

IRAQ MOBILITY RESTRICTIONS AND HEALTH MEASURES DUE TO COVID-19

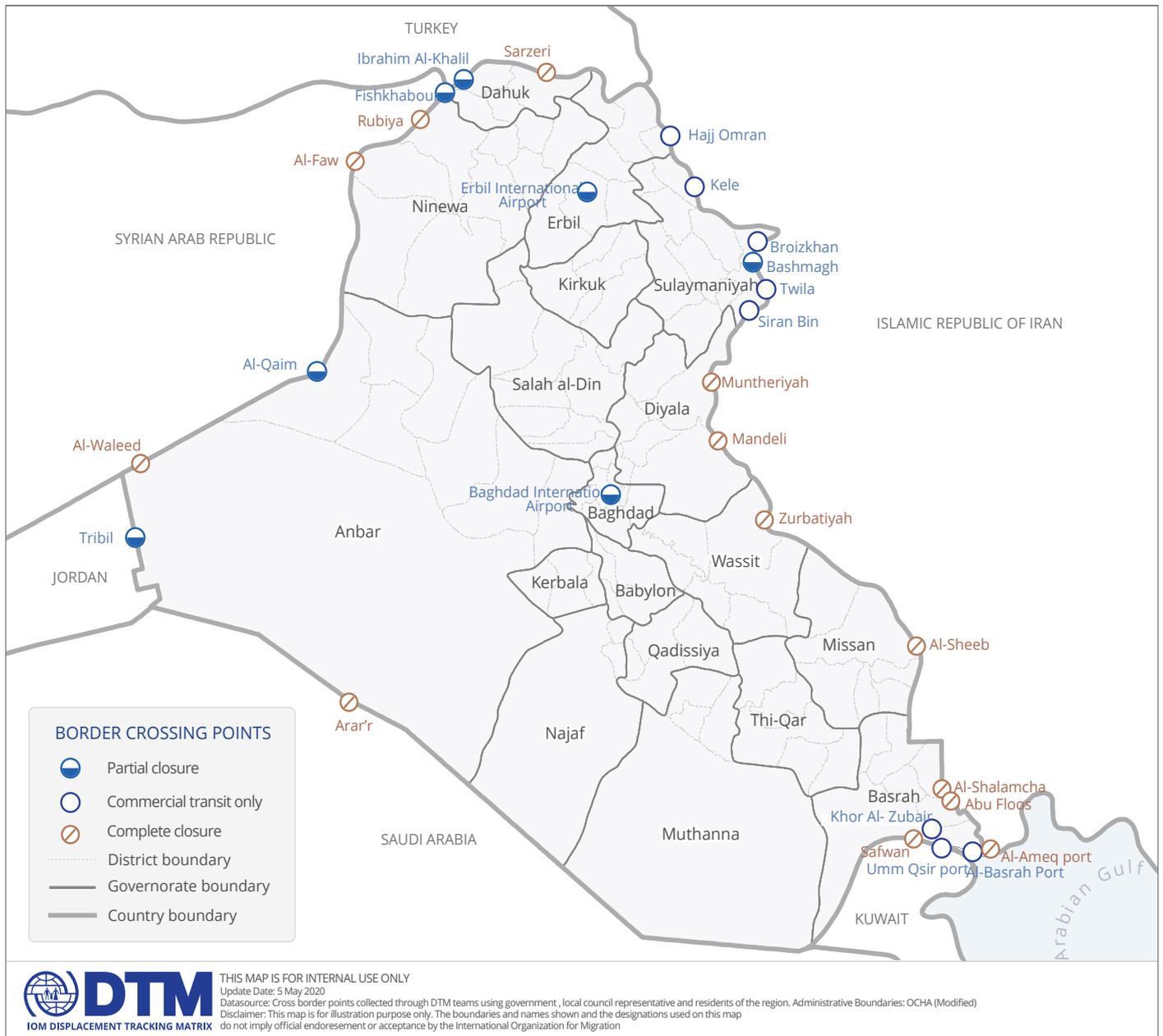
20 APRIL - 4 MAY 2020

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Iraqi authorities have imposed mobility restrictions and public health measures in March 2020 aimed at curbing the spread of the pandemic. 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. Moreover, different preventive healthcare measures have been implemented across the country, such as the distribution of public awareness materials, health

screening processes and the establishment of handwashing stations at border points.

IOM Iraq’s Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) assessed 28 locations between 20 April and 4 May 2020, of which 13 were reported as closed, 7 partially closed, and 8 open only for commercial traffic. This report presents an overview of mobility restrictions and health measures for the 13 monitored PoE 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 5 May 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.
- **22 land border** crossing points (international border crossing points on land): Trebil, Al-Waleed, Al-Qa'em Al-Faw, Rubiya, Fishkhabour, Ibrahim Khalil, Sarzeri, Haji Omran, Kele, Broizkhan, Bashmagh, Twila, Siran Bin, Muntheriyah, Mandeli, Zurbatiyah, Al-Sheeb, Al-Shalamcha, Abu Floos, Safwan.
- **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 April 2020, the Government of Iraq (GOI) announced the partial lifting of the curfews and movement restrictions. The Government imposed a total curfew until 22 May between 19:00h and 06:00h each evening of the work week, and all day on Fridays and Saturdays, with limited movements permitted at other times. Restaurants can now operate delivery services, shops and factories can come back online if they implement preventive measures, and government offices have re-opened at reduced capacity. The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) has extended curfews and movement restrictions until 10 May, with a total curfew between 00:00h and 06:00h, and some limited movements permitted at other times. The KRG has also eased the total prohibition on movement between governorates in KRI; citizens can now submit an online application to petition for permission to carry out critical travel. Airports throughout Iraq will remain closed to commercial travel until 22 May.

Movements into the country have been suspended for all residency permit holders and valid visa holders (e.g. workers, humanitarians, students, etc.). In the Kurdistan region, there have been some exceptions in order to repatriate or relocate citizens and national students into the region. Moreover, persons otherwise ineligible to enter or remain in the country have been granted entry or the right to remain in order to access healthcare.

In terms of documentation and legal measures, new regulations have been implemented since the beginning of the curfew. Fines for visa overstays or expired residency or work permits have been temporarily suspended. People with expired residencies have been allowed to stay, although they are required to submit their paperwork to the relevant governmental body as soon as the restriction measures are lifted. Similar exceptions do not apply to those cases in which visas have expired before the implementation of the curfew, limitation of movements, and closure of airports.

Additional permits are required for workers in essential services, such as healthcare workers, suppliers of essential goods, etc., to prove they have the right to move freely so they are able to reach their places of work.

HEALTH MEASURES

At all monitoring points, key informants (KIs) have reported the presence of Ministry of Health or local health authority staff. Specific COVID-19-related standard operating procedures (SOPs) have reportedly been implemented in order to manage the crossing of travellers, ensure the occupational health and safety of staff, and conduct detection activities, such as health screening, registration, notification, and to manage and refer ill travellers. Excluding the sea border points, KIs at 10 PoEs have reported the presence of staff trained in these SOPs.

At most points¹ (11 out of 13 PoEs), KIs have stated that information about COVID-19 has been provided, including posters, leaflets, announcements on prevention, handwashing instructions, guidance on symptoms, where to go if unwell, etc. Travellers are also notified about what to do when they develop symptoms (e.g. self-isolation and how to relieve symptoms at home). At 10 PoEs², KIs have alleged that travellers know where to seek care if their symptoms worsen or if they are at higher risk of developing severe symptoms (e.g. over the age of 65 or if they have an underlying medical condition, such as high blood pressure, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory disease, cancer or if they are weakened in some way). Apart from the sea border points, all other PoEs have reported the presence of handwashing stations, which are equipped with soap and water or chlorinated water.

At all 13 PoEs, KIs have confirmed the existence of health screening processes onsite for travellers on foot and by vehicle, which include temperature checks using non-contact thermometers. However, none of the points have reported the collection of health declaration forms as part of the screening process. In most points (11 PoEs), there is infrastructure (i.e. cabana, shed) in place at the sites to support crowd control and ensure the safety of screeners. At 10 points, Personal Protective Equipment (disposable gloves, surgical masks, face shields, etc.) is also reportedly available and worn by screeners and all other workers onsite. Moreover, according to KIs at most points (11 PoEs), there are supplies of surgical masks available at the sites for people with suspected COVID-19 and their companions. However, only 9 out of 13 have isolation spaces to further evaluate suspected cases apart from crowds. KIs at all PoEs have reported the presence of functional referral systems in place.

¹ This information was not known by the KIs at the seaports

² This information was not known by the KIs at the seaports

Table 1. Status and restrictions imposed at selected points of entry

GOVERNORATE	NAME OF THE POINTS OF ENTRY	BORDERING COUNTRY	OPERATIONAL STATUS	RESTRICTIONS/MEASURES IMPOSED
Anbar	Trebil	Jordan	Partial closure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movement restrictions to enter through and exit from this location • Medical measures including mandatory quarantine or additional medical checks required • Medical certificate confirming a negative COVID-19 test result
Anbar	Al-Qa'em	Syria	Partial closure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movement restrictions to enter through and exit from this location • Medical measures including mandatory quarantine or additional medical checks required
Baghdad	Baghdad International Airport	Airport	Partial closure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movement restrictions to enter through and exit from this location • Medical measures including mandatory quarantine or additional medical checks required • Certain nationalities restricted to disembark at this location
Basra	Umm Qasr	Seaport	Commercial transit only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No movement restriction (only goods are transported)
Basra	Al-Basra	Seaport	Commercial transit only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No movement restriction (only goods are transported)
Basra	Khor Al Zubair	Seaport	Commercial transit only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No movement restriction (only goods are transported)
Duhok	Ibrahim Khalil	Turkey	Partial closure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movement restrictions to enter through and exit from this location • Medical measures including mandatory quarantine or additional medical checks required
Duhok	Fishkhabour	Syria	Partial closure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movement restrictions to enter through and exit from this location
Erbil	Haji Omran	Iran	Commercial transit only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movement restrictions to enter through and exit from this location • Medical measures including mandatory quarantine or additional medical checks required • Medical certificate confirming a negative COVID-19 test result • Changes in identification documents needed to disembark and in visa requirements
Erbil	Erbil International Airport	Airport	Partial closure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movement restrictions to enter through and exit from this location • Medical measures including mandatory quarantine or additional medical checks required • Certain nationalities restricted to disembark at this location
Sulaimaniyah	Broizkhan	Iran	Commercial transit only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movement restrictions to enter through and exit from this location • Medical measures including mandatory quarantine or additional medical checks required
Sulaimaniyah	Bashmagh	Iran	Partial closure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movement restrictions to enter through and exit from this location • Medical measures including mandatory quarantine or additional medical checks required
Sulaimaniyah	Siran Bin	Iran	Commercial transit only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical checks for drivers (only Iraqi drivers are allowed to move through this point)

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 and its objective is to provide information on the capacity of current PoEs to mitigate and/or respond adequately and in a targeted manner, and to address any identified gaps or opportunities in health security and border management.

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 through 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 preexisting IOM Migration Management Unit data. IOM's field staff has collected data through interviews with KIs using a large, well-established network that includes local authorities, security forces and customs employees. The KIs' responses to the questions asked 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 key informant per monitoring point.

To systematically capture the status of each location, the following operational statuses for border crossing points are defined as follows:

- Closed for entry
- Closed for exit

- 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

To systematically capture the different mobility restrictions currently issued, the restrictions for various locations are categorized as follows:

- Movement is restricted to this location
- Movement is restricted from this location
- Visa requirements have changed for this location
- Certain nationalities are restricted from entering or disembarking at this location
- Rules pertaining to identification and/or travel documents needed to enter or disembark at this location have changed
- Medical measures including mandatory quarantine or additional medical checks have been imposed at this location
- Other

For further information on the methodology, definitions and explanation please refer to the [Methodology Framework](#).

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