

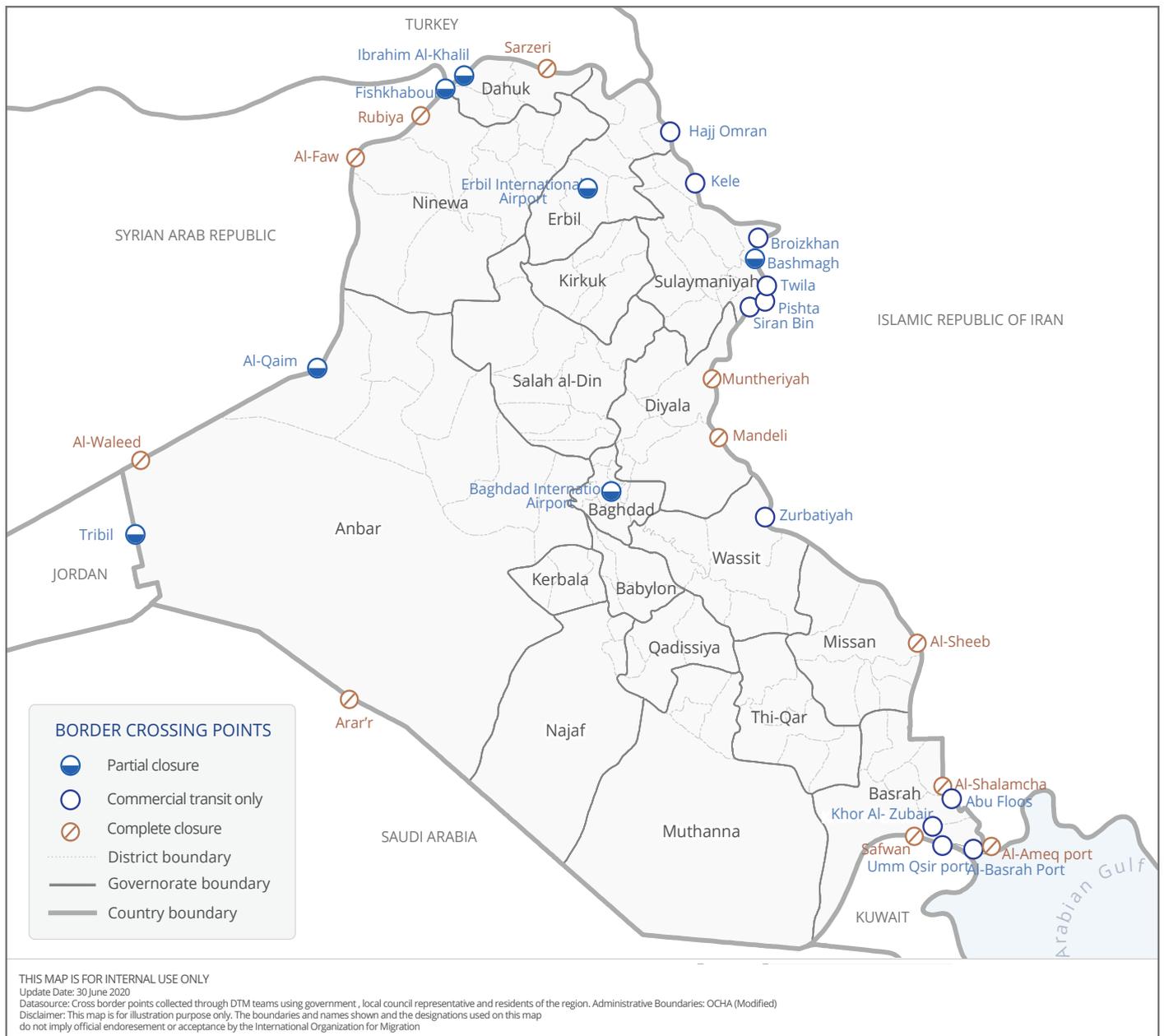
IRAQ MOBILITY RESTRICTIONS DUE TO COVID-19

16 – 29 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 16 June and 29 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 29 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

On 20 June, the Government of Iraq (GOI) announced the extension of nationwide lockdown measures to curb the spread of COVID-19. These measures include restrictions on commercial activity as well as civilian movements across the country. Local authorities' approach to law enforcement of these restrictions continue to vary across governorates.

Across Federal Iraq, in response to local epidemiological situations, the GOI continues to impose different measures across governorates, to stop further spread of the virus. On 20 June, the GOI announced bans in some areas, including at places of worship in Kirkuk and Qadisiyah, as well as the re-introduction of full movement bans in Thi Qar and Babylon. Essential services relating to food and health remain exempt from these restrictions so long as they adopt strict health regulations.

Further, from 15 to 29 June, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) introduced a ban on non-essential civilian and vehicular movements between Kurdistan Region of Iraq's (KRI) governorates, as well as between KRI and Federal Iraq. Citizen movements for essential reasons are subject to special approval by government authorities.

In addition, on 29 June, the KRG imposed a total lockdown within Erbil governorate starting from 29 June, 6:00 am until 4 July, 11:59 pm. During the lockdown period, all civilian movement are prohibited, with vehicle traffic and movement of citizens only allowed to purchase essential items. Local bakeries, supermarkets, groceries, and pharmacies would remain open during the lockdown. The KRG also continues to allow governorates to apply restrictions in response to localised virus transmission rates. As such, on 20 June, the governorates of Erbil and Sulaymaniyah announced that government departments would operate on some days only until further notice.

Additionally, on 22 June, the Iraqi Civil Aviation Authority (ICAA) announced an extension to the ban on commercial passenger

flights until 1 July, however medical evacuation, cargo, charter and emergency flights remained operational between 16-29 June. The ICAA has continued to grant approvals for special repatriation flights for Iraqi nationals who are stranded abroad. International airports remain closed to travellers until further notice.

In terms of legal regulations, 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.

In KRI, residency offices 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.

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. 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

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 IOM Migration Management Unit (MMU) information. Where border points operate, IOM's field staff collect data by in person through Key Informants (KIs). In instances where border points are closed to population movement, the teams collect the data by phone 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 to the [Methodology Framework](#).

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