
UN 'VERY WORRIED' ABOUT THOUSANDS FLEEING IRAQ OFFENSIVE

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The United Nations said Thursday it was concerned that many of the 35,000 people recently displaced by fighting in Iraqs Anbar province were still very close to the front lines.

Thousands of civilians have been fleeing Hit, 145 kilometers (90 miles) west of Baghdad, as security forces close in on fighters from ISIS hunkered down in the city.

The UN doesnt have full access and we are very worried that some of the families who are escaping are in areas very close to the front lines, the UNs humanitarian coordinator in Iraq, Lise Grande, said in a statement.

The UN said aid agencies were providing food, water and hygiene kits to some of the people displaced but stressed that the affected areas were hard to reach.

Hit lies along the Euphrates, in the heart of Anbar, and is currently the main focus of the Iraqi security forces battle to retake ground lost to IS in 2014.

Grande said the number of displaced people from Hit seeking urgent medical assistance was an indication of how hard the conditions were.

The mobile clinics dealt with 1,300 consultations during just their first two days, she said.

The UN said 53,000 people had already been displaced in Anbar province this year prior to the latest wave in the Hit area.

According to the International Organization for Migration, 44 percent of the more than 3.3 million people displaced in Iraq since the beginning of 2014 are from Anbar.

The statement said only nine percent of the \$861 million the UN and its partners requested in January to provide emergency relief to 7.3 million vulnerable Iraqis had so far been received.

Kaynak/Source: