

West Mosul Update, 10 July

Mosul Al Qadima - Al Tanak - Al Zinjili

After nearly 9 months of fighting, Mosul was declared liberated by Prime Minister Abadi on 09 July. Yet during the following day there was ongoing fighting involving a considerable use of airstrikes in Mosul Al Qadima. 10 July ended with Abadi declaring 'total victory' in Mosul, although as of 11 July the fighting is still continuing.

Mosul Al Qadima

The neighbourhood remains a highly insecure area. It is extremely contaminated with IEDs and UXO and there are enduring risks of ISIS fighters hiding within retaken areas. A medic interviewed at a TSP on the edge of the neighbourhood stated that over the past few days most injuries treated were from the IEDs and UXO littering the neighbourhood. Many of the last civilians to flee Mosul Al Qadima are suspected of being ISIS fighters or their families. Despite fears that individuals may be ISIS affiliated and wearing suicide vests, the medic reported that families are being treated well by ISF and are being helped to move to camps.

On 10 July the Federal Police began to allow civilians to briefly return to the Mosul Al Qadima through Akidat to collect their belongings. This has been a common occurrence in retaken neighbourhoods in recent weeks. Despite the potentially fatal risks of walking through such a dangerous area these civilians are not being accompanied. The reason for the lack of accompaniment given by the ISF is that civilians already knew if their houses were safe and that the civilians had notified the ISF of any explosives planted by ISIS.

There are also a very small number of people who have remained in Mosul Al Qadima. This was estimated to be less than 100 in the southern half of the city. These people have so far relied on the ISF for food and water supplies. The main reason for people not leaving appears to be a general reluctance to leave their home, rather than any imposed restrictions.

Al Tanak

Iraqi army 9th Division have been redeployed as a security force after the ISIS attacks in Al Tanak, Nablus and Al Yarmuk over Eid. The attack involved ISIS fighters infiltrating these neighbourhoods and retaking parts of them for several days until ISF could regain control.

Most people who fled Al Tanak during the fighting over Eid have since returned. Sixty families were estimated to have returned in the past 2 days. The overall population remains at approximately 50% of what it was before the battle of Mosul began. There is now a screening process in place organised by 9th Division for all returns to the neighbourhood. This screening involves database checks as well as information provided by locals and coordination with the area's Mukhtar.

There has been very limited aid distributed to people in Al Tanak since it was retaken. An NGO was seen distributing family food boxes and NFIs during the assessment. This was reportedly the 3rd distribution in as many days in Al Tanak. Several locals independently complained about the organisation of these distributions. People complained that much of the aid was being taken by others from surrounding neighbourhoods, they believed that the distribution was intended only for their neighbourhood. Furthermore, many people were allegedly receiving a disproportionate amount of aid, possibly due to personal connections with a local Sheikh.



The distribution in Al Tanak

It was claimed that the NGO was using the Public Distribution System (PDS) stamp for identification rather than residency cards that confirm their neighbourhood of residence. The PDS has yet to restart in the area, though the Governorate Office has reportedly begun providing small amounts of fuel for generators, though this is inadequate. There has also been no water trucking aid into Al Tanak and this was cited as the primary issue for residents in the neighbourhood.

Given the issues with these distributions, the majority of people in Al Tanak are relying on local shops and markets in Al Risala for food and water as well as buying water trucked by private groups. There are very little work opportunities or livelihoods in the neighbourhood. This is forcing people to rely on savings to support themselves. The neighbourhood has historically been one of Mosul's

poorest and locals stated that they are rapidly running out of money. One individual did state that the elderly were able to receive a pension. They stated that the lack of water and capacity to purchase it was the main reason preventing further returns.



The destruction in Al Tanak has been less severe than many other Mosul neighbourhoods.

There are a number of ISIS affiliated families remaining in the neighbourhood and there are some tensions between them and other residents. Residents complained that ISIS families were receiving aid from the food distributions, meaning that there was less available for non-ISIS affiliated families. They were also worried that the ISIS families might still be harbouring ISIS fighters in the neighbourhood. Another NGO recently reported an arson attack on houses purportedly belonging to ISIS affiliated individuals. ISF in the area are hoping that the ISIS families can be moved on to camps but stated that they were not willing to forcibly evict them. They are also concerned about the continual threat of sleeper cells in the neighbourhood and that the ISIS families might be relaying information on to other ISIS members.

A local Sheikh has created a small militia of about 20 individuals from the neighbourhood. This has been done with the approval of local ISF who are keen for locals with knowledge of the area and its residents to help provide security. The militia members are not allowed to carry their weapons openly in the streets.

Al Zinjili

Various ISF military units remain stationed in Al Zinjili though responsibility for the neighbourhood and Al Shifaa has been passed on to local police. It remains heavily contaminated with IEDs and UXO. The main roads through the neighbourhood are

relatively clear but guidance is still needed to find these safe routes. An ISF officer estimated approximately 100 families were now back in the neighbourhood, with 5 - 7 returning daily. Families' returns must be coordinated with the military and they must pass through database screening and the approval of the local Mukhtar before their return is accepted. There is significant destruction across the neighbourhood and this will prevent many people from being able to return for a long time. Families that are returning are already beginning to repair the damage to their homes.

Despite the contamination there was little oversight by the ISF of families moving through the neighbourhood. Families were seen conducting repair work in close proximity to IEDs and UXO. Dead bodies of civilians and ISIS fighters have yet to be cleared from the neighbourhood. One family had returned that morning to find 5 bodies in their home and had decided to pack up their belongings to move to Mosul Al Jadida instead. People are aware of the risks of returning but another individual claimed that they had no choice, they could not afford to rent accommodation elsewhere and were not even considering moving to a camp.



A family attempts to cut their way back into their home after ISIS welded the doors shut.