

West Mosul update, 17 July

Al Dandaan, Al Dawasah and Al Akidat

On 17 July Rise conducted assessments of Al Dandaan, Al Dawasah and Al Akidat neighbourhoods. Alongside Al Nabi Shiet, these neighbourhoods form a band that runs along the southern edge of Mosul Al Qadima. The situation in Al Nabi Shiet appears to be similar to that of its nearby neighbourhoods. However, it was not possible to find enough people available to conduct a proper assessment.



The assessed neighbourhoods are all suffering a dearth of livelihoods. This has forced many people into performing more dangerous roles. In northern Al Dawasah a number of children were seen scavenging in houses, possibly stripping copper wire. The area had reportedly been cleared for IEDs and UXO. Other people were seen loading a truck with hardware goods from an abandoned store. They stated that they had been hired by the owner to retrieve the goods. The area had also reportedly been cleared for IEDs and UXO but live explosives were still seen lying on the ground nearby.

The northern ends of these neighbourhoods remain highly insecure due to their proximity with Mosul Al Qadima where fighting was still ongoing on 17 July. There are ongoing fears of ISIS fighters hiding in retaken parts of the neighbourhood and trying to flee to the south. These areas have not been fully cleared for IED and UXO yet and returns generally seemed to be blocked by Federal Police.

There are several Federal Police TSPs throughout the assessed neighbourhoods. These TSPs are able to provide limited primary health care. Most people go to the clinic in Al Jawasac or the Mosul General Hospital in Wadi Hajar. One such TSP in Al Nabi Shiet was receiving 4-8 patients per day.

Al Dandaan

Al Dandaan was retaken from ISIS in early March but many people were displaced from the neighbourhood in mid-June after an ISIS counter attack. The attack involved dozens of ISIS fighters infiltrating the neighbourhood using ISF uniforms as disguises. Residents spoken to during the assessment stated that they knocked on people's doors posing as ISF. It's unclear how many civilians were killed or injured in the ensuing fight, but there was a large battle to retake the neighbourhood from ISIS. ISIS fighters set fire to at least 16 houses during the battle. The incident was contained within Al Dandaan, residents interviewed from nearby neighbourhoods said that the fight had not reached their area.



A burnt out house in Al Dandaan.

This fighting has displaced almost everyone from Al Dandaan. There are now estimated to be just 10-15 families in the neighbourhood, living in the southern and western edges. The north remains insecure due to its proximity to Mosul Al Qadima. Civilians are not allowed to return to homes close by the Tigris due to fears of ISIS fighters attacking via the river's edge. Families must get the approval of the Federal Police in the area before returning to their homes. The returning families are not screened on a database. The reason for the lack of screening was that as there's so few returns, it's more efficient to rely on local contacts to vouch for them. The original mukhtar was killed by ISIS and the current one is still displaced. Therefore currently there is no acting civilian leader to coordinate distributions and screening alongside the military. There were no reported IDP families from other neighbourhoods within Al Dandaan.

The Federal Police are responsible for the neighbourhood's security. The area is highly militarised with many soldiers accommodated in empty civilian houses. The presence of ISIS fighters in the neighbourhood has remained a concern for security forces, they reported capturing one fighter on 15 July while he was trying to flee from Mosul Al Qadima along the eastern edge of Al Dandaan. There have also been reports of BBIED operatives attempting to cross 4th Bridge to get to east Mosul, although they were intercepted. Locals did not report any concerns with the Federal Police presence.

Al Dandaan was traditionally a wealthy area and it was suggested that many people who were displaced were rich enough to move to a different country and may not return soon. Some families are beginning to return now that the area is more secure. The neighbourhood suffered extensive destruction during the first wave of fighting and again from the subsequent counter attack. This, and lack of services are obstacles to returns.

Locals claimed that NGO and PDS aid had stopped since the counter attack and that they were now relying primarily on their savings and aid from the Federal Police. It is a wealthy area and therefore returnees can rely on shops more than other neighbourhoods. There are no shops in Al Dandaan, people either walk to Al Jawasac to the south or get a taxi to Mosul Al Jadida, people are free to access these areas. Boreholes provide cleaning water. This water is not drinkable although it is better quality than in many other areas due to the proximity to the Tigris. Small private generators are being relied upon for limited amounts of electricity. There is reportedly a small NGO PHC in Al Jawasac that locals are using, though they often have to visit a private pharmacy for specific medications.

A Shia religious group has opened a canteen at the southern edge of the neighbourhood on the 4th bridge road that has been running since 12 July. The canteen is feeding civilians and soldiers. The group is reportedly also taking 4 small vans of food into Mosul Al Qadima each day to feed the civilians and soldiers located there.

Al Dawasah

A local man interviewed during the assessment stated that a Federal Police Brigadier had asked him to assess the number of civilians in Al Dawasah over the past week. The man had identified 51 families in the neighbourhood and they are mostly in the southern edges, away from Mosul Al Qadima.

Federal Police are the main security actor in the neighbourhood. Soldiers from the ERD were also seen in the area. The area was reported by Federal Police to be cleared of IEDs

and UXO, but some live explosives were seen beside the street. Those interviewed did not report any concerns with the Federal Police presence.



A street in central Al Dawasah.

Returns to the neighbourhood continue to be slow, with a lack of services cited as the main concern. The residents have not been affected by the fighting in neighbouring Al Dandaan. The returns process is reportedly also an easy matter of getting approval from the local Federal Police. There are no IDPs from Mosul Al Qadima in the neighbourhood, they moved either to other neighbourhoods such as Hawa Al Kanisaa or to camps.

An NGO is providing water trucking, therefore families are receiving 500L of clean water per week. People in the neighbourhood are very poor and Federal Police are providing some food to locals. While the PDS system has not restarted in the area, the local man who assessed the families had also been tasked last week with taking people's PDS cards to the PDS site in Al Tayaran. He had then collected the PDS supplies to distribute within Al Dawasah. However, during a separate assessment, other locals reported a case of an individual collecting and destroying the PDS cards of Al Dawasah residents and stealing the PDS supplies.

Potentially provocative graffiti was seen in several places in the neighbourhood. The left door says 'Thanks Iran, Asa'ib'. This is seemingly referring to Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq, an Iranian backed Shia PMF militia who are allegedly responsible for various human rights abuses in other parts of Iraq. Given historic sectarian tensions, such graffiti can be offensive to

locals. The right door appears to be a tag by a member of the ERD and notes the district of Al Jawasac.



Graffiti in Al Dawasah .

Al Akidat

There are now approximately 300 families in Al Akidat. There are currently only a few returns to the neighbourhood per day, although it was estimated that 40% have now returned. Most of the 300 families are those who returned soon after the neighbourhood was retaken and only displaced very briefly. People continue to enter the neighbourhood for a short time to check on the state of their houses.

House to house screening of residents in Al Akidat had reportedly been conducted by Federal Police on 16 July. Federal Police also have local informants in the area although there did not seem to be a mukhtar present. Iraqi local police have recently been deployed to the area as a security force as well.

Returns to Mosul Al Qadima, even brief trips to retrieve belongs, are now reportedly being prevented by Federal Police, due to the insecurity of the area. However, this could not be verified. One man spoken to said he knew of several civilians who had returned to Mosul Al Qadima a few days prior and had been killed by an IED left in their home.

NGO support was reported to be 'sporadic.' The water plant in Al Jawasac was recently reopened, however the pipes are still not repaired. In order to distribute water, groups are instead trucking it directly to neighbourhoods, including Al Akidat. There are so few

returns in Al Dandaan that people are relying on private generators for electricity. However, in more populated areas private companies are using diesel generators to provide electricity. In Al Akidat for example, 1 ampere (which lasts about a month), costs 14,000 IQD and is available for 14 hours a day.