

DURING THE MOSUL OPERATION,
NOTHING IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

(Baghdad, 21 September 2016): Humanitarian agencies are racing against the clock to prepare for the humanitarian impact of the military campaign to oust the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) from Mosul, Iraq's second largest city.

In a worst case scenario, as many as 1.2 to 1.5 million Iraqis are likely to be impacted and as many as one million may try to flee the city in search of safety and assistance.

“Civilians will be at extreme risk,” said Lise Grande, Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq. “The conditions families will be facing are terrifying. They will be at risk from crossfire, bombardments and could be used as human shields. They may be unable to flee or, alternatively forced to run,” said Ms. Grande. “Families may be separated. Many may be killed or wounded.”

“What happens to civilians will depend on how armed forces behave and operate,” said Ms. Grande. “This is why we are today calling on all parties to the conflict to uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law to do everything possible to protect civilians and ensure they have access to assistance.”

Although 10 million Iraqis currently need some form of humanitarian assistance, only 54 per cent of the 2016 Humanitarian Response Plan for Iraq has been funded. Already, more than half of the projects included in the appeal have been forced to close or could not start due to lack of funding.

In addition, humanitarian organizations have requested US\$284 million to prepare for the Mosul operation, which is likely to be the single largest, most complex in the world in 2016. To date, half of this amount has been received.

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