

# POPULATION FLOW OVERVIEW, TRAVELLERS' PROFILE AND COVID-19 AWARENESS

DATA COLLECTION PERIOD: SEPTEMBER 2020

DECEMBER 2020

DTM Iraq collects data at border crossing points with neighboring countries – the Islamic Republic of Iran (Iran), the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria) and Turkey – to better understand migration movements in the Middle East. Cross-border monitoring is drawn from IOM's DTM standard methodology, designed to capture and describe migration flows, and is part of the Regional Evidence for Migration Analysis and Policy (REMAP) project, funded by the European Union, targeting Afghanistan, Bangladesh, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq and Pakistan.

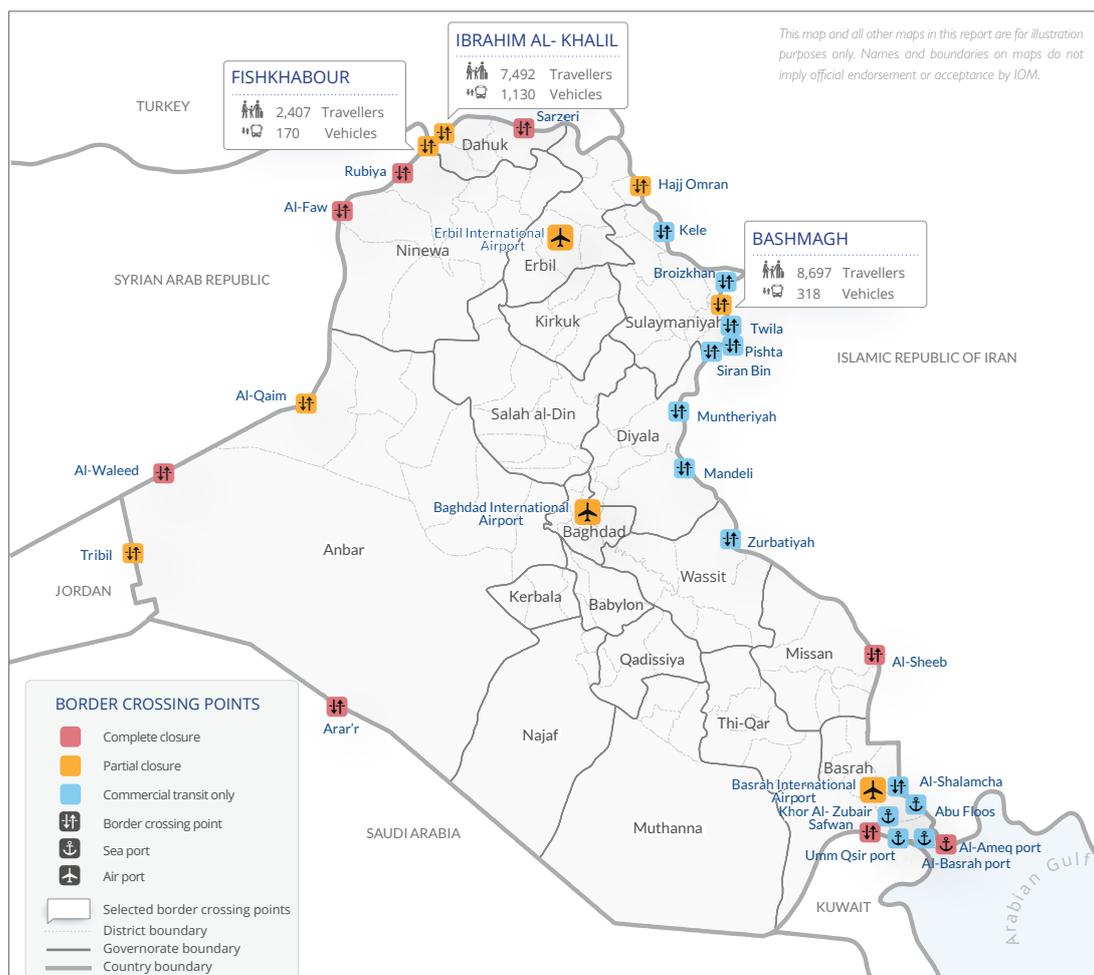
The data for this report was gathered through two separate approaches: a headcount of all travellers entering or leaving Iraq and a sample survey of travellers. Border crossing points were selected based on observations conducted in May 2019 by IOM's Rapid Assessment and Response Teams (RARTs), when five border crossing points were selected for data collection: Ibrahim Al-Khalil, bordering Turkey, Fishkhabour, bordering Syria, and Bashmagh, Zurbatiyah (Wassit Terminal) and Al-Shalamcha, bordering Iran.<sup>1</sup> Due to mobility restrictions imposed by Iraqi authorities since March 2020 aimed at curbing the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19),

data collection took place at three out of five selected border points.<sup>2</sup>

The report presents an overview of the overall movements of travellers observed at each of three monitored border crossing points during September 2020, their socio-demographic characteristics, and reasons for travel. It is also focused on their awareness of COVID-19 symptoms, prevention measures and risk factors.

In this report, the term 'travellers' refers to all individuals who are crossing the international border with Iraq for any given reason and thus includes several categories of people. First, travellers who are entering or exiting Iraq temporarily to visit family, do trade or business, or receive medical treatment. Second, travellers who are planning to stay or leave the country for a longer period – or even indefinitely – for work-, family-, or education-related purposes, or humanitarian reasons. Third, travellers who are planning to change or have already changed their place of usual residence and can hence be considered migrants.<sup>3</sup>

Map 1: Status of border crossing points as at 21 September 2020



1 Further details on the selection of respondents, survey methodology and how the border crossing points were selected are available in the Methodological Overview on the last page or at the Iraq DTM portal. Available at [http://iraqdtm.iom.int/files/Remap/iotm\\_dtm\\_CROSS\\_BORDER\\_MOVEMENT\\_MONITORING\\_METHODOLOGICAL\\_OVERVIEW.pdf](http://iraqdtm.iom.int/files/Remap/iotm_dtm_CROSS_BORDER_MOVEMENT_MONITORING_METHODOLOGICAL_OVERVIEW.pdf)

2 Please refer to the report "Iraq Mobility Restrictions due to COVID-19" for more details on the mobility restrictions imposed since March 2020, aimed to curb the spread of the virus. Available at <http://iraqdtm.iom.int/COVID19/MovementRestrictions>

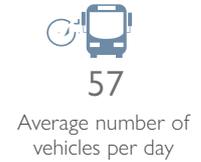
3 According to the IOM definition, "migrant – an umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common lay understanding of a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons" (IOM (2019), Glossary on Migration – Switzerland). For the purpose of collecting data on migration, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) defines "international migrant" as "any person who changes his or her country of usual residence" and "usual residence" as "the place at which the person has lived continuously for most of the past 12 months (that is, for at least six months and one day) or for at least the past 12 months, not including temporary absences for holidays or work assignments, or intends to live for at least six months" (UN DESA (1998), Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration, Revision 1 – USA).



# BORDER POINT PROFILE

## IBRAHIM AL-KHALIL

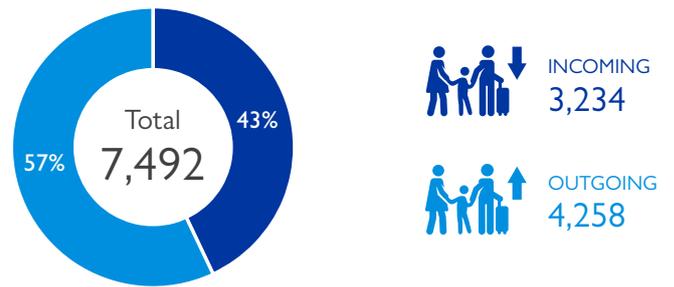
BORDERING COUNTRY: **TURKEY**



At the Ibrahim Al-Khalil point, data collection took place from 1 September to 30 September 2020, weekdays only from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. During this period, this border crossing point was open every day for 24 hours for incoming and outgoing travellers. Incoming travellers needed permission from the Ministry of Interior except for Iraqis and those with a residence permit in Iraq. Iranians were not allowed to enter. Outgoing travellers could exit without permission from the Ministry of Interior except for Iraqis, who needed permission from the Ministry of Interior.

All residents of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) had to be tested for Covid-19 when they entered the border points. They were afterwards required to quarantine at home for 48 hours for the test results to be processed. Travellers residing in Federal Iraq were not subject to this testing and quarantine rule.

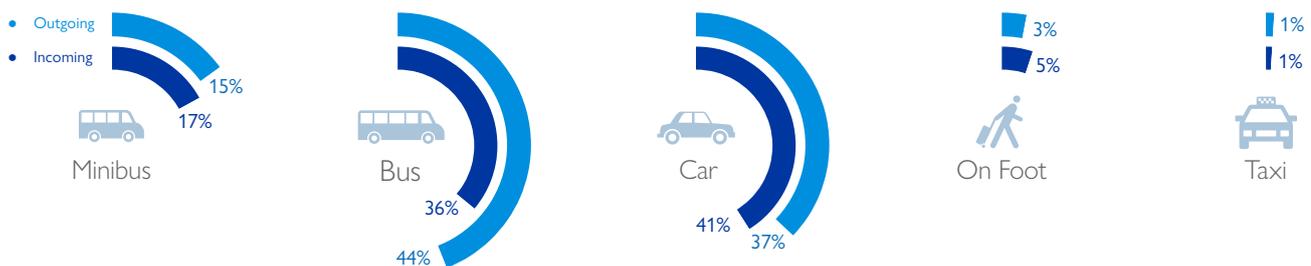
Number and percentage of travellers by type of flow



During this period, the Ibrahim Al-Khalil border crossing point witnessed a larger flow of travellers as compared to the previous month. DTM identified 7,492 individuals crossing the Ibrahim Al-Khalil border point, with 3,234 entering Iraq after being abroad (incoming flow) and 4,258 individuals exiting Iraq to another country (outgoing flow). On average, the border was crossed by 375 travellers per day (combining incoming and outgoing flows) and 57 vehicles (including private cars, buses, and minibuses). This is significantly higher number compared to the previous round collected in between 4 and 27 August when 2,073 individuals crossing the Ibrahim Al-Khalil border point.

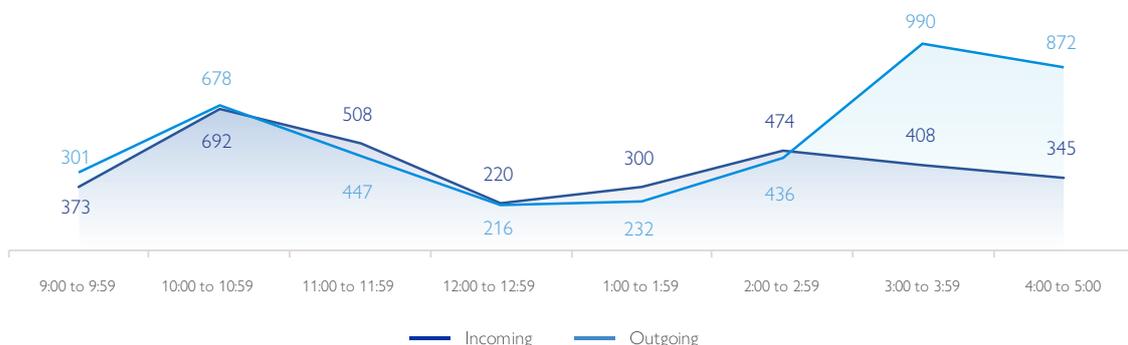
Around half of incoming travellers crossed this border point by bus or minibus, around two fifths crossed by car and only few crossed on foot or by taxi. Around three fifths of outgoing travellers crossed this border point by bus or minibus, around two fifths crossed by car, and few crossed on foot or taxi.

Percentage of travellers by means of transportation



The number of outgoing travellers slightly exceeded the number of incoming travellers for this border crossing point with peak crossings between 3:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m.

Number of travellers by type of flow during the day (9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.)





# TRAVELLERS' PROFILE

## IBRAHIM AL-KHALIL

BORDERING COUNTRY: TURKEY

Most incoming and outgoing travellers were men. Women represented 20 per cent of incoming and 22 per cent of outgoing flows. Around three fifths of incoming and half of outgoing travellers were aged 35–60 years and the rest were aged 18–34 years, with a small portion of travellers older than 60 years (that is, 4% of incoming and 4% of outgoing travellers).

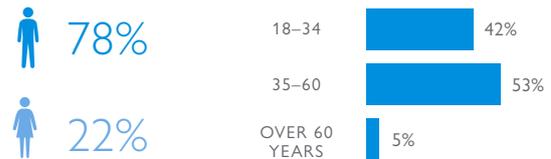
Around three fifths of incoming flows were Iraqis, around two fifths were Turkish, with few travellers from other countries. Incoming Iraqis either reside in Iraq (58%) or abroad (42%). Most incoming foreign travellers usually reside abroad, that is, 94 per cent of Turkish nationals and 76 per cent of other nationals. The main reasons for entering Iraq were business or trade (38%), followed by returning to country of habitual residence (32%) and family visits (22%). Most incoming travellers entered Iraq temporarily for a duration of up to three months (that is, 86% of incoming travellers residing in Iraq and 64% of incoming travellers residing abroad).

Most outgoing flows were Iraqis either residing in Iraq (65%) or abroad (35%) and 17 per cent were Turkish residing in their home country. The remaining 4 per cent were Georgians, Ukrainians, Syrians and Swedes residing in Iraq or travellers from United Kingdom residing in their home countries. The main reasons for exiting Iraq were returning to country of habitual residence (40%), followed by medical treatment (23%) and business or trade (18%). Three per cent were leaving Iraq due to humanitarian reasons, all of them Iraqis. Most outgoing travellers exited Iraq temporarily for a duration of up to three months (that is, 81% of outgoing travellers residing in Iraq and 87% of outgoing travellers residing abroad).

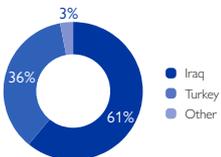
### INCOMING

### OUTGOING

AGE AND GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF TRAVELLERS

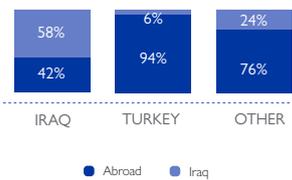


MAIN NATIONALITIES OF TRAVELLERS

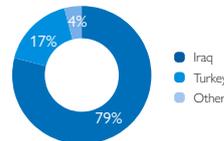


Other countries of nationality were United States of America, United Kingdom, Syria, Georgia and Ukraine

COUNTRY OF USUAL RESIDENCE BY NATIONALITIES

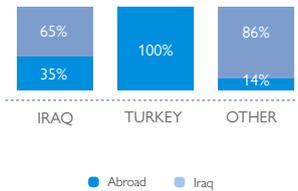


MAIN NATIONALITIES OF TRAVELLERS

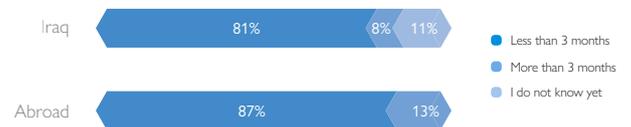
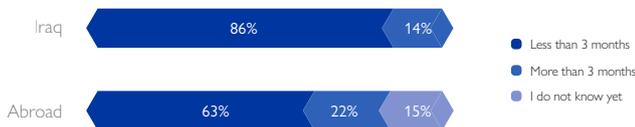


Other countries of nationality were Georgia, Ukraine, Syria, Sweden and United Kingdom

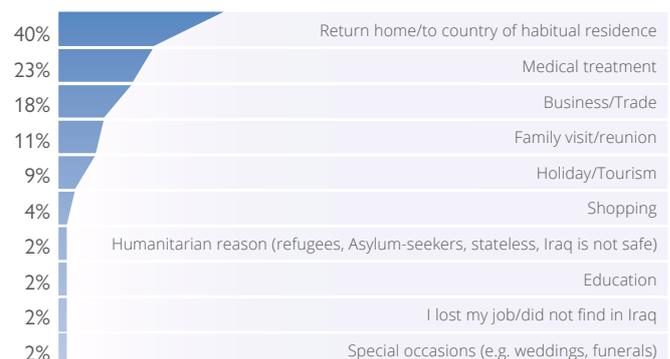
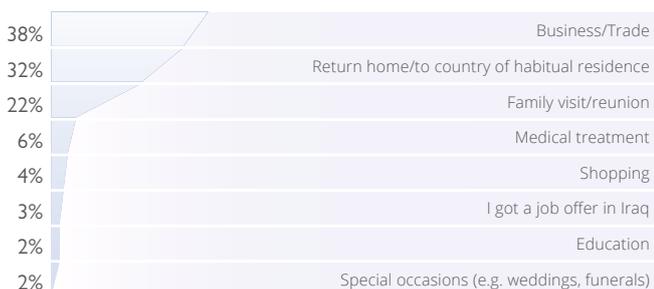
COUNTRY OF USUAL RESIDENCE BY NATIONALITIES



INTENDED LENGTH OF JOURNEY BY COUNTRY OF USUAL RESIDENCE



REASONS FOR TRAVEL



Note: Respondents could choose more than one option, response options 'other reasons' and reasons with less than 1 per cent are not shown on these charts.



## COVID-19 AWARENESS OF TRAVELLERS

# IBRAHIM AL-KHALIL

BORDERING COUNTRY: **TURKEY**

Travellers were asked about their awareness of COVID-19 symptoms, prevention measures and risk factors. The majority of incoming and outgoing travellers were aware of main symptoms such as fever and dry cough, but fewer reported knowing that difficulty breathing/shortness of breath are common symptoms – 35 per cent of incoming and 35 per cent of outgoing travellers. The same applies to prevention measures, most incoming and outgoing travellers were aware of washing hands regularly and maintaining distance but fewer were aware of covering mouth and nose with a mask when around others.

Travellers would either go to a public primary health-care centre or hospital in case of symptoms (49% of incoming and 26% of outgoing) or call the hotline and follow instructions (19% of incoming and 22% of outgoing). Around one third of the incoming flow and two fifths of outgoing flow would stay home and wait for symptoms to improve or worsen.

Some travellers reported having health conditions for which COVID-19 is often more severe. Specifically, incoming flow had 6 per cent of travellers with diabetes and 9 per cent with serious heart conditions. Outgoing flow had 8 per cent of travellers with diabetes, 5 per cent with serious heart conditions and 3 per cent with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis.

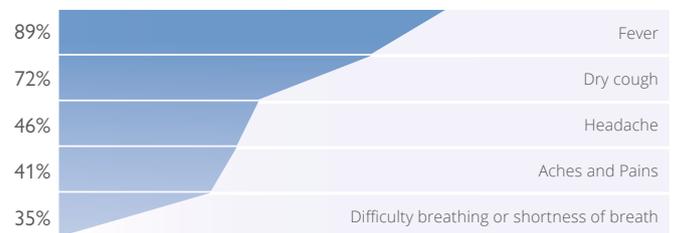
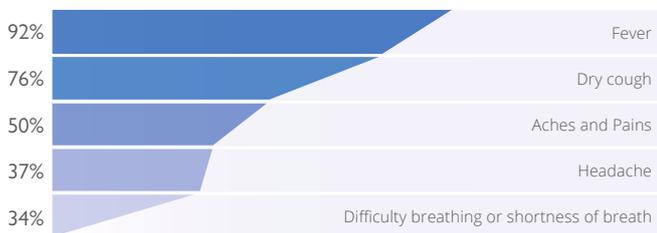


### INCOMING



### OUTGOING

#### COVID-19 SYMPTOMS AWARENESS



#### ACTIONS IN CASE TRAVELLERS OR SOMEONE FROM THEIR FAMILY HAVE COUGH, FEVER OR DIFFICULTY BREATHING

**49%** Go to public primary health-care centre or hospital

**27%** Go to a private clinic or hospital

**19%** Call the hotline and follow instructions

**4%** I do not know

**1%** Stay home and wait for symptoms to improve or worsen

**26%** Go to public primary health-care centre or hospital

**6%** Go to a private clinic or hospital

**22%** Call the hotline and follow instructions

**2%** I do not know

**44%** Stay home and wait for symptoms to improve or worsen

#### VULNERABLE GROUPS

**6%** diabetes

**9%** serious heart conditions

**8%** diabetes

**5%** serious heart conditions

**3%** chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis

#### COVID-19 PREVENTION MEASURES AWARENESS





BORDER POINT PROFILE  
**FISHKHABOUR**  
BORDERING COUNTRY: SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC



2,407

Total number of travellers



267

Average number of travellers per day



170

Total number of vehicles



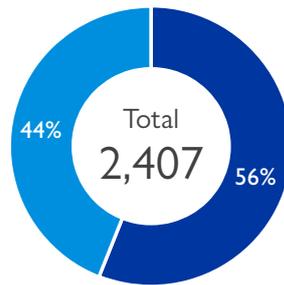
19

Average number of vehicles per day

At the Fishkhabour point, data collection took place from 1 September to 29 September 2020, weekdays only from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. During this period, this border crossing point was open for three days in the week of data collection (Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday). Travellers are permitted to enter and exit only for urgent reasons such as to receive medical treatment, for special occasions such as weddings or funerals, or being en route to another country (i.e. in transit).

All residents of KRI had to be tested for Covid-19 when they entered the border points. They were afterwards required to quarantine at home for 48 hours for the test results to be processed. Travellers residing in Federal Iraq were not subject to this testing and quarantine rule.

Number and percentage of travellers by type of flow



**INCOMING**  
1,352

**OUTGOING**  
1,055

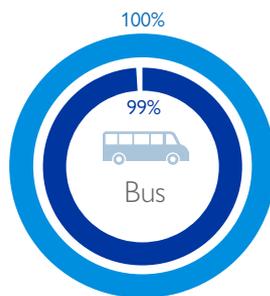
During this period, the Fishkhabour border crossing point witnessed a higher flow of travellers as compared to the previous round collected in August. DTM identified 2,407 individuals crossing the Fishkhabour border point, with 1,352 entering Iraq after being abroad (incoming flow) and 1,055 individuals exiting Iraq to another country (outgoing flow). On average, the border was crossed by 267 travellers per day (combining incoming and outgoing flows) and 19 vehicles. This is a higher number compared to the previous round collected in between 23 and 27 August, when 738 individuals crossed the Fishkhabour border point. Almost all travellers crossed this border point by bus and only few by minibus, which is consistent with the previous round of data collection.

Percentage of travellers by means of transportation

- Outgoing 0%
- Incoming 1%



Minibus



- 0%
- 0%



Car

- 0%
- 0%



On Foot

The number of incoming travellers slightly exceeded the number of outgoing travellers for this border crossing point, with peak crossings between 10:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m.

Due to an insufficient sample size of outgoing travellers, the analysis on socio-demographic characteristics, reasons for travel and COVID-19 awareness was not conducted.

Number of travellers by type of flow during the day (9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.)





TRAVELLERS' PROFILE

# FISHKHABOUR

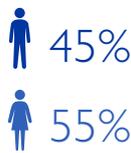
BORDERING COUNTRY: SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

Unlike for other border crossings, there were more female travellers than male travellers at the Fishkhabour border crossing, and women represented 55 per cent of incoming flow. Around half were middle-aged (35–60 years old) and another half were young adults (18–34 years old). All incoming travellers were Syrians either residing in Iraq (56%) or abroad (44%). Family reunion was the main reason to cross for the majority of travellers (83%), followed by special occasions (40%) and returning to the country of habitual residence (28%). Most Syrians residing in Iraq intended to stay for a period of up to three months and only one tenth entered for a longer period of three months or more, while three fifths of Syrians residing in their home country or other countries abroad intended to stay for up to three months and two fifths entered for a longer period of three months or more.



## INCOMING

GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF TRAVELLERS



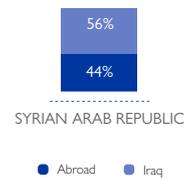
AGE DISTRIBUTION OF TRAVELLERS



MAIN NATIONALITIES OF TRAVELLERS



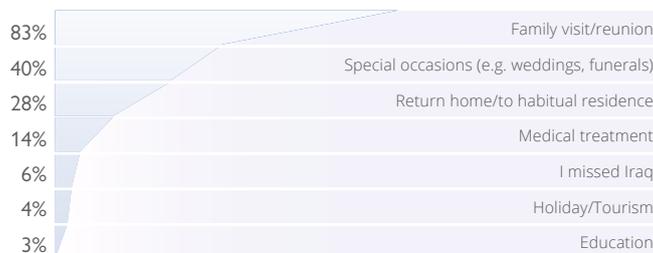
COUNTRY OF USUAL RESIDENCE BY NATIONALITIES



INTENDED LENGTH OF JOURNEY BY COUNTRY OF USUAL RESIDENCE



REASONS FOR TRAVEL



Note: Respondents could choose more than one option, response options 'other reasons' and reasons with less than 1 per cent are not shown.



COVID-19 AWARENESS OF TRAVELLERS

# FISHKHABOUR

BORDERING COUNTRY: SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

Travellers were asked about their awareness of COVID-19 symptoms, prevention measures and risk factors. The majority of incoming travellers (97%) were aware of fever as main symptom such but fewer reported knowing that dry cough (66%) and difficulty breathing/shortness of breath (59%) are common symptoms. The same applies to prevention measures; most incoming travellers were aware of avoiding touching face and washing hands regularly but fewer were aware of maintaining distance and only some were aware of wearing a mask when around others.

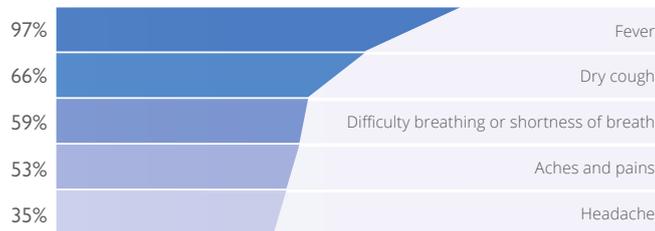
Travellers would either go to a public primary health-care centre or hospital in case of symptoms (33%) or call the hotline and follow instructions (52%). Around one fifth of the incoming flow would stay home and wait for symptoms to improve or worsen.

Some travellers reported having health conditions for which COVID-19 is often more severe. Specifically, incoming flow had 16 per cent of travellers with diabetes, 5 per cent with serious heart conditions, and 2 per cent with severe obesity.



## INCOMING

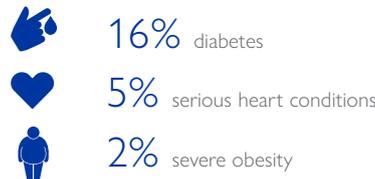
COVID-19 SYMPTOMS AWARENESS



ACTIONS IN CASE OF TRAVELLERS OR SOMEONE FROM THEIR FAMILY HAVE COUGH, FEVER OR DIFFICULTY BREATHING



VULNERABLE GROUPS



COVID-19 PREVENTION MEASURES AWARENESS





BORDER POINT PROFILE

# BASHMAGH

BORDERING COUNTRY: ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN



8,697

Total number of travellers



414

Average number of travellers per day



318

Total number of vehicles

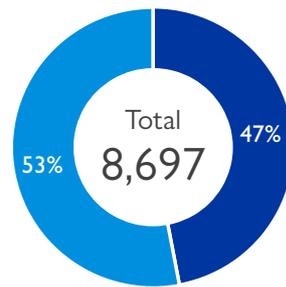


15

Average number of vehicles per day

At the Bashmagh border crossing, data collection took place from 1 September to 30 September 2020, weekdays only from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. During this period, this border crossing point was open every day for 24 hours for incoming and outgoing travellers. Outgoing Iraqis and incoming Iranians needed permission from the Ministry of Interior. All residents of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) had to be tested for Covid-19 when they entered the border points. They were afterwards required to quarantine at home for 48 hours for the test results to be processed. Travellers residing in Federal Iraq were not subject to this testing and quarantine rule.

Number and percentage of travellers by type of flow

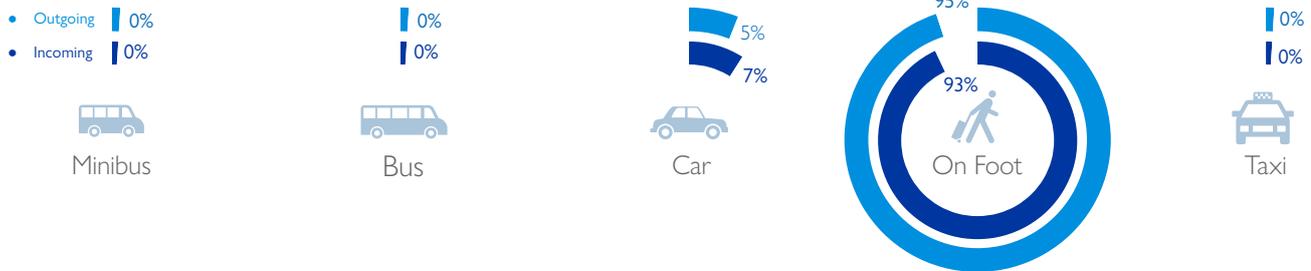


**INCOMING**  
4,126

**OUTGOING**  
4,571

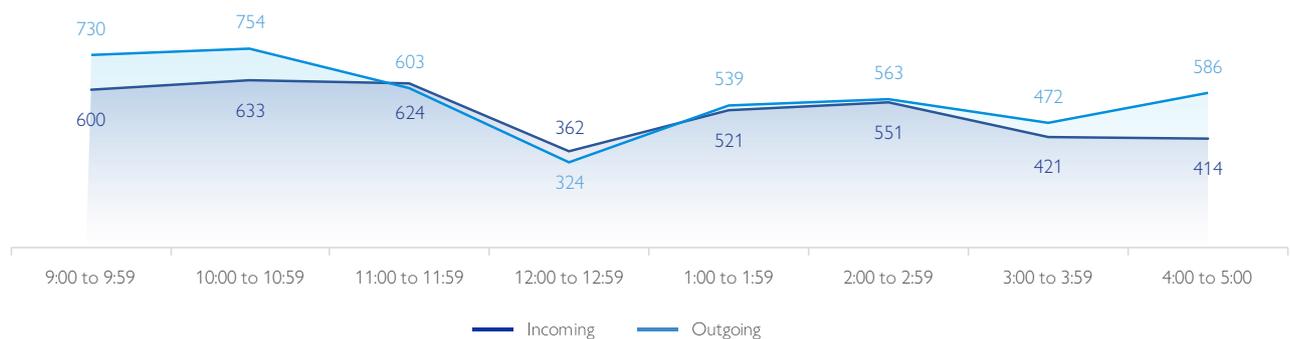
During this period, the Bashmagh border crossing point witnessed a significantly higher flow of travellers as compared the previous round collected in August. DTM identified 8,697 individuals crossing the Bashmagh border point, with 4,126 entering Iraq after being abroad (incoming flow) and 4,571 individuals exiting Iraq to another country (outgoing flow). On average, the border was crossed by 414 travellers per day (combining incoming and outgoing flows) and 15 vehicles (private cars). This is a significantly higher number compared to the previous round collected between 10 and 27 August, when 2,544 individuals crossed the Bashmagh border point. Most travellers crossed this border point on foot, with only some crossings by private cars, which is consistent with the previous round of data collection.

Percentage of travellers by means of transportation



The number of outgoing travellers slightly exceeded the number of incoming travellers for this border crossing point, with flow evenly distributed during the monitored hours.

Number of travellers by type of flow during the day (9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.)





TRAVELLERS' PROFILE

# BASHMAGH

BORDERING COUNTRY: ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

Most incoming and outgoing travellers were men. Women represented 28 per cent of incoming and 26 per cent of outgoing flows. Half of incoming travellers were aged 18–34 years and the rest were aged 35–60 years, with a small portion of travellers older than 60 years (5% of incoming travellers). One third of outgoing travellers were aged 18–34 years and the remaining were aged 35–60 years.

Around three fifths of incoming flows were Iraqis residing in their home country and around two fifths were Iranians residing in their home country. Business or trade was the main reason of travel for 38 per cent of incoming flow, followed by returning to the country of habitual residence (32%) and family visit (22%). Most incoming travellers entered Iraq temporarily for a duration of up to three months (that is, 99% of incoming travellers residing in Iraq and 81% of incoming travellers residing abroad).

Around two third of outgoing flows were Iraqis residing in their home country and around one third were Iranians residing in their home country. The main reasons for travel were returning to the country of habitual residence (40%), medical treatment (23%) and business or trade (18%). Most outgoing travellers residing in Iraq exited Iraq temporarily for a duration of up to three months, while most outgoing travellers residing abroad exited for a longer term of three months or more.



## INCOMING

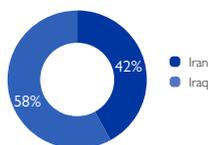


## OUTGOING

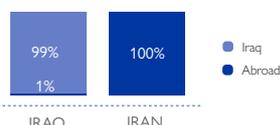
AGE AND GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF TRAVELLERS



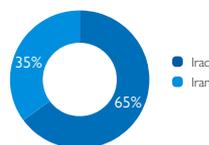
MAIN NATIONALITIES OF TRAVELLERS



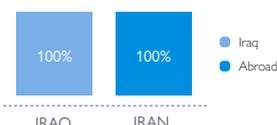
COUNTRY OF USUAL RESIDENCE BY NATIONALITIES



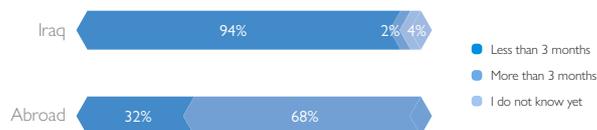
MAIN NATIONALITIES OF TRAVELLERS



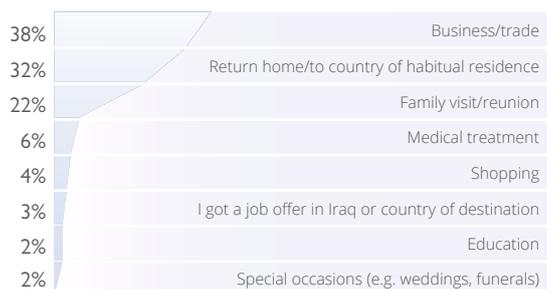
COUNTRY OF USUAL RESIDENCE BY NATIONALITIES



INTENDED LENGTH OF JOURNEY BY COUNTRY OF USUAL RESIDENCE



REASONS FOR TRAVEL



Note: Respondents could choose more than one option, response options 'other reasons' and reasons with less than 1 per cent are not shown on this chart.



COVID-19 AWARENESS OF TRAVELLERS

# BASHMAGH

BORDERING COUNTRY: ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

Travellers were asked about their awareness of COVID-19 symptoms, prevention measures and risk factors. The majority of incoming travellers were aware of main symptoms such as fever (94%), difficulty breathing/shortness of breath (87%) and dry cough (86%). Awareness was noticeably lower among outgoing travellers: three fifths of outgoing travellers were aware of difficulty breathing/shortness of breath as a main symptoms but fewer reported knowing about fever (20%) and dry cough (41%). The same applies to prevention measures, most incoming and outgoing travellers were aware of washing hands regularly and maintaining distance but fewer were aware of covering mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing and avoiding touching face.

Most incoming travellers would go to a private clinic or hospital in case of symptoms while most outgoing travellers would go to a public primary health-care centre or hospital.

Some travellers reported having health conditions for which COVID-19 is often more severe. Specifically, incoming flow had 4 per cent of travellers with diabetes, 4 per cent with serious heart conditions and 2 per cent with severe obesity. Outgoing flow had 13 per cent with diabetes, 22 per cent with serious heart conditions and 8 per cent with cancer or weakened immune system.

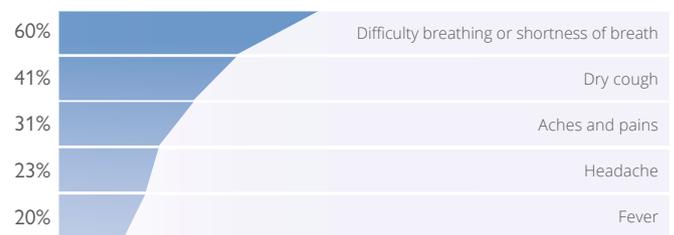


## INCOMING



## OUTGOING

COVID-19 SYMPTOMS AWARENESS



ACTIONS IN CASE OF TRAVELLERS OR SOMEONE FROM THEIR FAMILY HAVE COUGH, FEVER OR DIFFICULTY BREATHING



6% Go to public primary health-care centre or hospital



80% Go to a private clinic or hospital



85% Go to public primary health-care centre or hospital



14% Go to a private clinic or hospital



14% Call the hotline and follow instructions



0% I do not know



1% Call the hotline and follow instructions



0% I do not know



0% Stay home and wait for symptoms to improve or worsen



0% Stay home and wait for symptoms to improve or worsen

VULNERABLE GROUPS



4% diabetes



13% diabetes



4% serious heart conditions



22% serious heart conditions

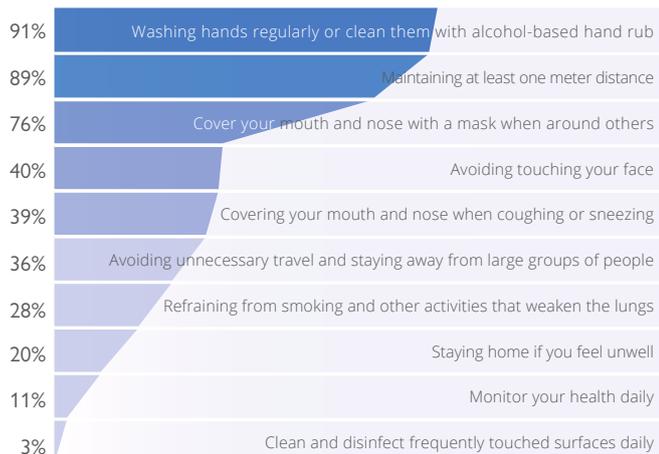


2% severe obesity



8% cancer or weakened immune system

COVID-19 PREVENTION MEASURES AWARENESS



## METHODOLOGY

The data collection for this report took place at three border crossing points during the months of September 2020 on weekdays only, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. with a lunch break of 30 minutes between 12:30 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. Data was collected through IOM's enumerators, composed of 14 staff members deployed across Iraq (35% of enumerators are female).

The border crossing points were selected based on observations conducted in May 2019 by IOM's Rapid Assessment and Response Teams (RARTs).<sup>4</sup> Specific criteria were used to select the border crossing points: 1) high volume of daily crossings leading to border countries; 2) diversity, both in geography and type of border point (official/unofficial border points, bus stations, etc.); and 3) ability of staff to reach and operate from the location for daily data collection and fund optimization.

Out of 16 locations assessed, five border crossing points were selected for data collection:

- Ibrahim Al-Khalil in Dahuk Governorate, bordering Turkey;
- Fishkhabour in Dahuk Governorate, bordering the Syrian Arab Republic;
- Bashmagh in Sulaymaniyah Governorate, bordering the Islamic Republic of Iran;
- Zurbatiyah (Wassit Terminal) in Wassit Governorate, bordering the Islamic Republic of Iran;
- Al-Shalamcha in Basrah Governorate, bordering the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The data collection methodology for cross-border monitoring in Iraq was developed in cooperation with IPAZIA Ricerche. The methodology uses two approaches: 1) headcount of all travellers entering or leaving Iraq, and 2) survey of randomly sampled travellers identified as entering or exiting Iraq.

The counting exercise aims to enumerate all individuals crossing national borders and to identify the total volume of travellers who enter Iraq after being abroad (incoming flow) and travellers who exit Iraq to another country (outgoing flow). Counting was conducted by observation, using tablets to record the type of flow (incoming/outgoing), the time of crossing (day, hour, minutes) and the number of travellers by means of transport (whether by private car, taxi, bus or minibus – up to 15 seats).

The survey aims to collect information about travellers and was conducted through face-to-face interviews, using tablets to record socio-demographic characteristics and reasons for travel. Respondents were selected randomly through the adoption of a 'systematic step/interval' – i.e. travellers are systematically selected at fixed intervals from the start of the workday. The interval was fixed at 1:3 (one in every three individuals will be selected for an interview). All travellers aged 18 years and older who were crossing borders were eligible for an interview, regardless of their nationality. Sampling weight was applied to generalize the characteristics of travellers.

Data presented in this report is representative of the travellers crossing at each of the three selected border points between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. during weekdays only. Data should not be generalized to all of inter and intra-regional migration; rather, the data captures information on migration at the three border points monitored. Data collected in assessed border points should not lead to assumptions about flows in non-assessed border points or areas without monitoring points.

## DISCLAIMER

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<sup>4</sup> Please refer to the methodological note for more details. Available online at: <http://iraqdtm.iom.int/>



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