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**IS THIS THE END OF ISLAMIC STATE? IRAQ ARMY FIGHTS CALIPHATE IN BATTLE'**

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JUST before dawn yesterday, as residents in the Iraqi town of Mosul began waking up, something could be heard in the air.

No, it wasnt the sound of air strikes, something that has become a familiar force in the last city still under control of the ultra-hard line Islamic State.

This time, it was a beacon of hope.

The Iraqi army dropped tens of thousands of newspapers and magazines from the air, containing leaflets warning residents that an offensive to recapture their city from IS was in its final stages of preparation, according to Iraqs Joint Operations Command, which distributed images of some of the leaflets.

IS controlled territory shrunk by 16 per cent in the first nine months of 2016, according to analysis released by IHS Markit.

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Kaynak/Source: