

《伊拉克军队即将解放整个泰勒阿费尔》

Iraqi security forces came close to liberating the whole city of Tal Afar from ISIL militants on Saturday after a week-long offensive designed to dislodge the militants from the city and surrounding areas, the Iraqi military said.

The army's 9th Armored Division and paramilitary Hashd Shaabi units recaptured the neighborhoods of al-Muthanna al-Oula and al-Muthanna al-Thaniyah in the afternoon, and raised Iraqi national flags on some of their buildings, Lt. Gen. Abdul-Amir Yarallah from the Joint Operations Command (JOC) said in a statement.



An Iraqi soldier flashes the victory gesture as the Iraqi forces advance through a street in the town of Tal Afar, west of Mosul on August 26, 2017. /AFP Photo

Earlier in the day, the Iraqi troops recaptured another eight neighborhoods in the city center, including al-Qal'a neighborhood and its old Tal Afar Citadel, a ruined Ottoman fortress.

The latest military push, backed by Iraqi and international aircraft, enabled security forces to almost take full control of Tal Afar, some 70 km west of Mosul, except the small neighborhood of al-Askari and the industrial area in the northeast of the city.

During the day, the Iraqi troops also freed 14 villages, Sheikh Ibrahim Mountain and the Zambar mountain range in the southeast and northeast of Tal Afar, according to JOC statements.

Meanwhile, Yarallah said in a brief statement that the operations will continue until the troops liberate the town of Ayadhiyah, some 11 km north of Tal Afar, and the surrounding villages.



Armoured vehicles and Humvees of the Iraqi forces, backed by the Hashed Al-Shaabi (Popular Mobilization units), advance through the city of Tal Afar, west of Mosul on August 26, 2017. /AFP Photo

The Tal Afar area is about 3,206 square km, which consists of the city of Tal Afar and three towns: Zummar, which is under control of the Kurdish security forces, Mahalabiyah, which was freed from ISIL militants during past few days, and Ayadhiyah, which is still under ISIL control.

The whole Tal Afar area consists of 47 villages scattered around the city and its three towns.

The majority of the population in the Tal Afar area are Sunni and Shiite Turkomans, in addition to the Kurds and other ethnic minorities.

On August 20, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, also the commander-in-chief of Iraqi forces, declared the start of an operation to retake control of Tal Afar and the nearby areas from ISIL militants.

The Tal Afar area, some 70 km west of Mosul, is the last ISIL stronghold in the province of Nineveh.

