

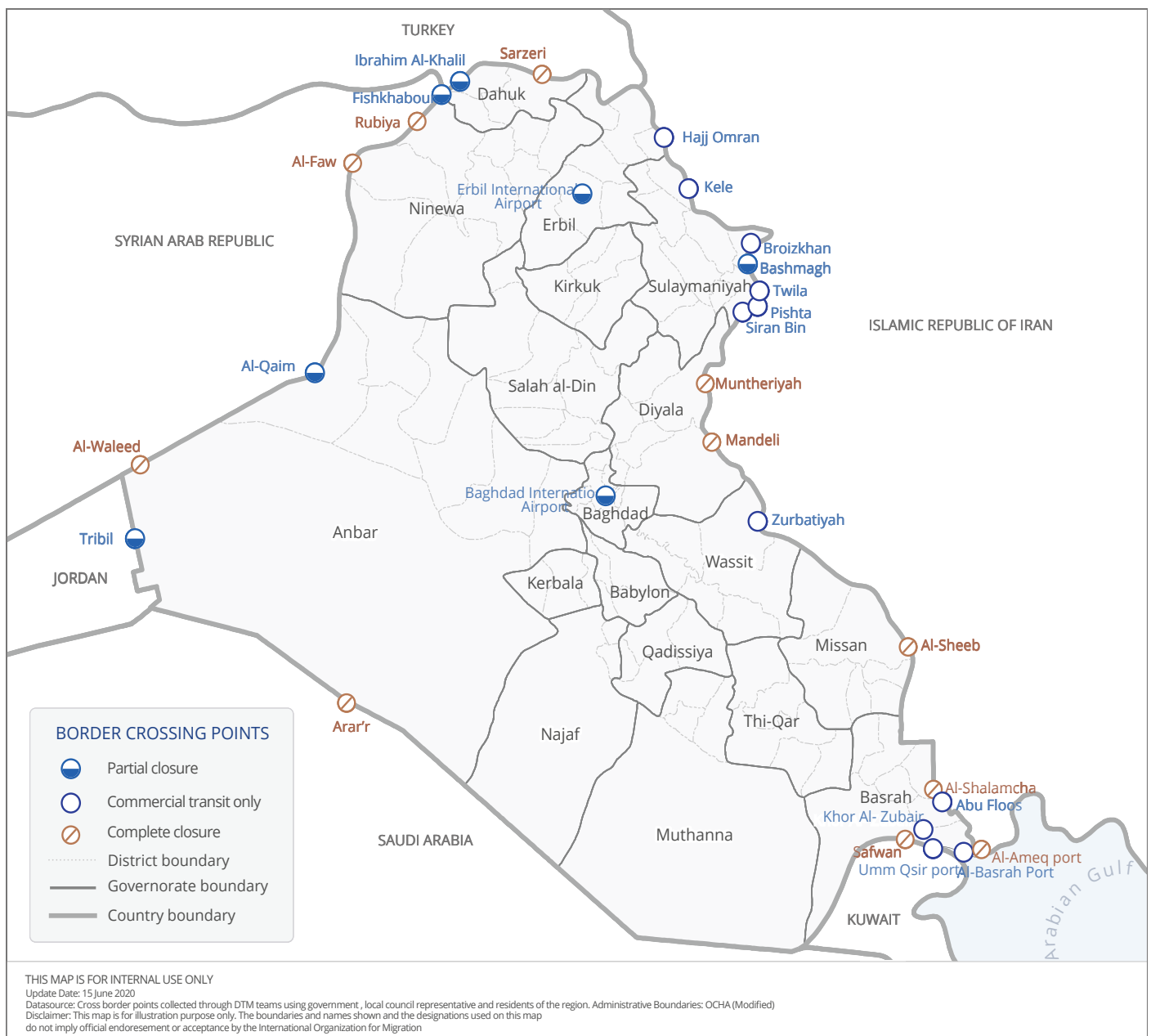
IRAQ MOBILITY RESTRICTIONS DUE TO COVID-19

2 – 15 JUNE 2020

In response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, Iraqi authorities have imposed mobility restrictions since March 2020 aimed at curbing the spread of the virus. These measures include restrictions on travel and limitations on freedom of movement, such as the closure of airports and points of entry (PoEs) along land borders and maritime boundaries, as well as domestic movement restrictions. IOM Iraq's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), with funding from the European Union and the

US Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, assessed 29 locations between 2 June and 15 June 2020, of which 11 were reported as closed, 7 partially closed, and 11 open only for commercial traffic. This report presents an overview of mobility restrictions for the 18 monitored PoEs which have remained partially open, as well as for Iraq in general. More details can be found in Table 1.

Map 1: Status of border crossing points as of 15 June 2020



Data has been collected on the following geographic units:

- **2 airports** (currently or recently functioning airports with designated International Air Transport Association codes): Baghdad and Erbil International Airports.
- **23 land border** crossing points (international border crossing points on land): Abu Floos, Al-Shalamcha, Al-Sheeb, Al-Waleed, Al-Qa'em, Arar'r, Broizkhan, Bashmagh, Fao, Fishkhabour, Ibrahim Khalil, Haji Omran, Kele, Muntheriyah, Mandeli, Pshta, Rabia, Safwan, Sarzeri, Siran Bin, Trebil, Twila and Zurbatiyah.
- **4 sea border** crossing points (international border crossing points on the sea, rivers or lakes): Umm Qasr, Al-Basra, Khor Al Zubair and Al-Ameq.

MOBILITY RESTRICTIONS

Between 2 and 13 June, in response to increased COVID-19 cases, the Government of Iraq (GOI) imposed nationwide lockdown measures to limit the spread of the virus. Civilian movement restrictions remained in place, while security, healthcare, and media professionals, as well as those with government permission remained exempt from this rule. Food businesses, health facilities and pharmacies remained open with strict health regulations in place, with approaches to local law enforcement of restrictions continuing to vary across the country.

On 5 June, the GOI announced an easing of these measures from 14 June until further notice, allowing civilian movements within governorates between 6 pm and 5 am, and also ordered security forces to tighten control of existing restrictions.

Local jurisdictions continue to apply their own rules relating to civilian movements and the opening of businesses. As such, on 14 June, governorates of Baghdad, Muthanna, Maysan, Wasit, Anbar, Babil, Najaf, Basra, and Karbala along with Diwaniya city in Qadisiyyah governorate partially lifted restrictions, allowing civilians to travel and work within governorates between 5am and 6pm from Sundays to Wednesdays.

Further, on 3 June, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) announced the optional easing of total lockdown restrictions previously announced as effective from 1 to 6 June. This allowed Governors to adopt more flexible rules relating to civilians' movements within their respective governorates in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI). As such, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah governorates lifted total movement restrictions within cities, and allowed businesses to re-open under strict health and safety regulations. However, civilian movement between KRI's governorates as well as between KRI and Federal Iraq remained prohibited. The KRG continues to administer an electronic application process for citizens to apply for movement between governorates for important cases.

Additionally, on 5 June, the Iraqi Civil Aviation Authority (ICAA) announced an extension to the ban on commercial passenger flights until 1 July, however cargo and charter flights remained operational between 2 and 15 June. Border points of entry (PoEs) including international airports remain closed to travellers

until further notice. This ICAA decree, consistent with those before it, makes an exemption for the necessary movement of diplomats, international organizations, and the United Nations.

In terms of legal regulations, residency offices in the KRI remain open following closure during the Eid holidays in May. Those with temporary visas, residency cards and work permits that have expired during lockdown are not incurring any penalties. Given the high level of requests for document renewals, fee waivers have been granted for those who were not able to renew their documents within the first few days after the reopening of residency offices.

At the federal level, fees are not applied to visas that have expired after 21 February 2020. Moreover, migrants in Iraq whose countries of origin do not have a diplomatic presence in Iraq can apply for a travel permission letter from the federal Ministry of Interior. Migrants whose countries of origin do have a diplomatic presence can only travel with a permission letter from relevant embassy offices. In both cases, there must be an agreement between Iraq and the relevant countries of origin. Additional permits are required for workers in essential services, such as health-care workers and suppliers of essential goods, proving they have the right to move freely for work-related purposes.

Rules surrounding the transport of goods across borders continue to differ across the country, with some authorities allowing any items to be imported or exported, while others only permit limited items such as food or oil to be moved. Consistent with previous months during COVID-19 lockdown, some points of entry operate on certain business days only.

Table 1 displays the status of all points of entry that were partially closed to migrants or opened for commercial transit only across Iraq between 2 and 15 June. Changes to operational status include Erbil's Hajj Omran crossing and Wassit's Zurbatiyah crossing opening for commercial transit only after being respectively partially closed or completely closed to migrants in the last period (19 May-1 June). Additionally, Bashmagh crossing in Sulaymaniyah has partially opened to migrants after its full closure previously.

Table 1. Status and restrictions imposed at selected points of entry

GOVERNORATE	NAME OF THE POINTS OF ENTRY	BORDERING COUNTRY	OPERATIONAL STATUS	TYPE OF MOVEMENT ALLOWED
Anbar	Trebil	Jordan	Partial closure	Incoming
Anbar	Al-Qa'em	Syria	Partial closure	Incoming
Baghdad	Baghdad International Airport	Airport	Partial closure	Special incoming and outgoing flights
Basra	Abu Floos	Iran	Commercial transit only	Incoming
Basra	Khor Al Zubair	Seaport	Commercial transit only	Both
Basra	Umm Qasr	Seaport	Commercial transit only	Incoming
Basra	Al-Basra	Seaport	Commercial transit only	Outgoing
Duhok	Ibrahim Khalil	Turkey	Partial closure	Both
Duhok	Fishkhabour	Syria	Partial closure	Both
Erbil	Hajj Omran	Iran	Commercial transit only	Both
Erbil	Erbil International Airport	Airport	Partial closure	Special incoming and outgoing
Sulaimaniyah	Kele	Iran	Commercial transit only	Incoming
Sulaimaniyah	Broizkhan	Iran	Commercial transit only	Both
Sulaimaniyah	Twila	Iran	Commercial transit only	Incoming
Sulaimaniyah	Siran Bin	Iran	Commercial transit only	Incoming
Sulaimaniyah	Bashmagh	Iran	Partial closure	Both
Sulaimaniyah	Pshta	Iran	Commercial transit only	Incoming
Wassit	Zurbatiyah	Iran	Commercial transit only	Incoming

Information that has been updated since the last reporting period is highlighted in yellow.

METHODOLOGY

Since March 2020, DTM Iraq has been supporting the DTM Global Team in a new data collection exercise aimed at better understanding how COVID-19 affects global mobility. This assessment has involved 171 IOM Country Missions worldwide with the objective to provide information on the capacity of current PoEs to mitigate and/or respond adequately and in a targeted manner to the current COVID-19 pandemic.

This data collection exercise has been led by DTM HQ and coordinated with other IOM departments, and relevant data has been collected and updated at the country level on an ongoing basis using a web application.

In Iraq, data has been collected through the IOM DTM field team composed of over 100 staff members deployed across Iraq (20% of enumerators are female), and supplemented with preexisting IOM Migration Management Unit data. IOM's field staff has collected data by phone with Key Informants (KIs) using a large, well-established network that includes local authorities, security forces and customs employees. The KIs' responses aim to represent the actual situation at the monitoring points, and are not based on their opinions, unless phrased otherwise. Whenever possible, triangulation of findings was conducted with more than one KI per monitoring point.

To systematically capture the status of each location, the following operational statuses for border crossing points are defined as follows:

- Partial closure (indicating that only a reduced number of individuals can use the border crossing point to exit and enter the country, territory or area, due to limited hours of operation or partial closure for specific nationalities)
- Closed (for both entry and exit)
- Open for entry and exit
- Open for commercial traffic only
- Other
- Unknown

For further information on the methodology, definitions and explanation please refer to the [Methodology Framework](#).

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