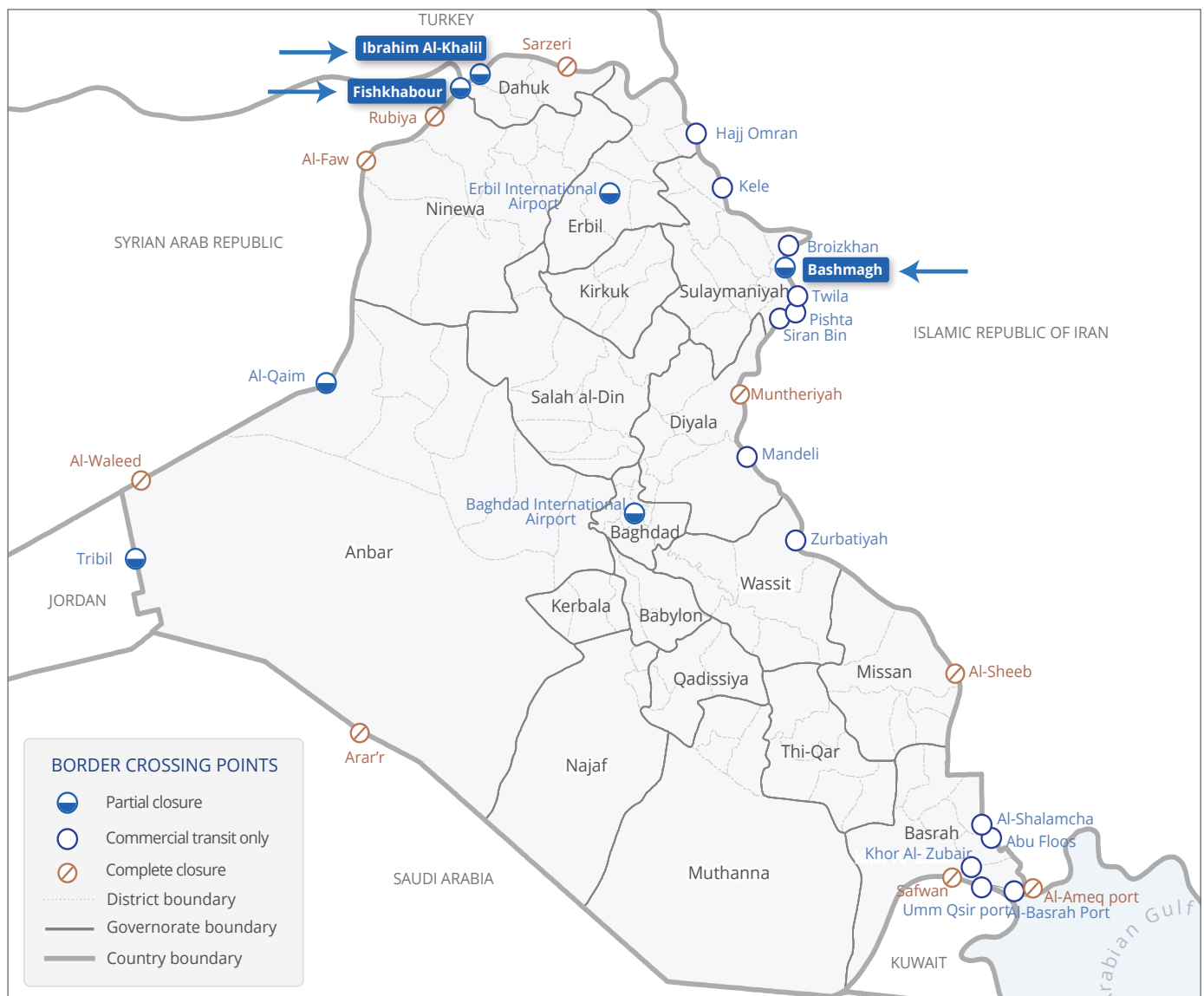


MOVEMENT RESTRICTIONS AND HEALTH MEASURES AT BORDER CROSSING POINTS

JULY 2020

DTM Iraq collects data at border crossing points with neighboring countries to better understand movement restrictions and health measures during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak. The data for this report was gathered through face-to-face interviews with key informants (KIs), government and health

employees, and observation that took place on 5 July 2020 at three border crossing points: Ibrahim Al-Khalil, bordering Turkey, Fishkhabour, bordering the Syrian Arab Republic and Bashmagh, bordering the Islamic Republic of Iran.



Operational status and movement restrictions

Bashmagh – incoming flow is allowed only on Monday and Thursday for returning Iraqis and outgoing flow is allowed every day for returning Iranians.

Fishkhabour – open only Sunday and Wednesday, only Syrians can return to Syria and Syrians with dual nationality are allowed to enter through Fishkhabour for transiting and then can exit through Ibraheem Al-Khaleel to reach their countries of usual residence.

Ibraheem Al-Khaleel – incoming flow is allowed only on Monday and Thursday for returning Iraqis and foreigners with permission from the Ministry of Interior; outgoing flow is allowed every day for returning foreigners and Iraqis with permission from the Ministry of Interior.

Health-related Standard Operating Procedures

Each monitored border crossing point disposes of an official document explaining the health measures that should be adopted during the COVID-19 outbreak. Training on this document was conducted for border point staff at all points except Fishkhabour. According to KIs, this document covers such procedures as preventive measures for staff, health screening of travellers, registration of travellers, notification of suspect cases and referral system of ill travellers. However, KIs at Bashmagh and Ibraheem Al-Khaleel reported that the document did not cover the procedure for reducing crowds of travellers. Based on enumerators' observation, none of monitored border crossing points has a mechanism to reduce crowding and congestion of travellers (ropes, queues, etc).

Health Staffing

Each monitored border crossing point has medical personnel: 5 in Bashmagh, 4 in Fishkhabour and 12 in Ibraheem Al-Khaleel (6 health-care professionals per each type of flow). Based on enumerators' observation, most or all workers were wearing disposable gloves and surgical masks. KIs at Ibraheem Al-Khaleel reported scarcity of soap, surgical masks and gloves from time to time.

Infection prevention and control

All monitored border crossing points have a handwashing station with soap and water or chlorinated water, except Bashmagh.

Health screening

All monitored border crossing points have temperature check using a non-contact thermometer, space for health screening (cabin, shed, umbrella, etc.) and a supply of surgical masks for suspected cases. Border points do not have a separate isolation space for further evaluation of any suspect case away from crowds. Health declaration forms of travellers are collected at Bashmagh and Ibraheem Al-Khaleel, but not at Fishkhabour as only transit of travellers escorted by Asayesh are allowed at this point. For the same reason, there is no quarantine requirements for incoming travellers at the Fishkhabour point. At the Ibraheem Al-Khaleel and Bashmagh points, a two-week quarantine at a government-assigned hotel is reported as mandatory for all incoming travellers. At the Bashmagh point, it would appear that this rule is not always respected and that some incoming travellers are allowed to simply comply with a 48-hour quarantine at home. This period is the time needed to receive results of COVID-19 testing, but as there is no testing at the border point and no indication that incoming travellers need to follow up on proving having received testing, it is not clear at this point what follow-up mechanisms are in place. There is no requirement to quarantine for truck drivers as drivers do not cross the border and a local driver continues the route.

Risk communication

Ibraheem Al-Khaleel border crossing point has visible information products about COVID-19. There are also posters at Fishkhabour, but enumerators noted that they are not visible for travellers. Bashmagh border point does not have visible information products about COVID-19. Furthermore, at all border points travellers are not informed about the symptoms of COVID-19 and steps to take if they develop symptoms, whether verbally or by being handed a leaflet or another information document.

Registration

At all monitored border crossing points, names and contact details of all travellers are recorded both electronically and on paper.

Notification and referral system

All monitored border crossing points have an ambulance. In case of a suspect case, the closest health facility would be notified. At the Bashmagh point, suspect cases are referred to Penjwen hospital; at Fishkhabour point and Ibraheem Al-Khaleel, Kavin hospital in Dahuk and Lilav hospital in Domiz for COVID-19.

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