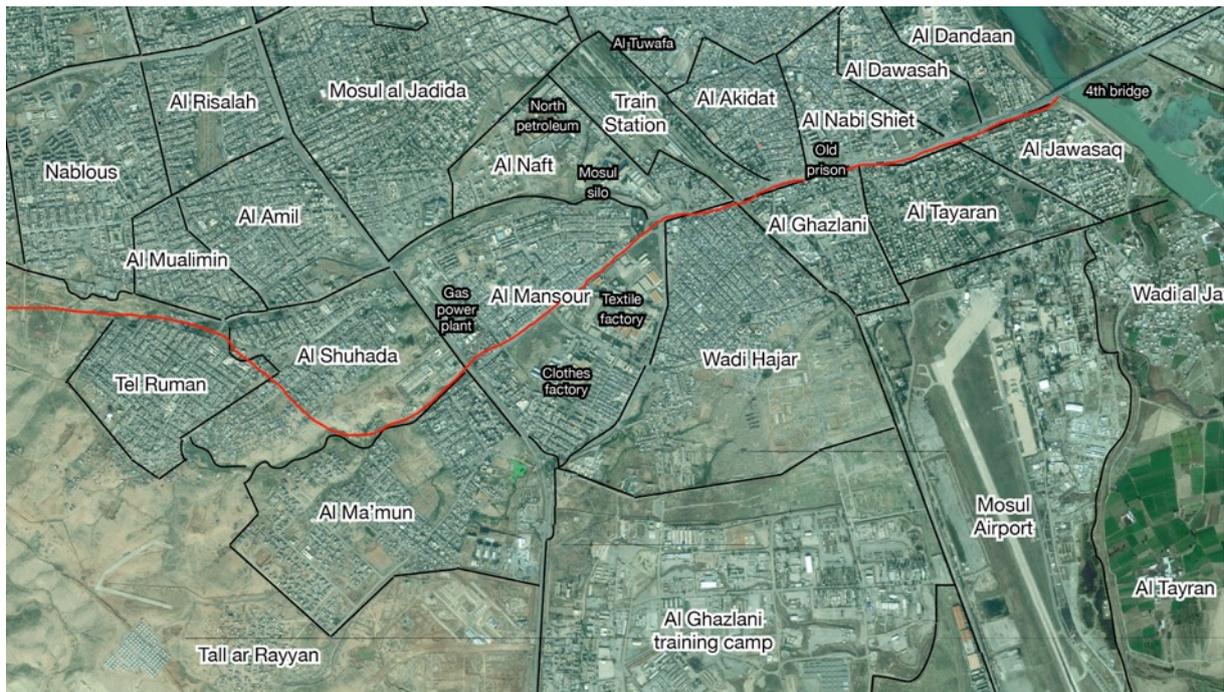


## Updates on displacement south of Mosul, 4 March

The frontline in West Mosul, starting at the river, is now roughly level with the road that runs latitudinally from the 4<sup>th</sup> bridge skirting the northern edges of the Al Jawasaq, Al Tayaran, Al Ghazlani and Wadi Hajar neighbourhoods. It then passes through Al Mansour and down the northern edge of Al Ma'mun and Tel Ruman. A combination of ERD (closer to the river) and FedPol (predominant) hold the line from the river to Al Ghazlani, and ISOF west of that point. Unconfirmed reports indicate that ISOF has spread further east into Al Tayaran as of today. Civilians remaining in these neighbourhoods continue to face severe risks from ISIS snipers, mortars and UAVs, as well as counterattacks using VBIEDs and BBIEDs. FedPol units report that food and water are very scarce.



Map showing the approximate position of the frontline, 4 March.

### Displacement through the frontline north of Albu Saif & Mosul Airport

The progress of the FedPol/ERD advance has been gradual. As streets have come under their control, civilians have left their homes in relatively small numbers. People that want to leave are being picked up in FedPol minibuses and driven directly to Arij or Hamam al Alil. We were unable to get a clear picture of precisely how and where people are picked up, but FedPol do what they can to avoid creating gatherings of any sort (they have previously been targeted by UAVs in these neighbourhoods, causing mass civilian and military casualties). The MERMT/FedPol TSP at Albu Saif (36°16'37.12"N 43°09'27.93"E) is no longer being used as a collection point for loading civilians into different vehicles as it was previously. However, minibuses usually slow down here, and when they have time, MERMT medics hand packets of water and biscuits to the minibuses as they drive past. No screening takes place on this route other than a check for weapons and explosives when civilians board the minibuses.

Waves of mass displacement have not come from neighbourhoods retaken by FedPol/ERD as they have from those retaken by ISOF, who have advanced quicker. Still, few civilians are reported to remain in the retaken neighbourhoods near the river under FedPol/ERD control. For example, according to FedPol, only around 10% of families remain in Al Tayaran. This is likely to be partially due to the forced movement of families by ISIS for use as human shields. Those that stay are most likely to be doing so out of fear. These neighbourhoods are by no means secure and ISIS are well known to target families that try to escape. Two children under 5 were

brought to the TSP in Albu Saif on 4 March having been shot in the head by snipers – further proof that children are not only vulnerable to more indiscriminate attacks by car bombs, but are being specifically targeted by ISIS snipers. People are also worried about where they will be taken if they leave and how they will be treated. In Albu Saif, when the TSP was being used as a collection point, it was common for new arrivals to express a wish to return home immediately. However, once they were told where they were due to be taken – to a screening area with INGO presence – they usually relaxed and no longer wanted to return home.

The official recommendation for civilians is still that they should stay in their homes, and there are arguments on both sides as to whether this is the safest course of action. We were told by two separate FedPol sources that only around 60 families remained in Al Tayaran and that they would all be taken out. This is more likely to reflect the preference to leave shared by most civilians, rather than any change in official policy on the ground. Getting basic support such as food and water into retaken neighbourhoods remains a serious challenge. As the frontline moves further north, the security situation will improve in outer neighbourhoods – although probably still not enough for direct intervention by INGOs, new opportunities for reaching civilians in need will emerge. For now, however, only a relatively small area has been retaken, and the security situation is such that getting emergency relief to civilians within these neighbourhoods can only be achieved with direct support from FedPol or ERD. Regarding displacement, short of stocking the FedPol minibuses for IDPs with water and biscuits, the TSP in Albu Saif for now remains the best place on this displacement route to position emergency supplies.



*Clouds from a coordinated attack involving 7 VBIEDs on Al Ghazlani and Al Tayaran neighbourhoods, 4 March. Picture taken from the Mosul sugar factory (36°17'52.01"N 43°08'44.06"E), where MERMT were previously based and where there is a FedPol TSP.*

#### Basic update on Scorpion Junction IDP collection point

On 1 March the collection point for IDPs coming from Al Ma'mun and surrounding neighbourhoods changed from Salam village to a small group of buildings/enclosed areas on Highway 1, just south of Scorpion Junction on the west side of the highway (36°14'57.11"N 43°06'28.11"E). The collection point consists of two separate enclosed areas – one for women and children and one for men. Men are given an initial screening by CTS, primarily to check for information that may benefit the military campaign. On 1 March it was reported to us

that families stay for around 3-5 hours before onward transport to Hamam al Alil screening site. NGOs are providing some support at the collection point.

A steady stream of IDPs coming from Al Ma'mun, Tel Ruman, Wadi Hajar and other neighbourhoods has continued in recent days. CTS reported that around 3,250 had come on 4 March. Reportedly the majority are IDPs from villages south of Mosul and were forcibly relocated to Mosul by ISIS. They mostly travel on foot to Highway 1 where they pass the AEM/ISOF TSP, which moved to a new location on Highway 1 beneath a large ISIS sign (now removed) on 1 March (36°17'42.18"N 43°06'51.8"E). IDPs walk a further 500 yards south on Highway 1 where they come to a primary collection point – when around 20 or so have collected there, transport arrives to ferry them to the main collection point near Scorpion Junction, a few kilometres further down the road.



*IDPs walking down Highway 1 from the AEM/ISOF TSP beneath the ISIS sign, 1 March.*



*Grandfather and granddaughter reunited at the primary collection point on Highway 1.*