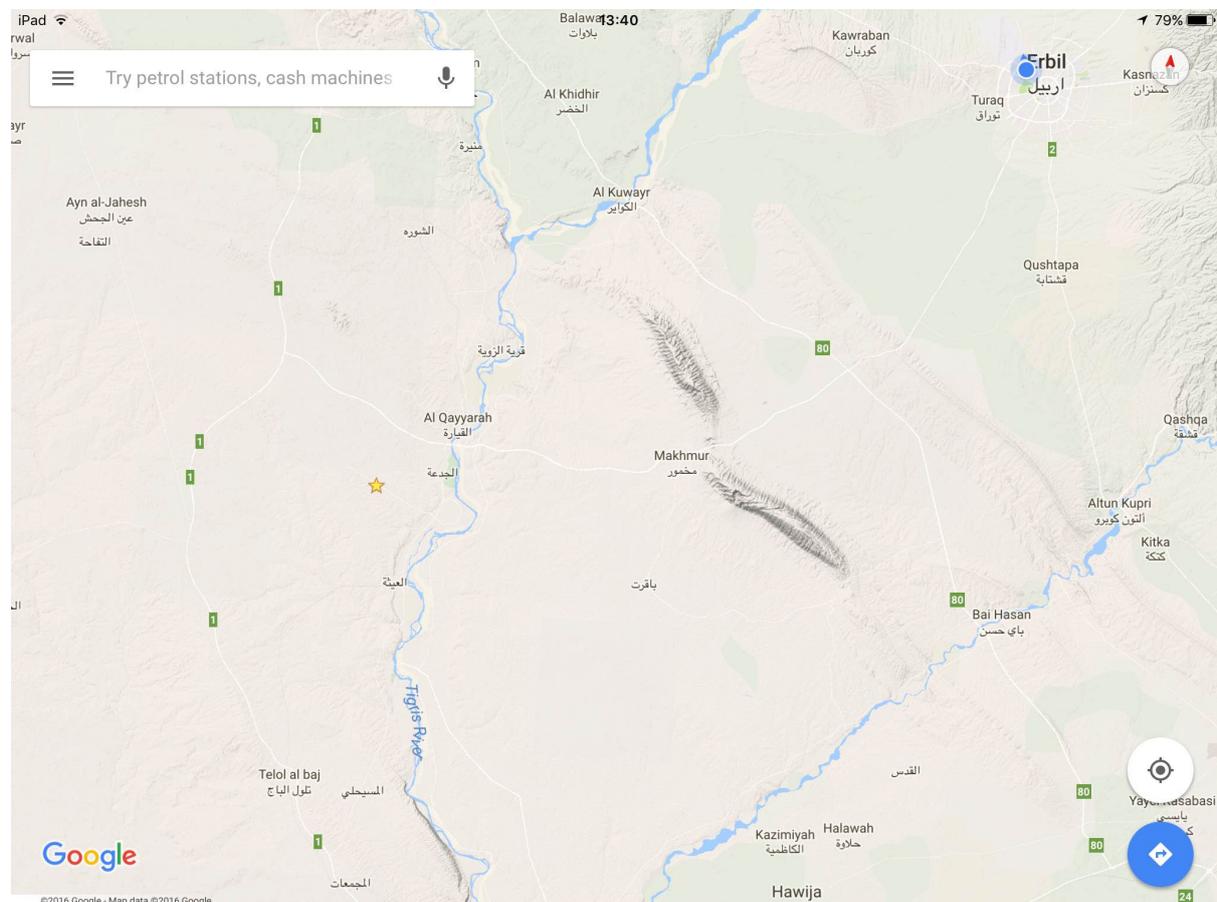
IDPs in Tina and Hajj Ali, Update 22 August

[This update follows previous reports on the IDP situation in Hajj Ali – please contact me at jasper.hadman@rise-foundation.org if you have not received these reports and are interested in them.]

Tina

Situation

Tina (or Khabat al Tina) is located about 7 km north-west of Imam village, on the road towards Qayyarah Airbase. Its coordinates are N 35.72913 / E 043.19542. It is a small village with an original population of around 500. Between 6,500-8,000 IDPs are gathered there. The majority are from nearby villages like Imam, Ijhalla, Jadaa and Juana, and from Al Qayyarah town.



Tina village is starred.

There are around 200 MOMD tents just outside the village where about 4,500-5,000 people stay. Each tent houses between 2 and 4 families. There are no permanent services available. A further 2,000-3,000 are reportedly staying inside Tina village, although we did not have time on this occasion to inspect the village itself.

Most of the IDPs in Tina have been there for over a month and are very eager to return to their villages. The greatest number seem to be from Imam, around 7 km away. Those who are from areas still under ISIS control or where heavy fighting continues (like Shirqat and Al Qayyarah town), want to be taken to Tikrit where they have family and tribal links. On 20 August, a senior officer in the Iraqi Army said that they planned to take IDPs in Tina to Telol al Baj, a staging post for routes further south towards Tikrit. He may have only been talking

about those IDPs whose home villages were still in ISIS hands or are too dangerous to return to. On 22 August, IDPs in Tina were told by the Iraqi Army that if their village had been liberated and declared safe, they would be returned there in 2-3 days. This information came from IDPs and is currently unverified.



MOMD tents in Tina without any services.

Conditions and urgent needs in Tina

There are practically no services provided in Tina and the supply of life-saving aid is very limited.

Clean drinking water is the main requirement. The water available to IDPs is limited in quantity and contains high levels of salt. This causes stomach complaints. Almost everyone we spoke to said that water is the greatest need.

Second is food. People have been surviving off little more than biscuits and cake – some for close to two months – presumably provided by MOMD. There is no other food, and besides, no fuel or stoves to cook with if there was. Milk for babies is another urgent need.

There have been some deliveries of food and bottled water by volunteer organisations such as We Care, but they are sporadic and can only reach a small percentage of IDPs in Tina. A very large shipment of bottled water arrived in Tina when we were there on 22 August – four large trucks each stacked with 22 pallets of bottled water. Reportedly this was provided by a popular Salahadin MP, Ahmed Abdullah al Jibouri. Still, a greater and more regular supply is urgently required. An RRM has reportedly been activated, but the trucks – carrying boxes of food, water, dignity and hygiene kits – are unable to pass the bridge at the moment. RNIDPO are working on trying to resolve this issue.



Left: IDPs in Tina gathering around one of the trucks handing out bottled water.

Right: Dust storms are very common and there is little or no shelter from the heat.

Medicines and medical staff are another urgent need. Complaints such as asthma, diarrhoea, constipation, kidney stones, high/low blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, kidney stones, psychological issues, and epilepsy in children are common and need urgent treatment. There is a health centre in the village but it cannot cater for the needs of the IDP community. There is a WHO mobile clinic but it only visits Tina about once a week. There are many old and infirm people, pregnant women, and very young infants.

Toilets in the camp area consist of two very basic screens made out of tents. Most people just go out to the desert at night. There are 10 latrines but these have not been installed.

New camp

Plans are currently ongoing between the Governor of Ninewa, Mayor of Qayyarah, the Ninewa Operational Command and RNIDPO regarding the location of a possible new camp in the area.

Villages on the west side of the Tigris

Current approximate population numbers in the villages on the west bank of the Tigris south of Al Qayyarah town are:

Juana (aka Argubah): 500 families

Jadaa: 300 families

Duralqaeda (aka Huriya): 400 families

Ijhalla: 1,300 families

Imam: 30 families

Tina: 6,500–8,000 individuals



Some families walked for many kilometres to reach Tina, having escaped from Al Qayyarah.

Al Qayyarah town reportedly has a current population of around 13,000, but this figure may be low. On 21 August the Iraqi Army dropped leaflets over Al Qayyarah town telling civilians to flee at once to Tina or Duralqaeda. This represents a reversal in policy for the Iraqi Army as up to this point they have encouraged people to remain inside their houses. It is not known why this policy has changed or whether Al Qayyarah town is a solitary exception. 1,000-2,000 new arrivals are expected in Tina from Al Qayyarah town over the

next few days. However, latest reports indicate that most civilians in Al Qayyarah are staying in their homes because of heavy shelling and airstrikes.

Hajj Ali

There has been a very large reduction in the numbers of IDPs staying in the 3 schools in Hasiyah. From a total of roughly 900 people on 20 August, only 15 families remained in the early afternoon of 22 August. The departed families have been transported by the Iraqi Army back to their villages – Ijhalla, Juana and Jadaa. The majority of those that remained are from Hajj Ali itself and have been prevented from returning to their homes (reportedly by the local sheikh, although this is unclear) because of the threat of IEDs. There were also families from Al Qayyarah, Shirqat and Imam. The family from Shirqat wanted to go to Tikrit and were later transported to Tina as a step towards this goal.

At about 2pm on 22 August a truckload of IDPs – 250 individuals, including 60 single men – arrived at the schools from Debaga with the Iraqi Army. Their names were taken by the Iraqi Army and by the end of the day the majority of these people had been transported on to Ijhalla, Juana and Jadaa.

It seems that the schools in Hajj Ali are now being used as a transit site from Debaga for IDPs from Hajj Ali and villages on the west bank of the Tigris. Large numbers have and are likely to continue to arrive, but the duration of their stay is only a matter of hours or a few days. It is unlikely that large numbers of IDPs on the west bank of the Tigris will be sent to Hajj Ali, as the majority of these villages are now considered safe enough to return to.

Given the change in circumstances, the rehabilitation of one site in Hajj Ali would now be a more appropriate response than a large-scale programme for a caseload of thousands. UNICEF and Oxfam are aware of these changes and are modifying their plans accordingly. IMC and ICRC have also recently visited the schools in Hajj Ali. RNIDPO will continue managing the site and still require support in Hajj Ali. However, they will also be looking at sites west of the river – possibly Tina – where they have access and can deliver aid and services to those with the greatest need.

Humanitarian Complexities

Al Qayyarah sub-district is currently the staging area for further operations towards Mosul. It is therefore a heavily militarized area with ISF, ICTF (Iraqi special forces), Hashd, Police and other armed groups. Tribal and political dynamics are also significant influencing factors. The front line with ISIS is only kilometres away and within indirect fire range. IDPs arriving from different locations from the front lines are often in need of immediate assistance, having just escaped from conflict. Aside from the significant protection concerns, there is also likely to be an issue with diversion of aid. The de-facto authority on the ground is the military and they are the primary source of support to arriving IDPs. This area represents an incredibly complex operating environment but given the way in which the campaign is unfolding and the ensuing patterns of displacement, we can expect to see this kind of set up to continue. It is therefore paramount to balance humanitarian concerns with pragmatic and flexible policy.



IDPs in Tina gathered for a visit by Najim al Jibouri, Commander of Ninewa Operations, on 22 August.