

Recapturing Mosul

Mosul, the second largest city in Iraq, has become the center of much attention lately due to its capture by ISIS in 2014, and recent attempts from Iraqi, Kurdish, and allied forces to reclaim the city. ISIS, or the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, is a terrorist group with the ultimate goal of spreading a thoroughly obsolete and zealot religion around the world that is far from what most Islamic individuals practice today.

Recapturing Mosul has so far proved to be an unimaginably difficult task, but with the assistance of the United States, the ability to retake the city has become much more of an achievable reality. Currently, there are nearly 5,000 American troops serving in Iraq. Pentagon spokesman Peter Cook described the United States as “playing an adviser role, an enabler role for these Iraqi forces,” in the fight for Mosul.

Since ISIS captured Mosul in 2014, the Jihadi group has used the city for the main purpose of producing chemical weapons. Mosul also has a high profusion of oil. Mosul once harbored multiple sites and artifacts that dated back to the Assyrian Empire; however, these have now been destroyed by ISIS forces.

Since the invasion in 2014, ISIS has been the cause of countless changes in society and culture in Mosul, including the treatment and expected social behavior of women. Hanaa, a female citizen of the city of Mosul, described ISIS as being “very strict about the dress code for women,” and that “women have to be fully covered up in black, head to toe.” Skye Wheeler, women’s rights emergencies researcher at Human Rights Watch, described the treatment of women under the Islamic State over time: “The longer they are held by ISIS, the more horrific life becomes for Yezidi women, bought and sold, brutally raped, their children torn from them.”

While Iraq and its allies have recently managed to retake multiple villages, ISIS is setting up suicide attacks throughout Mosul targeting mostly Iraqi and Kurdish soldiers. Iraq's fight to win back Mosul will continue, as will the determination of ISIS to keep control of the city.