

Thousands flee as Iraqi forces advance on ISIL-held Tal Afar – UN

21 August 2017 – The top United Nations humanitarian official in Iraq has warned against the consequences of displacement as thousands of civilians are expected to flee from Tal Afar and surrounding communities during the Iraqi military operation to retake these areas from the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) terrorist group.

“Thousands of people are fleeing Tal Afar for safety,” [said](#) Lise Grande, the Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, in a press release issued yesterday. “Families are trekking for 10 to 20 hours in extreme heat to reach mustering points. They are arriving exhausted and dehydrated.”

More than 30,000 people have already fled the district, said Ms. Grande, noting that it is not known how many civilians are still in the areas where fighting is occurring, but preparation is under way for thousands more to flee in coming days and weeks.

“Food and water are running out, and people lack the basic necessities to survive,” she said, stressing that nothing is more important than protecting civilians during the conflict while urging the parties to the conflict to avoid civilian casualties.

“The Government is leading the humanitarian operation, providing transport and aid. Humanitarian partners are helping to cover gaps by providing life-saving assistance at mustering points and supporting families when they reach emergency sites and camps,” said Ms. Grande.

As of 20 August, less than 50 percent of the funding requested in the 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan for Iraq has been received, she said, underscoring the need for additional resources.