Medicine in Mosul

As the military offensive to retake Mosul grows nearer more and more humanitarian agencies are pressuring governments to increase the amount of medical aid is being sent to the area for civilians, as well as setting up more refugee camps. There is not much known about the medical situation in Mosul, but it is expected that there will be a large outflow of civilians as the battle progresses and that many of them will require immediate medical help.

According to a press release by the International Medical Corps, there are about 1.2 million people already displaced in the area around Mosul and that “hundreds of thousands of additional people could flee Mosul” as the offensive progresses. This poses a serious need for the international community to provide medical assistance both in the form of treatments as simply providing shelter for the refugees.

Already many countries have promised to increase money flowing into the refugee effort to accommodate the influx. The UK pledged 14 million pounds to the effort, for the purpose of improving living conditions by setting up temporary housing as well as providing medical care and physicians to the refugees. Australia announced that it was going to send another 7.6 million on top of the already 46 million they have provided since 2014. The US pledged back in September to provide another 181 million to Iraq in aid as well.

There isn’t much known about the condition of the health care system in Mosul at the moment. What is known however comes from the doctors, nurses, and care providers inside the city, as reported by Niqash an agency that reports on events occurring in Iraq. What is known is that the medical system has been becoming worse and worse as the incursion continues. There are no vaccines for children, very little opportunity for people needing operations or treatments to get it in a timely manner. The costs of treatment are about what they are across Iraq, but the people in the city have no money to pay for them because of a lack of work. Also the funding being provided to the hospitals is estimated to be only a third of what it is supposed to be, as the rest is confiscated by ISIS.

There are also reports coming out that members of ISIS as well as their families are given preferential treatment. Doctors are unable to refuse treatment to them and often are forced to provide it free of charge. This cuts into the ability of civilians not aligned with the group to suffer due to lack of availability. Because of the decreased funding, doctors are earning less money and are losing money when they provide free services to the fighters. In addition because the hospitals have so little funding to work with they are unable to get the necessary medical supplies.

Many humanitarian agencies are fearful that when the offensive finally does

reach the city there will be a large portion of civilians in need of immediate medical attention, because the fighting may result in injuries to them. For the international community to help out the expected hundreds of thousands of refugees that will be fleeing the city in the coming weeks, they need to ensure that there is plenty of support in place, including shelter, basic necessities, food and water, medicine, and medical care in the form of doctors and nurses.

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