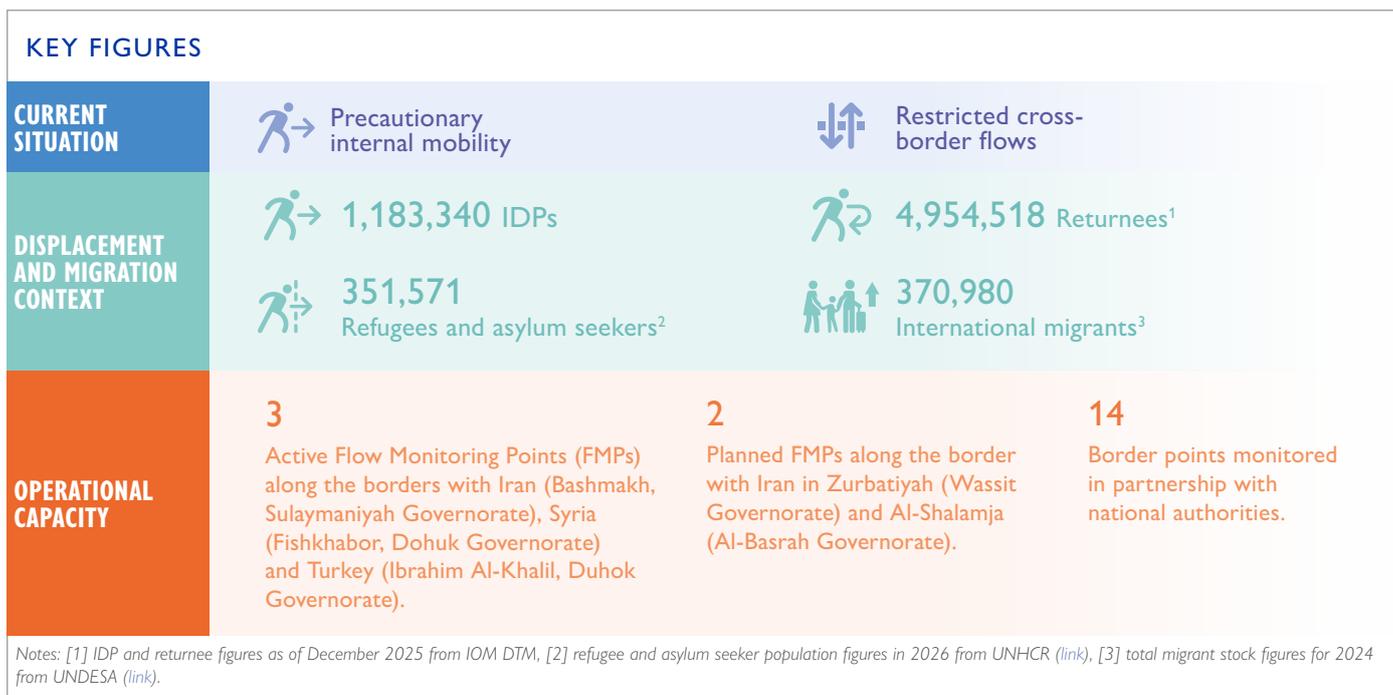


# UPDATE ON CROSS-BORDER MOBILITY AND INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT IN IRAQ

SITUATION AS OF 9 MARCH 2026

A sharp escalation in regional tensions occurred on 28 February 2026 following coordinated military strikes by the United States of America and Israel inside Iran which triggered subsequent retaliatory missile and drone activity across the region. In Iraq, the security situation remains fluid, with disruptions affecting airspace, civilian mobility, and humanitarian access. The crisis compounds pre-existing vulnerabilities linked to Iraq's complex security dynamics and protracted displacement dating back to the conflict with the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL).



## OPERATIONAL CAPACITY FOR DISPLACEMENT MONITORING

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) plays a central role in collecting and disseminating data on migration and displacement in Iraq, working closely with the Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD) to monitor mobility dynamics across the country and at its borders. IOM applies a standard global methodology, the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), to collect data on internal displacement, return trends, and cross-border flows. DTM data enables decision-makers and humanitarian partners to deliver efficient, better-targeted, humanitarian, recovery and peacebuilding programs, making the most effective use of available resources. IOM provides DTM data as a common resource to all actors engaged in humanitarian preparedness and response as well as recovery and return operations.

To **monitor internal displacement and return**, IOM DTM relies on trained Rapid Assessment and Response Teams (RARTs), consisting of 40 local responders with over a decade of operational experience. RARTs maintain deep-rooted institutional connections to local authorities across all governorates, with the capacity for rapid scaling, and leverage a network of approximately 3,732 key informants. RARTs provide constant situational

awareness and early warning, monitoring local developments and verifying any reports of displacement through Emergency Tracking assessments at the location level. Additionally, they conduct regular countrywide assessments to update displacement stock estimates and, based on need, multi-sector needs assessments.

To **monitor cross-border mobility and displacement**, IOM DTM operates flow monitoring points (FMPs) at key transit locations, such as border crossings and major travel routes. At these points, trained enumerators conduct short interviews with travellers to collect data on population movements, including routes, demographics, and reasons for crossing. IOM currently operates three FMPs along the borders with Iran (Bashmakh, Sulaymaniyah Governorate), Syria (Fishkhabor, Dohuk Governorate) and Turkey (Ibrahim Al-Khalil, Duhok Governorate). Two additional FMPs are in the process of being activated along the border with Iran in response to the current crisis (Zurbatiyah, Wassit Governorate, and Al-Shalamja, Al Basrah Governorate). Additionally, IOM works closely with the Ministry of Interior and the Border Commission to monitor mobility dynamics across a broader set of border crossing points (BCPs).

## INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

While no large-scale or lasting displacement incidents have been confirmed across Iraq as of March 9, the recent escalation in security incidents, including drone and missile strikes, has triggered notable precautionary mobility and heightened community concern. While these movements remain limited and largely temporary, continued security incidents could increase the risk of localized displacement, particularly in areas located near potential military targets.

Airstrikes and drone attacks have been reported in at least eleven governorates, with incidents in Al-Anbar, Babil, Baghdad, Duhok, Erbil, Kerbala, Kirkuk, Al-Najaf, Ninewa, Al-Sulaymaniyah and Wassit. While these strikes have primarily been aimed at military targets, notable exceptions include attacks on the Rotana Hotel in Erbil on 6 March and on the US Embassy compound in Baghdad on 8 March.

DTM Rapid Assessment and Response Teams (RARTs) report that in Al-Qa'im District (Al-Anbar Governorate), residents in the Hey-Alsikak area have begun vacating their homes at night due to their proximity to potential security targets, returning only in the morning. Similar precautionary movements have been reported in Erbil, where some families left the city to stay with relatives in surrounding rural areas.

The security situation has also impacted public services; notably, schools and universities have been suspended or shifted online in most of the governorates as a precautionary measure. Fuel shortages and electricity outages have also affected households and businesses across the country. In some areas, the population has begun stockpiling essential items, with reports of localized increases in food prices.

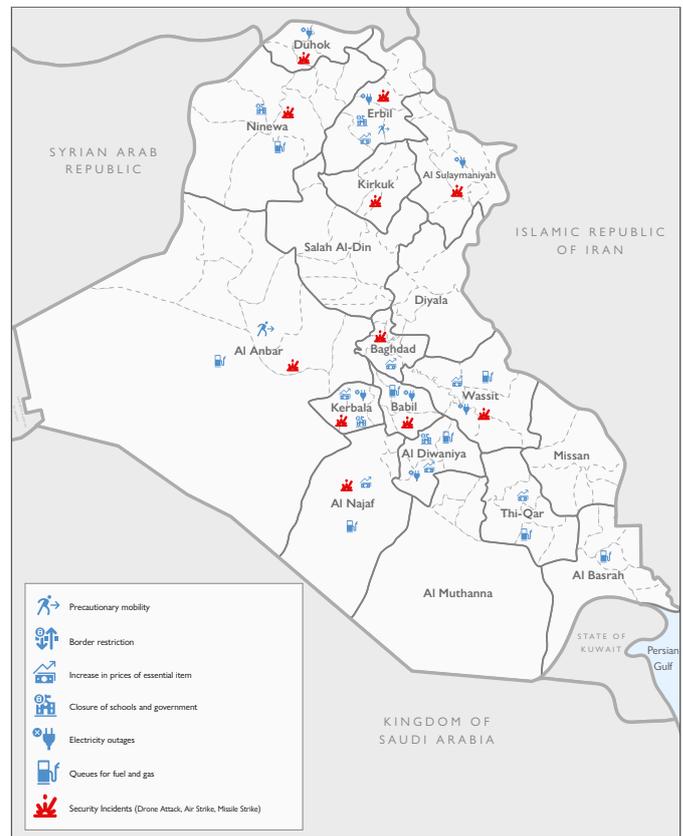


Figure 1: Humanitarian impact of the crisis and displacement risk factors inside Iraq. The information is reported at the governorate level based on reports from DTM field teams and may not be exhaustive. This map is for illustration purposes only. Names and boundaries do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

## CROSS-BORDER MOBILITY

Iraq shares a long land border with Iran that runs across six governorates: four in Federal Iraq, Diyala, Wassit, Missan, and Al Basrah, and two in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI)—Erbil and Al Sulaymaniyah. Usually, regular cross-border movements take place between the two countries for trade, business and tourism. Since the start of the crisis, shortages, disruptions to information systems, and nearby air strikes have affected border operations on the Iranian side, leading to the closure of several crossing points. On the Iraqi side, borders remain open and continue to operate regularly.

Across the Iraq-Iran border, five BCPs remained partially open on 9 March, including three BCPs in Federal Iraq, in Zurbatiyah (Wassit governorate), Al-Sheeb (Missan governorate), and Al-Shalamja (Basra governorate), and two in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, in Hajj Omran (Erbil governorate) and Bashmagh (Al-Sulaymaniyah governorate). Iranian authorities have restricted movements to the return of Iraqi and Iranian citizens to the respective countries. Limited exceptions have been reported for medical evacuations and commercial transit, and for foreigners to leave Iran.

Additionally, several BCPs have been closed entirely by Iranian authorities since February 28, 2026, including Broizkhan, Twila, Kela, Siran Bin, and Pshta BCPs (Al-Sulaymaniyah governorate). In Diyala governorate, the Sumar/Mandeli and Muntheriyah BCPs have been closed on the Iranian side since March 1 and 2, 2026, respectively.

With airports closed, Ibrahim Al-Khalil (Türkiye–Iraq border) has become the primary transit route for Iraqis stranded abroad, particularly those in Europe and Asia. Returnees travel via Türkiye and enter Iraq by road through Ibraheem Alkhaleel, while departures from Iraq – of both Iraqi and third-country nationals – use the same route in reverse.

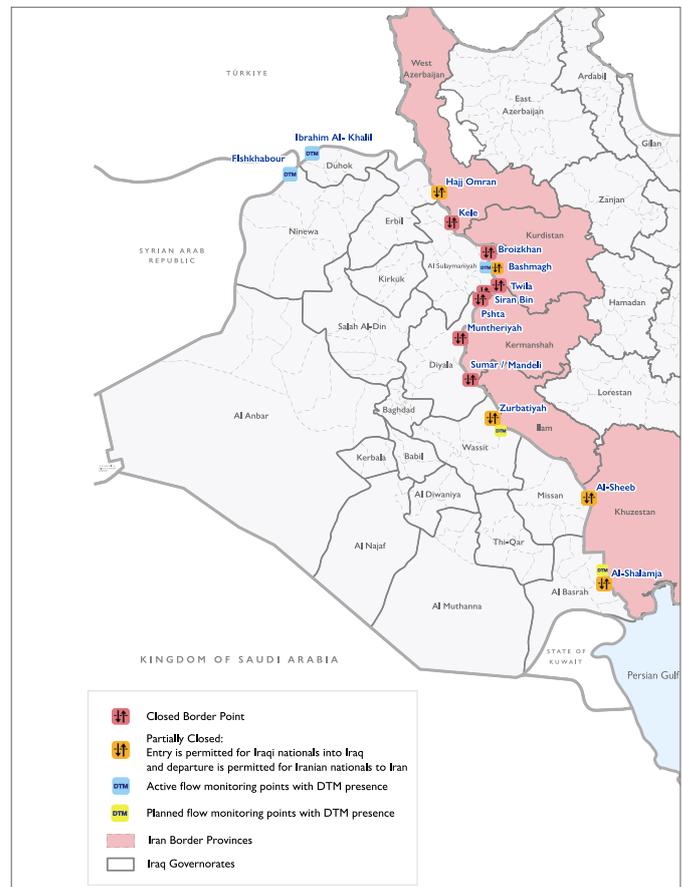


Figure 2: Status of border crossing points along the Iraq-Iran border and location of DTM flow points. This map is for illustration purposes only. Names and boundaries do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

While large-scale cross-border displacement has not been observed at the time of publication on 10 March, precautionary mobility patterns and disruptions to cross-border travel highlight the potential for rapidly evolving population movements if the security situation deteriorates

further. Continued monitoring of both internal displacement and cross-border mobility dynamics remains critical to support preparedness and humanitarian planning.

**Table 1: status of border crossing points along the Iraq-Iran border**

GOVERNORATE	BORDER POINT	TYPE	STATUS	INCOMING MOVEMENTS	OUTGOING MOVEMENTS
Basra	Al-Shalamja	Formal	Partially open	Movements decreased. Entry is permitted for Iraqi nationals into Iraq.	Movements decreased. Departure is permitted for Iranian nationals to Iran.
Diyala	Sumar / Mandeli	Formal	Closed on Iranian side since 1 March 2026	None reported.	None reported.
Diyala	Muntheriyah	Formal	Closed on Iranian side since 2 March 2026	None reported.	None reported.
Erbil	Haji Omran	Formal	Partially open	Movements decreased. Entry is permitted for Iraqi nationals into Iraq.	Movements decreased. Departure is permitted for Iranian nationals to Iran.
Missan	Al-Sheeb	Formal	Partially open	Movements decreased. Entry is permitted for Iraqi nationals into Iraq.	Movements decreased. Departure is permitted for Iranian nationals to Iran.
Al Sulaymaniyah	Broizkhan	Formal	Closed on Iranian side since 1 March 2026	None reported.	None reported.
Al Sulaymaniyah	Bashmagh	Formal	Partially open	Movements decreased. Entry is permitted for Iraqi nationals into Iraq.	Movements decreased. Departure is permitted for Iranian nationals to Iran.
Al Sulaymaniyah	Twila	Formal for KRI only	Closed on Iranian side since 28 February 2026	None reported.	None reported.
Al Sulaymaniyah	Kele	Formal for KRI only	Closed on Iranian side since 28 February 2026	None reported.	None reported.
Al Sulaymaniyah	Siran Bin	Formal for KRI only	Closed on Iranian side since 28 February 2026	None reported.	None reported.
Al Sulaymaniyah	Pshta	Formal for KRI only	Closed on Iranian side since 28 February 2026	None reported.	None reported.
Wassit	Zurbatayah	Formal	Partially open	Movements decreased. Entry is permitted for Iraqi nationals into Iraq.	Movements decreased. Departure is permitted for Iranian nationals to Iran.