



IRAQ: AS FIGHTING INTENSIFIES, MSF BOLSTERS RESPONSE AROUND MOSUL

With the battle for Mosul intensifying, international medical humanitarian organisation Médecins Sans Frontières/ Doctors Without Borders (MSF) is setting up surgical field hospitals to treat the wounded and increasing its support to displaced populations.

As the fighting intensifies in and around Mosul, the humanitarian crisis in Iraq continues to worsen. As part of its response to the widespread medical needs, MSF has established one field hospital with surgical capacity about 30 km north of the city and is setting up another in Qayyarah, some 60 km to the south.

“The objective of these hospitals is to treat patients severely wounded because of the ongoing fighting,” said Barbara Turchet, MSF Head of Mission in Iraq. “The hospital north of Mosul is located on the main road to Dohuk and aims to provide stabilization and lifesaving emergency surgery. For the most critically wounded in this area, offering care as close as possible to the front lines can be a matter of life or death.”

“Among the first patients to be admitted were a family whose house was hit by a rocket,” Turchet continued. “Two members of the family were treated in the MSF facility. Two others were stabilized and referred to the hospital in Al Shekhan. Most of the patients treated or stabilized in the field hospital thus far had injuries caused by shrapnel or blasts.”

The field hospital being set up in Qayyarah comes in response to medical needs teams are seeing south of Mosul. As with the other facility to the north, the goal is to provide surgical capacity within the compound of the existing Primary Health Care Centre (PHCC) in Qayyarah—as close to the frontlines as possible.

The emergency room and the hospitalisation wards are ready. The surgical facility is being installed temporarily under inflatable tents, pending the completion of a more robust structure inside retrofitted shipping containers.

Both field hospitals are linked to pre-existing medical facilities in nearby cities. Patients are being transported between them by ambulances managed by the Directorate of Health (DoH). The medical teams in the MSF facilities are made up of staff seconded from the DoH who are now working in concert with international MSF staff.

To further augment MSF's response, the organisation is planning to deploy advanced medical posts even closer to the frontlines, sites where patients can be stabilized before referral for surgery at the two field hospitals.

MSF mobile teams already providing medical and mental health care to internally displaced people in Erbil and Ninewa governorates have expanded their reach to those most recently displaced by the Mosul campaign and now residing in camps in Zelekan (northwest of Erbil) and Hasansham (west of Erbil).

MSF has worked continuously in Iraq since 2006. In order to ensure its independence, MSF does not accept funding from any government or international agency for its programs in Iraq, and relies solely on private donations from the general public around the world to carry out its work.