

Humanitarian Overview: Telafar City and Surrounding Areas

Iraq, 22 August 2017



Introduction

Total est. remaining pop. (Telafar District): 40,000¹
Pre-June 2014 population (Telafar District): 200,001-400,000²
Date of ISIL arrival: June 2014³
Humanitarian access: None
Date of data collection: 2-14 August 2017

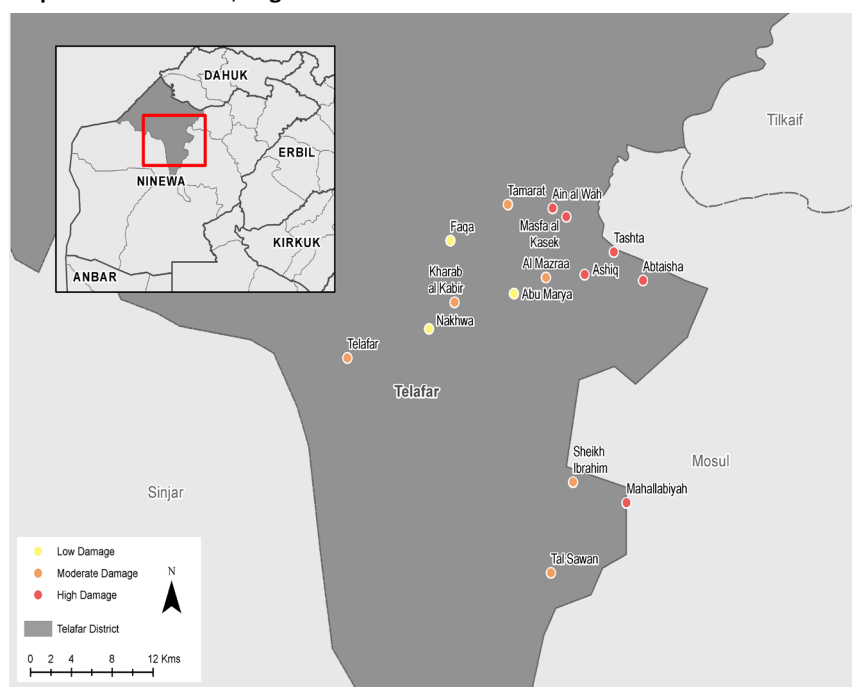
Overview

As of 20 August 2017, military operations by the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) positions in Telafar district have begun.⁴ UN OCHA estimates that up to 40,000 individuals remain in and around Telafar,⁵ and the offensive is likely to see increased flows of individuals out of the city and surrounding areas. The humanitarian situation in ISIL-controlled areas of Telafar district has led to acute need for assistance amongst remaining individuals.

Telafar city and the surrounding Telafar district have been under the control of ISIL since June 2014, after which they became inaccessible to humanitarian actors. As of November 2016, military operations around Mosul city cut remaining supply routes from Mosul and Syria,⁶ and resulted in the encirclement of ISIL-controlled areas of Telafar district. The deteriorating humanitarian situation in Telafar has displaced approximately 30,000 individuals since the end of April 2017 to emergency camps to the east and south of Mosul city.⁷

According to Key Informants (KIs) who recently fled the area, few civilians currently remain in Telafar city, having largely displaced to surrounding ISIL-controlled villages between November 2016 and February 2017. The most commonly reported reasons for individuals remaining in Telafar were an inability to displace, the risk of displacing, or to protect assets such as land and livestock.

Map 1: Telafar District, August 2017



Key findings

Summary of key findings and needs by sector:

Severity ranking below is based on indicators measuring the severity of each sector: 0= No severity to 4 = Extreme severity.

Telafar City and Surrounding Area

Healthcare	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The main hospital in Telafar city is reportedly still operational, though it has very little equipment and is primarily for use by armed groups. Those living in the villages generally do not go to Telafar hospital except in emergency cases – though treatment is minimal and all medicines are reportedly expired.There is reportedly a clinic in Abu Marya village, which is distributing medicines, but all medicines are expired, and there are no doctors. Some villages have community healers and/or individuals with first aid training who are able to treat basic ailments, but they have very few medical supplies.People with chronic diseases are particularly vulnerable – some had reportedly stockpiled medicines, but most of these stocks were exhausted.Children have reportedly not been vaccinated for 3 years.
Food Security	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Since the road to Syria was cut in November 2016, very few products have been brought in to ISIL-controlled areas of Telafar district. People had stockpiled food in preparation for the offensive, but these stocks are reportedly exhausted.The most available foods are animal products from local livestock – mainly meat, eggs, and milk – as well as salt, grain, barley, and bulghur. Some vegetables were said to be grown by farmers with property near springs, but they are grown in relatively small quantities. Goods such as sugar, tea and oil are smuggled in and are expensive.There is reportedly no fuel to cook food – with people resorting to burning trash and tires.There is reported to be a functional market in Abu Marya where shepherds could sell their livestock, and other vendors could sell limited food stuffs.Many KIs reported people were losing weight, and indicated that the majority of people were skipping meals due to a lack of food and resources.
WASH	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">People lost access to piped water in October 2016, when the electricity supply to the city and surrounding areas was cut.There was a water pipe from the Mosul Dam to the villages east of the city, but it was reportedly destroyed approximately a month ago.Most water comes from boreholes and is not potable. All water from boreholes is removed by hand as there is no electricity for pumps, and some respondents indicated that the size of the openings at the top of the boreholes only allows one water bottle to be removed at a time, limiting supply.KIs reported that several springs were used for drinking water, one in the Kelaa area of Telafar city, and one in Abu Marya village, though the water is not safe to drink.The consumption of untreated water is reportedly making people sick, with children especially susceptible to diarrhea.
Livelihoods	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Livelihood opportunities in AG-controlled areas of Telafar district drastically declined when the road to Syria was cut in November 2016.Retirees are able to receive their pensions from the Government of Iraq, though ISIL reportedly takes a percentage of these funds in exchange for allowing pension offices to operate.There are reported to be black market Hawalla systems for money transfers that also operate by providing ISIL with a percentage of funds moved into the area.Some people earn money through selling livestock, produce, water, firewood, and self-refined fuel. Others were said to be selling belongings, including cars and farming equipment, in order to provide for their families.
Education	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">All KIs indicated that no civilian children have attended school for 3 years – only children of families associated with ISIL – due to concerns over altered curricula. This indicates that children in ISIL-controlled areas were not compelled to attend schools operated by ISIL.Small numbers of KIs reported that children were being tutored at home, but the vast majority said children received no schooling at all.In some villages schools were being used as shelter by IDPs, though this trend has decreased as more people have left the district for government controlled territory.
Shelter	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Most KIs said that people are living in formal shelters, either in their own homes or homes vacated by others who had left areas under ISIL control.In some villages houses were reported to have been crowded from March through May, with those families who left Telafar city often living together in one house – in the village of Faja 50% of houses were reported to be hosting 7-8 families on average. However, this trend has declined as more people have moved out of ISIL controlled areas of Telafar district.IDPs were reported to be sheltering in public buildings such as schools and mosques, though this trend has declined as more people have moved out of ISIL-controlled areas of Telafar district.

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Methodology

REACH collected in-depth information from 26 recently displaced male Key Informants between the ages of 18 and 61 from Telafar City and surrounding villages. Data was collected through four Community Group Discussions (CGDs) between 2 and 14 August 2017, with 8-9 participants per CGD. The participants had all left ISIL-controlled areas of Telafar district between April and July 2017. All CGDs were conducted in Salamiyah IDP Camps 1 and 2.

Displacement

Initial movements of populations out of Telafar district began in June 2014, after ISIL took control of the area from the ISF. This first stage saw large numbers of primarily Shi'a Turkmen move out of their areas of origin to areas of southern Iraq, as well as abroad.

Following the beginning of the offensive to retake Mosul city in October 2016, the ISF also advanced in Telafar district, primarily moving from the south. By mid-November, 2016, the ISF had taken Telafar airport, 5km south of the outskirts of Telafar city.⁸ To escape increased levels of fighting, many of those remaining in Telafar city moved to surrounding ISIL-controlled villages, particularly to the east along the Mosul highway, and to the southeast along Zambar-Ibrahim mountain. CGD participants indicated that most movement out of Telafar city had slowed by February 2017, as the majority of the civilian population had reportedly left the city.

Beginning in the latter part of April 2017, individuals began to move out of Telafar district in increased numbers, encouraged by easier access to Kurdish-controlled areas northeast of the city, as well as the perceived weakened position of ISIL, which had actively prevented individuals from leaving their territory.

During the period from late April 2017 until mid-July 2017, the main displacement routes were through Kurdish-controlled areas to the northeast, and through ISF-controlled areas to the south. Those individuals moving

Most KIs had up to date information on the situation in Telafar as they remained in contact with friends and relatives who remained in ISIL-controlled areas. Due to the inherent limitations of qualitative data collection, presented findings should be understood as indicative only, rather than statistically representative of the target population.

through Kurdish-controlled areas were brought through Bartella screening center to emergency camps to the east and south of Mosul city. Many of those moving through ISF-controlled areas to the south spent extended periods of time in an informal camp in Tal Jarabiya before being brought through Scorpion Checkpoint south of Mosul city, and onward through Hamam al Alil to emergency camps.

Since mid-July, IDPs moving northeast along the Mosul highway have been directed towards ISF-controlled areas near Sheikh Qarra. CGD participants reported that this journey is made on foot through mountainous terrain - often at night - and takes between 14-20 hours. Some reported that individuals had died along the route. From Sheikh Qarra IDPs were moved by private vehicles to Badush, and from there on to emergency camps.

Other KIs - and particularly those with vehicles - reported moving through ISF-controlled areas to the east of Telafar city. Those with registration for their vehicles were allowed to travel on to the screening site in Badush, while those without proper registration for the vehicles were reportedly made to leave those vehicles at a mustering point near the frontline, and were transported by Iraqi Government vehicles to Badush before moving on to emergency camps. CGD participants also reported that IDPs continue to move through Iraqi government frontlines to the south of the district.

Intentions

According to CGD participants, residents of Telafar district have been anticipating a military offensive on the remaining ISIL-controlled positions in Telafar district since October/November 2016. As such, many have planned for the approach of Iraqi government forces, though difficulty of communication inside ISIL-controlled areas has meant that individuals have had limited information concerning when the offensive would actually begin. However, CGD participants agreed that the vast majority of the remaining population of Telafar district would leave ISIL-controlled territory if given the opportunity, as shortages of food and healthcare have reached a critical stage. Those who would remain were reportedly those unable to relocate - mainly the elderly,

sick, and disabled - or those wishing to protect property. Given the start of the current military operation, it can therefore be expected that the majority of the remaining population will displace from their current areas of origin if possible for them to do so.

When asked about future intentions, CGD participants overwhelmingly indicated that recently displaced residents of Telafar district would choose to return to their areas of origin, provided that the security situation has stabilised. The stabilisation of the security context was clearly prioritized over the resumption of services.

Table 1: Reported prices Telafar district, August 2017

Product	Prices Telafar District (August 2017) ⁹
Flour (1kg)	500 IQD (mixed wheat and barley) (0.4 USD)
Rice (1kg)	10,000-15,000 IQD (9-13 USD)
Sugar (1kg)	40,000-60,000 IQD (34-51 USD)
Cooking oil (1L)	35,000-50,000 IQD (30-43 USD)
Tomatoes (1kg)	4,000-5,000 IQD (3-4 USD)
Meat (1kg)	7,000-10,000 IQD (6-9 USD)
Fuel (1L)	10,000 IQD (9 USD)
Kerosene (1L)	10,000 IQD (9 USD)

Footnotes:

¹ UN OCHA Iraq, [Telafar Flash Update No. 1 \(20 August 2017\)](#).

² UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), [Map of Iraq Total Population by District](#), 2003.

³ The Guardian, [Iraqi City of Tal Afar Falls to ISIS Insurgents](#), 17 June 2014.

⁴ BBC News, [IS Conflict: Iraq Launches Ground Offensive in Tal Afar](#), 20 August 2017.

⁵ UN OCHA Iraq, [Telafar Flash Update No. 1 \(20 August 2017\)](#).

⁶ IB Times, [Battle for Mosul: Iraqi Forces and Shia Militia Cut Off Key Road Link to ISIS Stronghold](#), 24 November 2016.

⁷ UN OCHA Iraq, [Telafar Flash Update No. 1 \(20 August 2017\)](#).

⁸ CNN, [Iraqi Forces Capture Key Air Base Near Mosul](#), 17 November 2016.

⁹ Exchange rate of 1 USD = 1,168 IQD taken from [www.xe.com](#) on 21 August 2017.

Map 2: Displacement Routes from Telafar District, April-August 2017

