

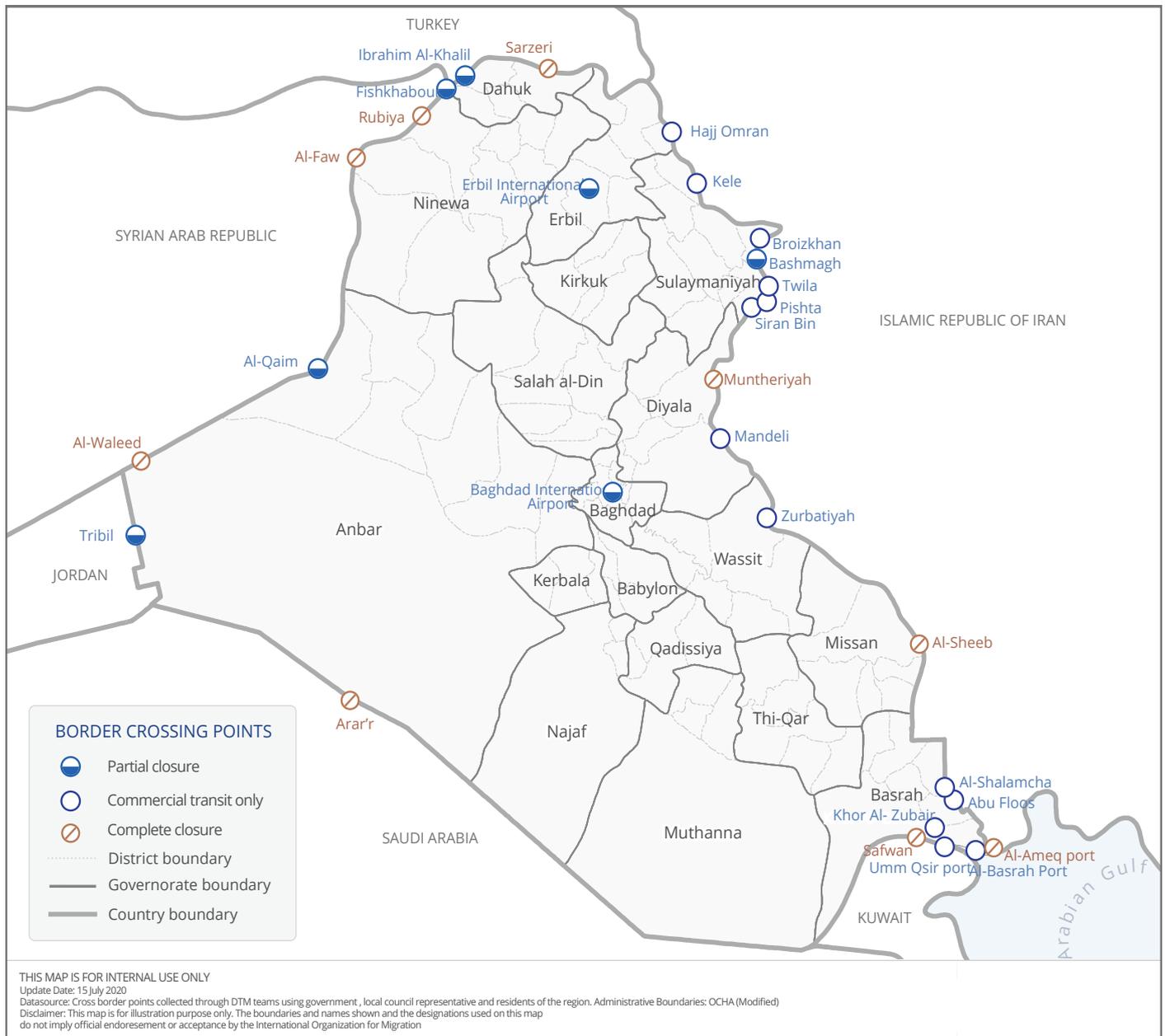
# IRAQ MOBILITY RESTRICTIONS DUE TO COVID-19

30 JUNE – 13 JULY 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 30 June and 13 July 2020, of which 9 were reported as closed, 7 partially closed, and 13 open only for commercial traffic. This report presents an overview of mobility restrictions for the 20 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 13 July 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

Between 30 June and 13 July, the Government of Iraq (GoI) extended the 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. Only a small number of changes to lockdown restrictions have taken place since the previous reporting period (16-29 June).

Across Federal Iraq, in response to local epidemiological situations, the GoI continues to impose different measures across governorates, to prevent further spread of the virus. This includes movement restrictions between governorates, as well as partial curfews from 6p.m to 6a.m within all governorates, including Ninewa following its full curfew being lifted previously. On 1 July, Thiqr Governorate lifted the full curfew that had been in place for two weeks in favour of a partial curfew from 6p.m to 6a.m. Across the country, essential services relating to food and health remain exempt from these restrictions so long as they adopt strict health regulations.

Further, from 30 June to 13 July, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) extended the 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. Curfews are not imposed in the KRI governorates of Dohuk or Sulaymaniyah, while Erbil's full curfew was replaced with a partial curfew (6p.m to 6a.m) on 5 July.

Additionally, on 2 July, the Iraqi Civil Aviation Authority (ICAA) announced an extension to the ban on commercial passenger flights until 15 July, however medical evacuation, cargo, charter and emergency flights remained operational between 30 June and 13 July. The ICAA has continued to grant approvals for special repatriation flights for Iraqi nationals who are stranded abroad.

Additionally, on 10 July, the Iraqi government announced that Iraqis will be permitted to leave Iraq to travel abroad. All travellers are required to quarantine at home for 14 days prior to flying, as well as provide a safe-to-travel medical certificate to border officials prior to departure. Further, from 2 July, the Iraqi Ministry of Transport has allowed Iraqi Airways to resume flights between Baghdad and Beirut twice a week. Passengers on these flights are subject to strict health protocols at both airports, and are required to obtain health insurance for their time in Lebanon.

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 the KRI, residency offices remain open, while individuals 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 transported. Consistent with previous months during COVID-19 lockdown, some points of entry operate on certain business days only.

Between 30 June and 13 July, DTM recorded several groups of people crossing between KRI and Syria, Turkey and Iran. These border crossings were as follows:

- Fishkhabour Border Crossing, Dohuk Governorate (Iraq-Syria border)
  - 840 individuals crossed from Iraq to Syria (Syrian nationals)
  - 169 individuals crossed from Syria to Iraq (Syrian nationals)
- Ibrahim al Khalil Border Crossing, Dohuk Governorate (Iraq-Turkey border)
  - 904 individuals crossed from Iraq to Turkey (Syrian, Iraqi and Turkish nationals)
  - 2,270 individuals crossed from Turkey to Iraq (Iraqi, Turkish and Iranian nationals)
- Bashmakh Border Crossing, Sulaymaniyah Governorate (Iraq-Iran)
  - 32 individuals crossed from Iraq to Iran (Iranian nationals)
  - 2,312 individuals crossed from Iran to Iraq (Iranian nationals)

Table 1 displays the status of all PoEs that were partially closed to migrants or opened for commercial transit only across Iraq between 30 June and 13 July. Changes to operational status from the previous period (16-29 June) include crossings between Iraq and Iran—Al-Shalamja (in Basra) as well as Baladruz/Mandeli (in Diyala), which are open for commercial transit after previously being completely closed.

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
Basra	Al-Shalamja	Iran	Commercial transit	Incoming
Diyala	Baladruz/Mandeli	Iran	Commercial transit only	Incoming
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
Sulaymaniyah	Kele	Iran	Commercial transit only	Incoming
Sulaymaniyah	Broizkhan	Iran	Commercial transit only	Both
Sulaymaniyah	Twila	Iran	Commercial transit only	Incoming
Sulaymaniyah	Siran Bin	Iran	Commercial transit only	Incoming
Sulaymaniyah	Bashmagh	Iran	Partial closure	Both
Sulaymaniyah	Pshta	Iran	Commercial transit only	Incoming
Wassit	Zurbatiyah	Iran	Commercial transit only	Incoming

Information that has been updated since the last reporting period is highlighted in yellow

## 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 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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