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## **IRAQ'S GOVERNMENT FERRYING RELIEF SUPPLIES TO MOSUL**

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Mosul: The Iraqi government on Sunday sent truckloads of food, heating oil and drinking water to residents of areas retaken from the Daesh group in and around the northern city of Mosul as more civilians streamed out of the city amid intense fighting between the militants and troops.

Diaa Sallal, the top relief official at the Ministry of Immigration and Displaced, told The Associated Press that the supplies were being delivered to the towns of Bartella and Qayara, east and south of Mosul respectively, as well as the outlying Mosul neighbourhoods of Ekhaa First and Ekhaa Second.

Sallal, reached by telephone in Iraq's northern Kurdish region, gave no further details.

The government launched a campaign to retake Mosul from Daesh in October. The fighting has caused shortages of vital supplies like clean drinking water, according to the UN and Iraqi officials.

On Sunday, heavy fighting flared up in the eastern sector of Mosul, with both sides exchanging heavy gunfire from rooftops in the Shaimaa neighbourhood. Daesh militants, meanwhile, shelled the district with a heavy barrage of mortars, according to an AP team that witnessed the battle.

Scores of families braved the fighting, leaving their homes and fleeing IS-held districts for the relative safety of the Shaimaa and Entissar neighbourhoods, both retaken by government troops, or camps for the displaced at a safe distance outside the city.

Hamdan Al Abed, an 18-year-old Shaimaa resident, broke down in tears at the sight of members of the Iraqi special forces in his neighbourhood and later recounted the brutality of the group in Mosul, which was captured by the militants in June 2014.

We couldn't resist them, we didn't have weapons and they would kill anyone against them, he told the AP. When the security forces approached our neighbourhood, all the Daesh fighters fled with their families deeper inside Mosul, he said.

Fighting in Mosul has been mostly focused in the part of the city east of the Tigris River, with the special forces deployed there progressing slowly due to the spirited resistance of IS and fears over the safety of civilians. There are an estimated 1 million civilians inside the city, Iraq's second largest and the last major urban center still held by Daesh in Iraq.