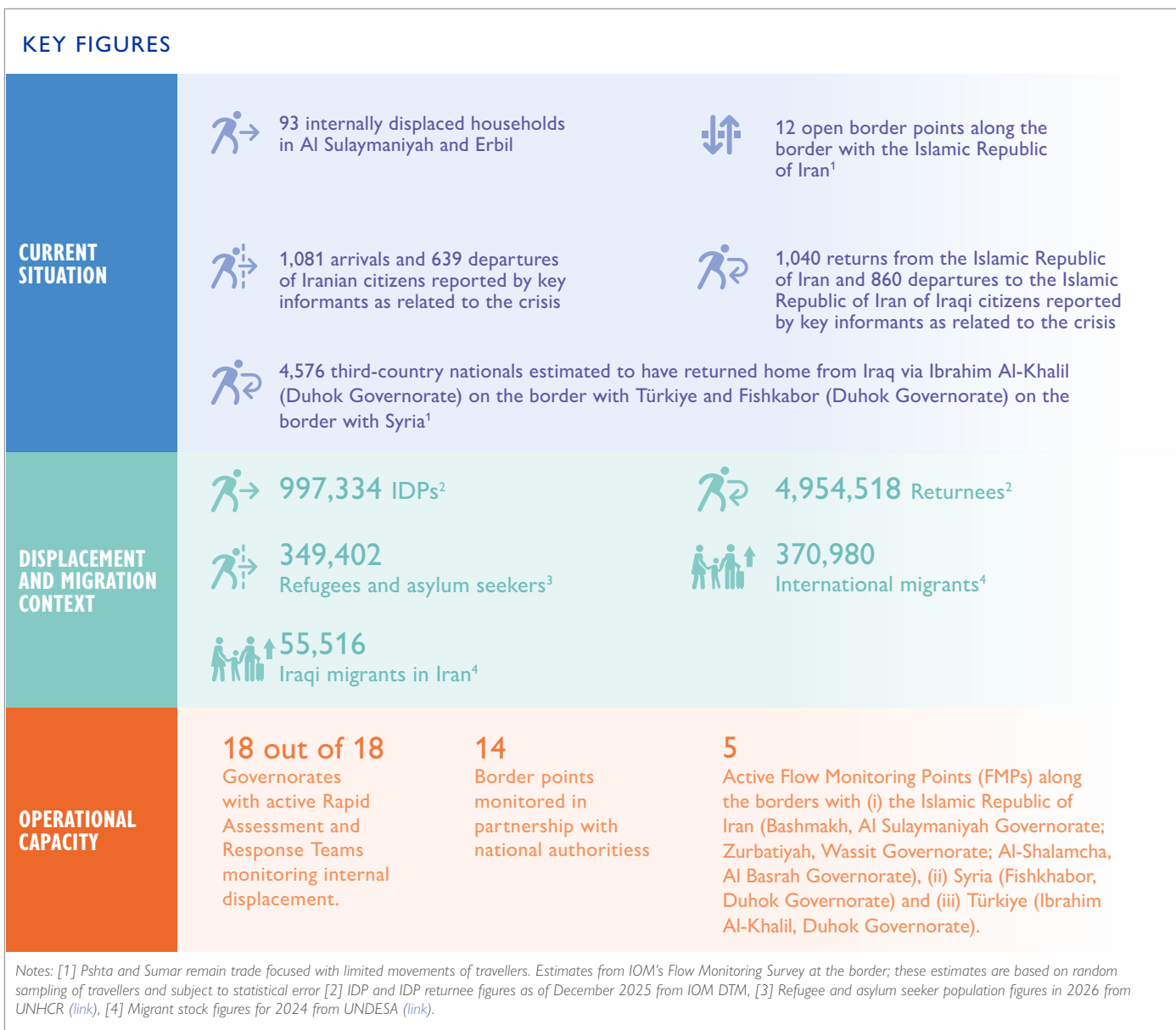


UPDATE ON CROSS-BORDER MOBILITY AND INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT IN IRAQ

SITUATION AS OF 27 APRIL 2026

Regional tensions continue following escalatory actions in and around the Islamic Republic of Iran since late February 2026. Despite an extension of the ceasefire in place since 8 April to allow for further negotiations, Iraq continues to face escalating pressures stemming from regional tensions. The crisis further exacerbates pre-existing vulnerabilities linked to the country's complex security environment and protracted displacement associated with the conflict with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Continued monitoring of internal displacement and cross-border mobility dynamics remains critical to inform operational planning, preparedness, and humanitarian response.



OPERATIONAL CAPACITY FOR DISPLACEMENT MONITORING

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) plays a key role in the systematic collection, analysis and dissemination of data on migration and displacement in Iraq. Working in close coordination with the Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD), IOM monitors mobility dynamics across the country and at its borders. IOM implements its global data collection system, the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), applying

standardized methodologies to generate timely, reliable, and comparable data on population movements.¹ DTM provides granular, location-level information on displacement trends, population profiles, and mobility patterns, enabling continuous monitoring of evolving dynamics. DTM data serves as a critical evidence base for operational planning and decision-making, supporting humanitarian, recovery, and stabilization interventions.

1 See the DTM Methodological Framework.

As a global public good, IOM makes DTM data available to government counterparts and humanitarian partners to inform coordinated response efforts, enhance targeting of assistance, and optimize the allocation of resources across preparedness, response, and return contexts.

To monitor **internal displacement and return in Iraq**, 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 over 3,700 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.

DRIVERS OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

Since the start of the escalations, IOM tracked 93 internally displaced households, with no additional instances of displacement recorded since 13 April. Drivers of displacement remain limited despite ongoing drone and airstrikes in two governorates (Al Sulaymaniyah and Erbil) during the reporting period. Recent developments across Iraq, particularly in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), indicate a continued pattern of low- to medium-intensity security incidents alongside gradual normalization of air and cross-border land traffic, with mixed implications for displacement and broader human mobility dynamics.

Since the start of the crisis, airstrikes and drone attacks have been reported in at least 15 governorates, including Al Anbar, Babil, Baghdad, Al Basrah, Diyala, Duhok, Erbil, Kerbala, Kirkuk, Al Najaf, Ninewa, Missan, Salah Al-Din, Al Sulaymaniyah, and Wassit. Many incidents continue to target military and security forces but also displacement sites.

During the reporting period, the operating environment in Iraq remained fragile and multi-layered, with security incidents continuing to be the primary displacement risk, compounded by localized environmental shocks and emerging economic pressures.

In Al Sulaymaniyah, a displacement site, Surdash was targeted multiple times, including missile strikes on 22 April and a drone incident on 24 April. Although no casualties were reported, repeated targeting of a displacement site raises protection concerns and the risk of reactive displacement. In Erbil, multiple drone-related incidents were recorded across Soran, Shaqlawa, Khabat, and Darashakran on 22 and 23 April. While all were intercepted or resulted in no damage, their frequency and spread contribute to heightened perceptions of insecurity, particularly in northern governorates.

Following the shortage of clean water reported in previous weeks in Wassit, the governorate has now experienced heavy rainfall that led to flooding in several villages along the Iran border, impacting residential areas and disrupting agricultural livelihoods. In Salah Al-Din, rising water levels in the Tigris River have damaged key infrastructure, including bridges in Baiji, Tikrit, and Tooz Khurmatu, limiting mobility and access to services, while posing potential risks to nearby oil infrastructure.

Economic strain is emerging as an additional driver. In Baghdad, a cooking gas shortage has disrupted livelihoods, forcing some businesses to close and contributing to job losses. This follows further fuel and cooking gas shortages which have been reported in Al-Qadisiyah and Muthanna in the past two weeks. Households are increasingly struggling with rising prices and limited access to

To monitor **cross-border mobility and displacement in Iraq**, 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, mode of travel, and reasons for crossing. IOM currently operates three FMPs **along the borders with the Islamic Republic of Iran** (Bashmakh, Al Sulaymaniyah Governorate, active since 15 March 2026; Zurbatiyah, Wassit Governorate, and Al-Shalamcha, Al Basrah Governorate, active since 17 March 2026), one on the border with Syria (Fishkhabor, Duhok Governorate) and one on the border with Türkiye (Ibrahim Al-Khalil, Duhok Governorate), collecting data on a daily basis. 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).

cooking fuel, affecting food security and coping mechanisms.

While airports have reopened in the past weeks, air travel has not reached pre-escalation levels as demonstrated by the inactivity of six major international airlines at Erbil International Airport (EIA).² Key informants at EIA furthermore reported the number of taxis stationed at the airport have reduced from about 60 before regional escalations to around 5 per day, indicating a drastic reduction in demand and the number of travellers.

Overall, while displacement remains limited, the continued pattern of security incidents alongside environmental and economic stressors linked to the hostilities across the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Middle East and beyond sustains a context of elevated risk, particularly for already vulnerable populations.

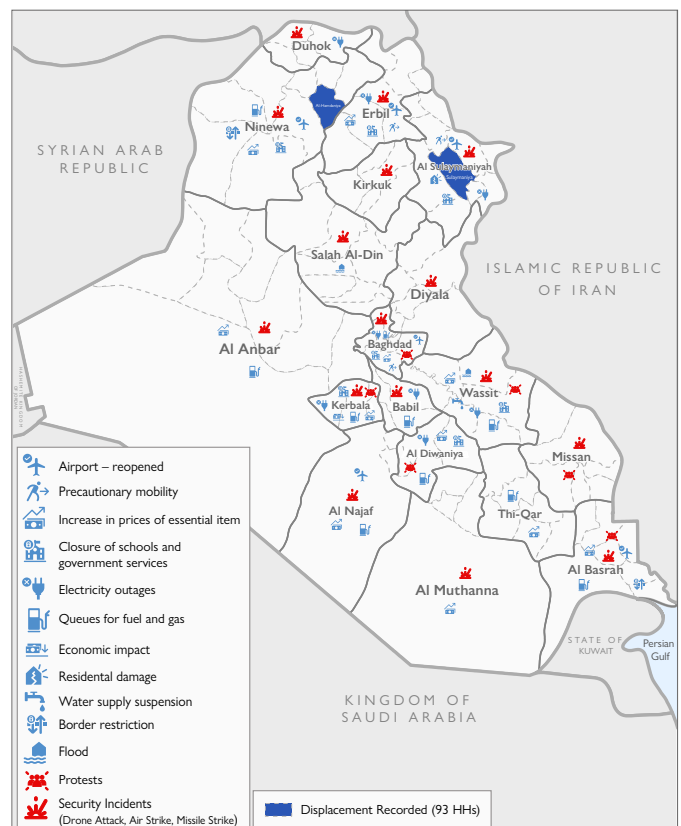


Figure 1: Humanitarian impact of the crisis and displacement risk factors inside Iraq. The information is reported at the governorate level based on reports from DTM field teams and media sources since 1 March 2026 and may not be exhaustive. This map is for illustration purposes only. Names and boundaries do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

2 Turkish Airlines, Pegasus Airlines, Air Cairo, Austrian Airlines, Lufthansa, and Qatar Airways.

CROSS-BORDER MOBILITY

Islamic Republic of Iran Border Monitoring

Iraq shares a long land border with the Islamic Republic of Iran that runs across six governorates: four in Federal Iraq, Diyala, Wassit, Missan, and Al Basrah, and two in the KRI, Erbil and Al Sulaymaniyah. Regular cross-border movements take place between the two countries for trade, business, tourism, and religious activities. All 12 BCPs remained open during the reporting period with increased regular traveller movements since the initial closures following the start of the hostilities.

As of 27 April 2026, border conditions remained broadly stable compared

to the previous reporting period (week ending 20 April), with all crossing points remaining open and no major restrictions observed. All BCPs reported in- and out-going movements with exceptions unrelated to the current escalations, such as border closures on Fridays or movements being – as before the conflict – restricted to trade mainly at Pshta and Sumar BCPs. Despite the open BCPs, IOM received information from Key Informants that travel has not yet reached levels from before the escalations began. An example would be how approximately 15 to 20 taxis would cross Hajj Omran daily before 27 February; whereas this number has now reduced to 2 to 3 a day.

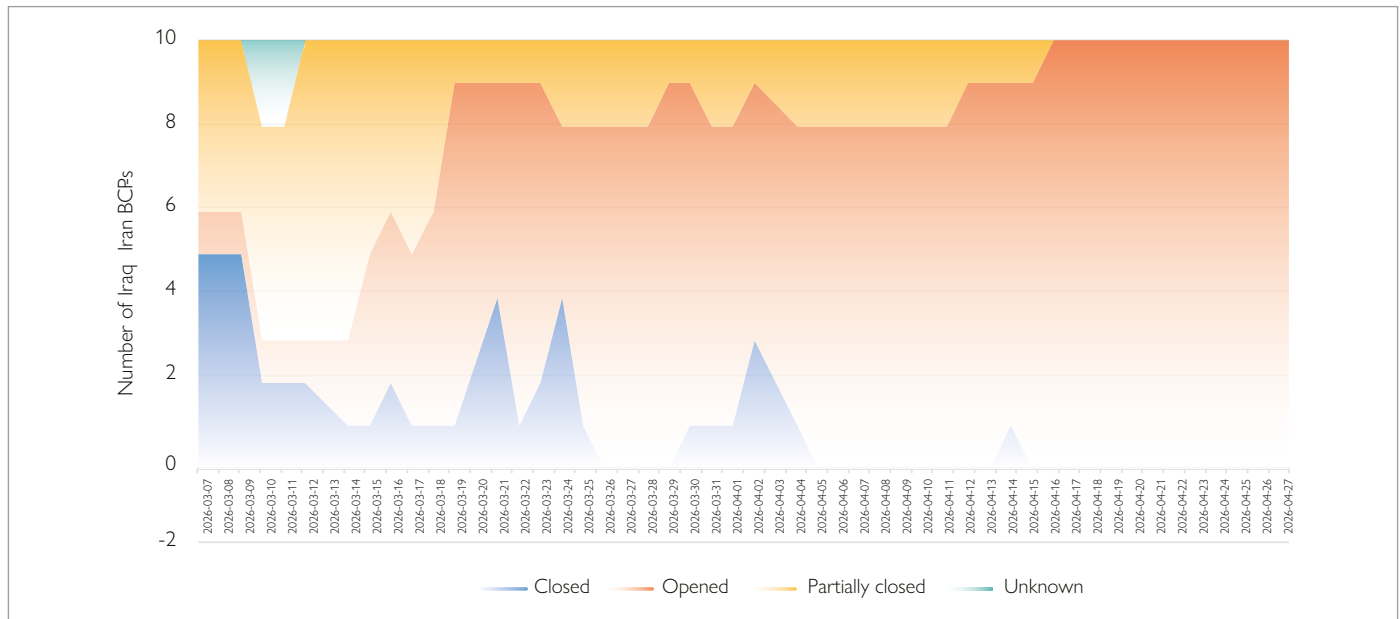


Figure 2: Border status across BCPs over time (excluding trade-only points and excluding Fridays)

While March closures of BCPs were mostly crisis related, more recent closures in the beginning and middle of April were primarily due to public holidays. Partial closure in Broizkhan before 14 April was reportedly due to the escalations despite the current ceasefire.

Key informants reported no drastic changes in flows on most days during the reporting period at most BCPs where data was available, with some BCPs in Al Sulaymaniyah indicating increases in incoming and outgoing migration reported between 15 and 18 April.

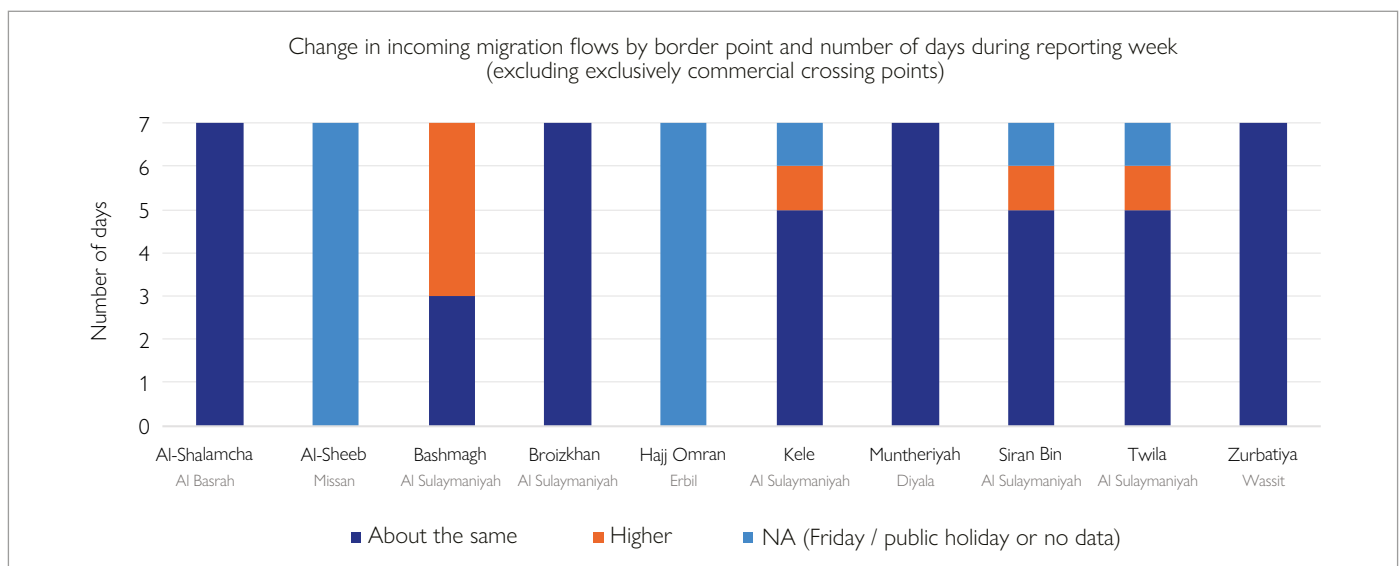


Figure 3 Change in incoming migration flows

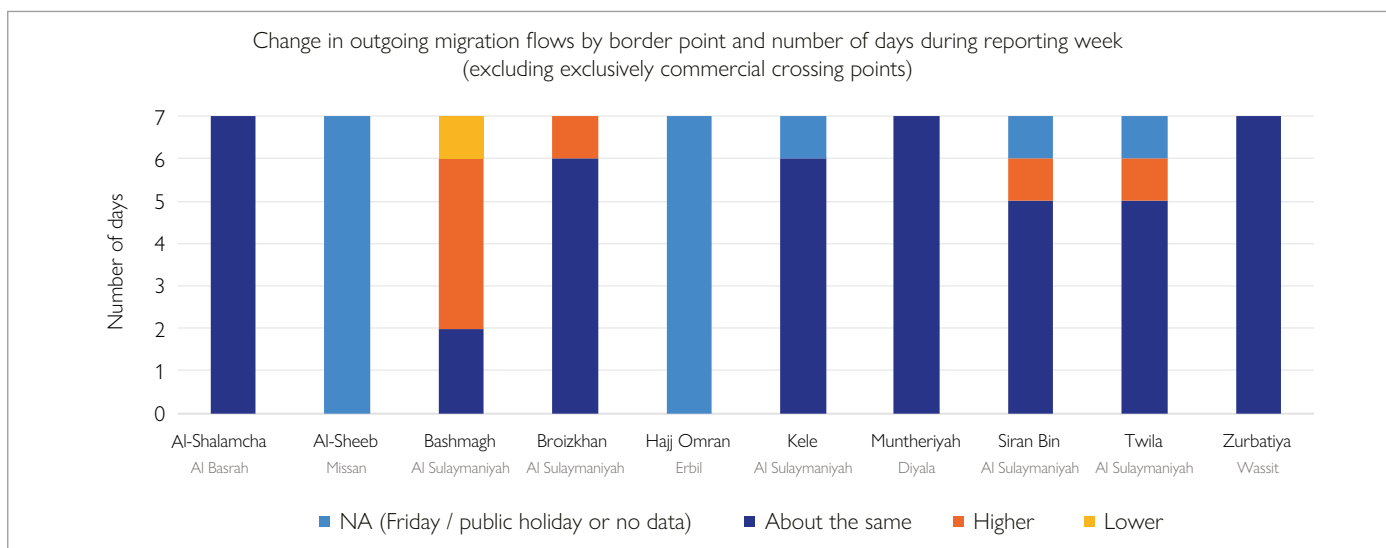


Figure 4 Change in outgoing migration flows

In addition, border authorities reported that two BCPs, namely Zurbatiyah and Al Shalamcha continued reporting preparedness measures for a potential emergency. Led by authorities, this included support to border health facilities in both BCPs, and improvements to water, hygiene, and sanitation services in Zurbatiyah. No BCPs reported emergency response or security incidents during the reporting period.

Islamic Republic of Iran Flow Monitoring³

Between 21 and 27 April, DTM flow monitoring points in Bashmagh (Al Sulaymaniyah Governorate), Al Zurbatiyah (Wassit Governorate),⁴ and Al Shalamcha (Al Basrah Governorate) recorded 4,034 incoming and 3,645 outgoing movements representing a 10 per cent increase in incoming movements and 5 per cent increase in outgoing movements compared to the previous reporting period. Iranian nationals accounted for 79 per cent of incoming and 66 per cent of outgoing movements. Other TCNs accounted for less than one per cent both ways.

Among incoming Iranian movements, the main reported purposes were religious activities (32%), employment (24%), family visits (23%), and shopping (9%). Meanwhile, no travellers reported movement linked to conflict or insecurity during the reporting period. Outgoing movements of Iranian nationals were primarily driven by returns to the Islamic Republic of Iran following short-term (47%, more than 3 months) or

longer-term (35%, 3 months or more) stays. Incoming movements by Iraqi citizens were overwhelmingly instances of return by migrants who had been residing in the Islamic Republic of Iran for over three months (81%) and under three months (14%). In this round of flow monitoring, IOM also recorded 34 TCNs entering Iraq (mainly for employment or business) and 26 TCNs exiting Iraq (mainly to renew their visa). TCNs were primarily from China, India, Kuwait, Lebanon and Pakistan. TCNs reported Iraq as final destination except one person who was transiting to Kuwait.

Iraqi nationals who returned home (over 3 months) moved to locations within Al Sulaymaniyah Governorate (81%), with smaller numbers going to Al Basrah (14%), Thi Qar (4%) and less than one per cent each to locations in Muthanna, Al Najaf and Kuwait.

³ Flow monitoring is implemented by DTM at three BCPs, limited to working hours and subject to security conditions. Unlike border monitoring, which is based on estimates from border officials, flow monitoring relies on interviews with individuals crossing the border.

⁴ Data collection was suspended on 31 March 2026 in Zurbatiyah BCP due to the security situation at the border point.

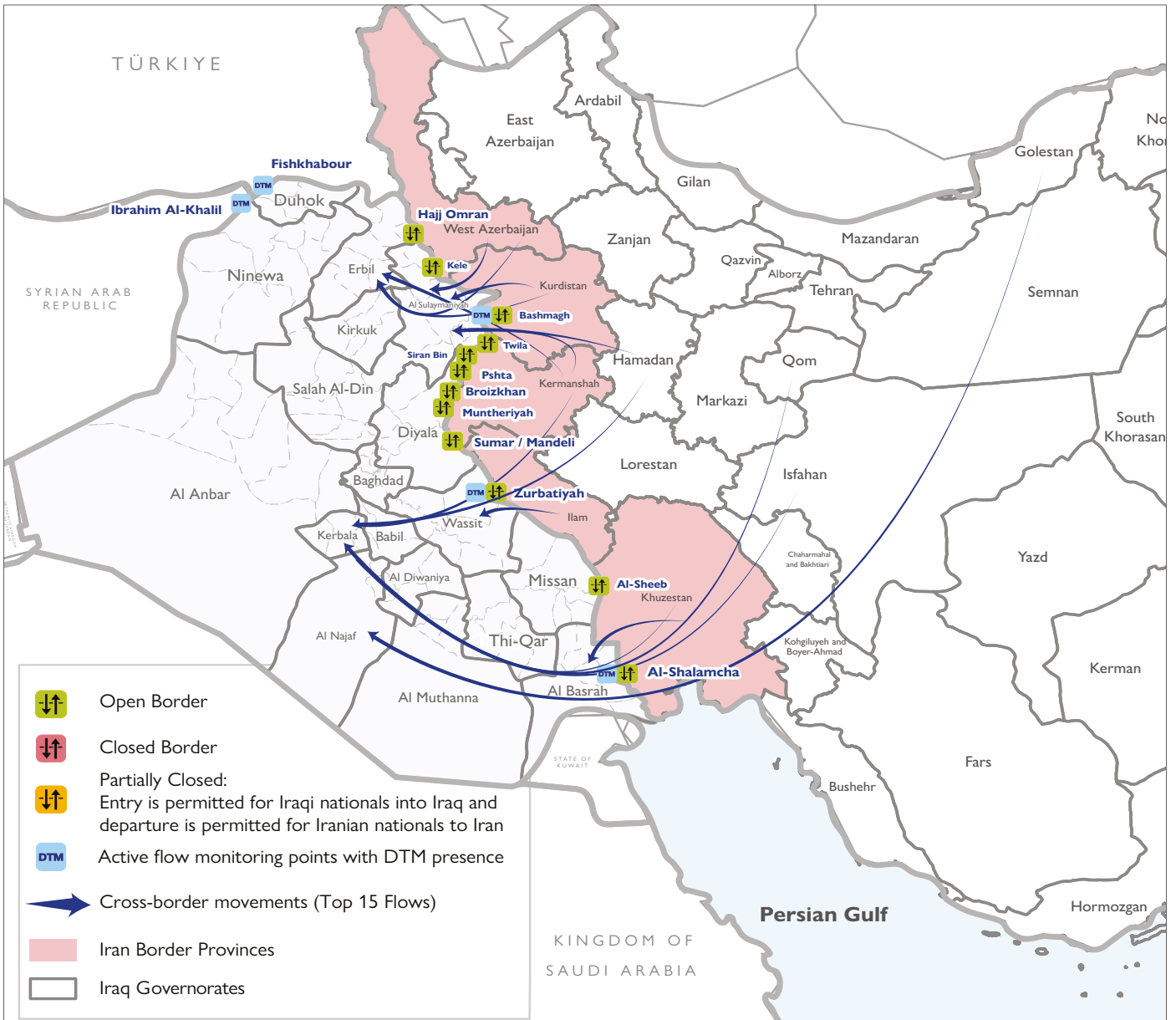


Figure 5: Status of border crossing points along the Iraq-Iran border and location of DTM flow monitoring points. This map is for illustration purposes only. Names and boundaries do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

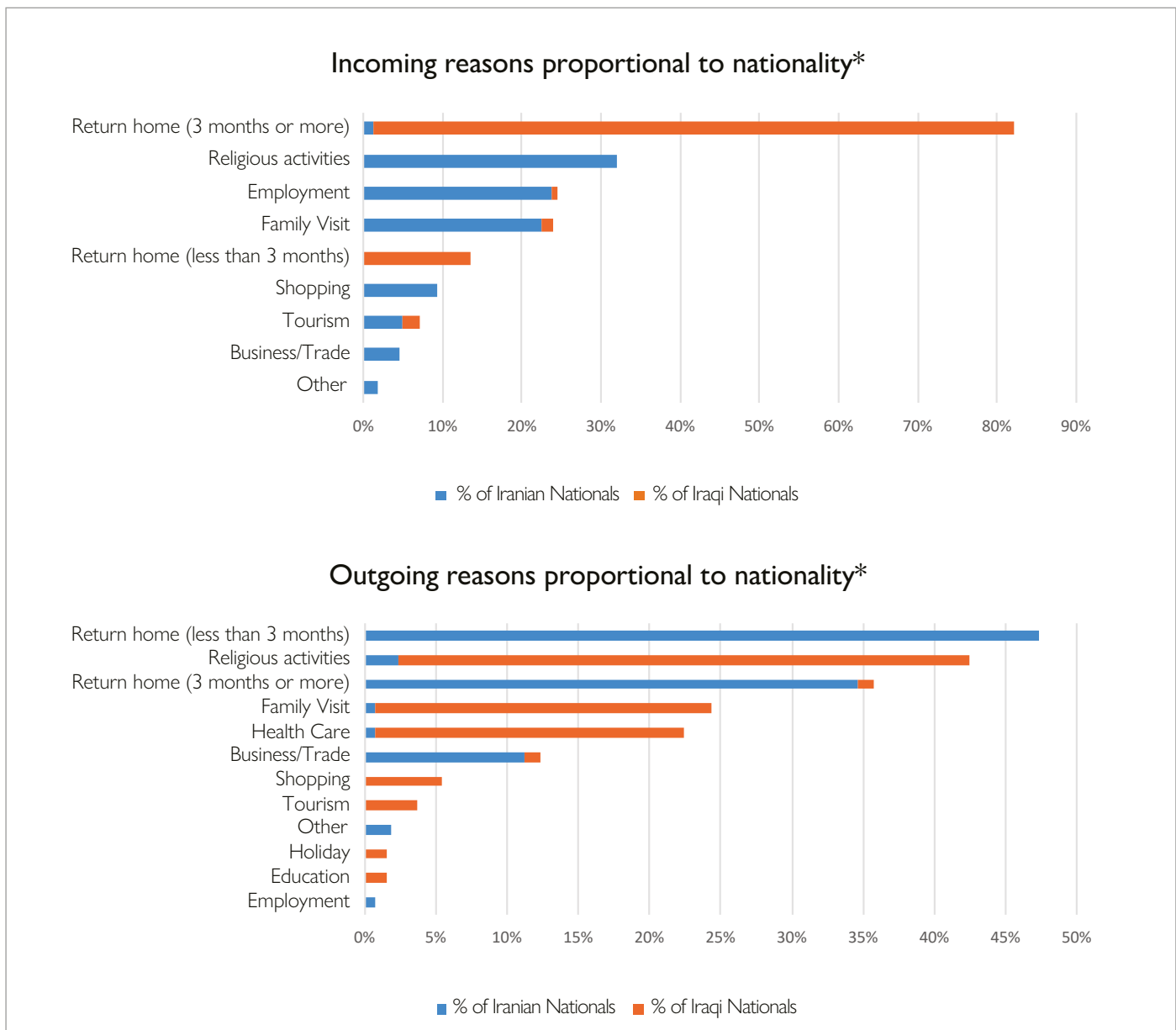


Figure 6 : breakdown of arrivals from and departures to the Islamic Republic of Iran by reason for movement

*TCNs are not represented.

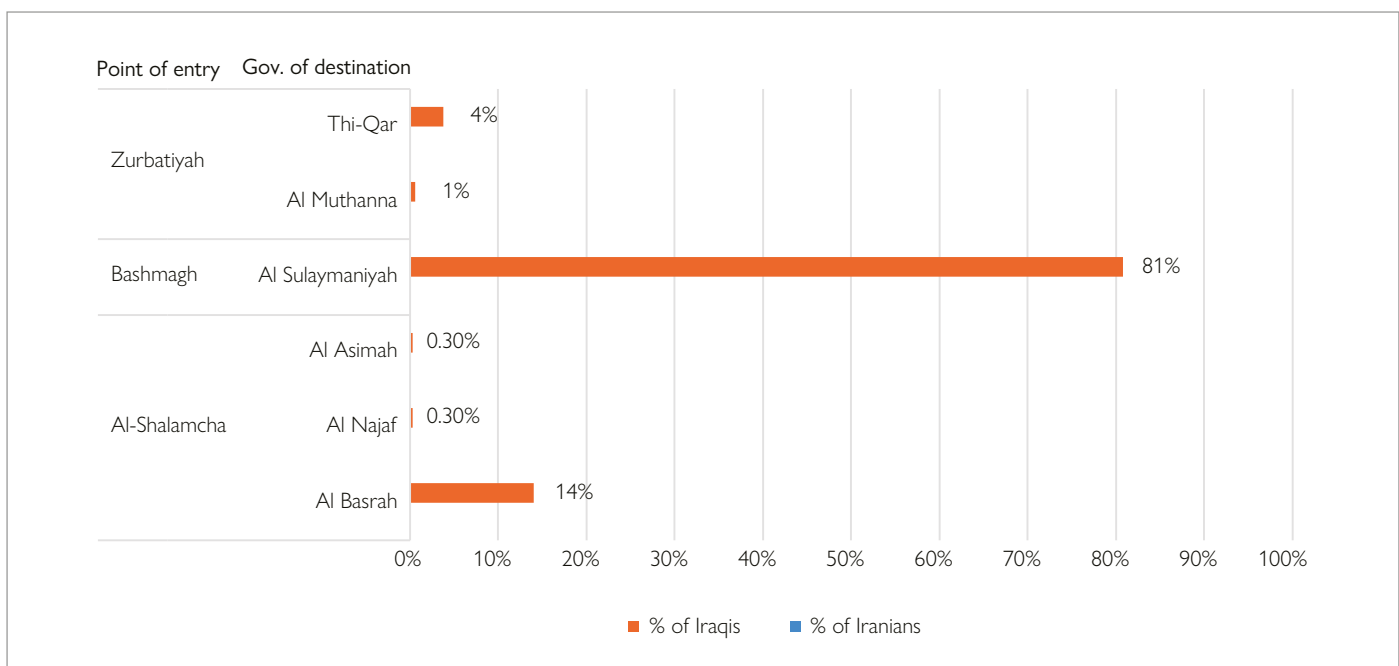


Figure 7: breakdown of arrivals from the Islamic Republic of Iran of Iranian citizens (movements related to the crisis) and Iraqi citizens returning home (3 months or more) by Flow Monitoring Point and governorate of destination.

Türkiye and Syria Flow Monitoring

IOM is also conducting Flow Monitoring Surveys at Ibrahim Al-Khalil (Duhok Governorate), on the border with Türkiye, and Fishkabor (Duhok Governorate), on the border with Syria. Due to the volume of traffic, these surveys are conducted with a random sample of travellers using interval sampling and are therefore subject to statistical error. Based on

this data, IOM estimates that 4,576 TCNs returned home from Iraq via these two land crossings between 10 March and 27 April 2026.⁵ The countries of nationality of these travellers included Türkiye, Syria, Germany, France, Iran, United States of America, China, United Kingdom, Portugal, Czech Republic, Kuwait, Bosnia and Italy.

⁵ The estimates are based on a sample size of 1,127 respondents (890 at Ibrahim Al-Khalil and 237 at Fishkabor), out of whom 190 were TCNs returning home, weighted for the overall volume of traffic at each location. Data collection takes place only during regular working hours and was suspended 1-9 March as a security precaution.



© 2026 International Organization for Migration (IOM)

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior written permission of the publisher. The following citation is required when using any data and information included in this information product: 'International Organization for Migration (IOM), April 2026. *DTM Cross-border Mobility and Internal Displacement in Iraq*. IOM, Iraq.' For more information on terms and conditions of DTM information products, please refer to the link [here](#).