

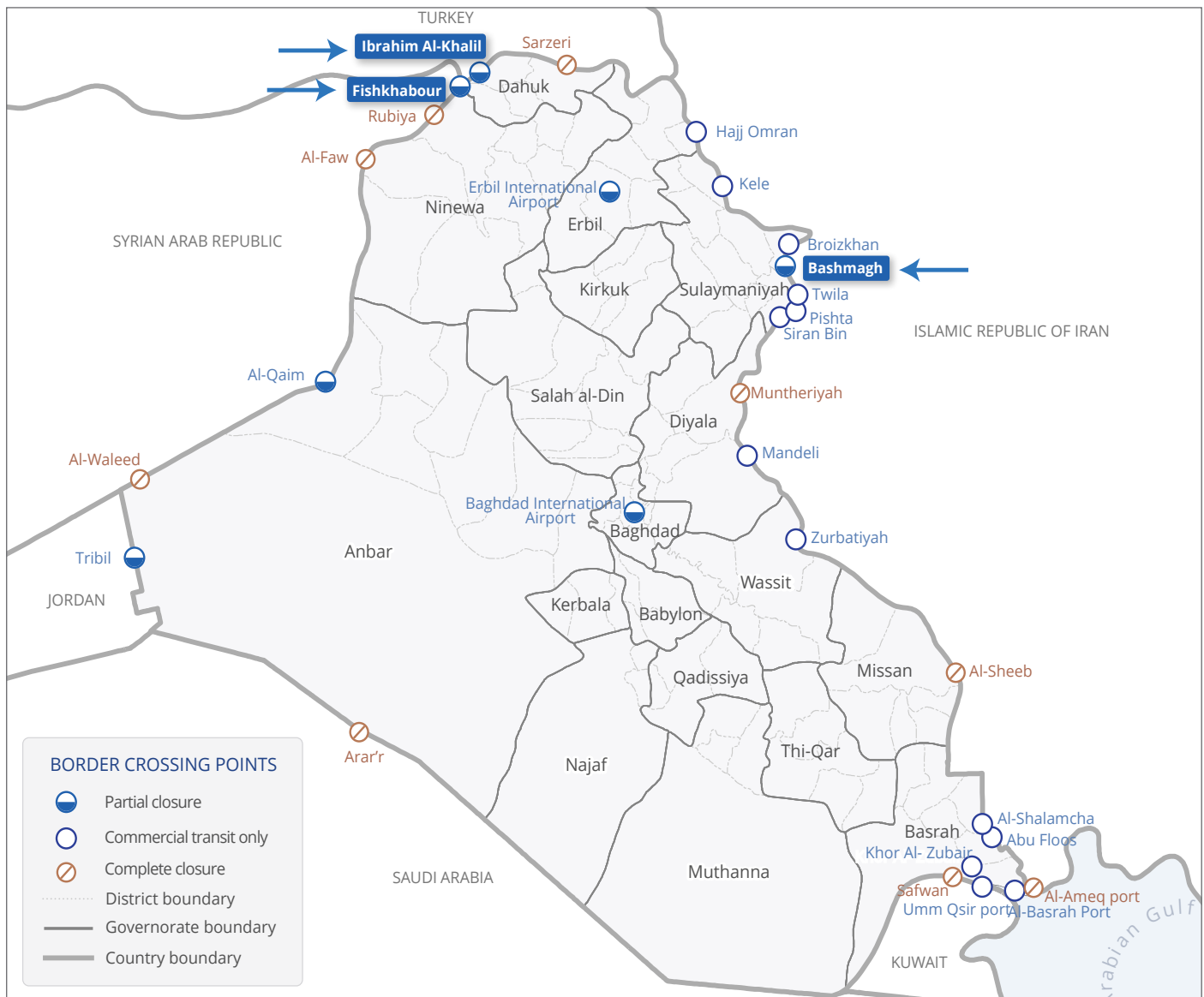
MOVEMENT RESTRICTIONS AND HEALTH MEASURES AT BORDER CROSSING POINTS

SEPTEMBER 2020

DTM Iraq collects data at border crossing points with neighboring countries to better understand movement restrictions and public health measures being implemented during the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. Data featured within this report was collected on 18 August 2020 through face-to-face interviews with key informants (government and health employees) as well as direct observation

at three border crossing points: Ibrahim Al-Khalil, bordering Turkey, Fishkhabour, bordering the Syrian Arab Republic and Bashmagh, bordering the Islamic Republic of Iran. This second report follows the first version which featured information collected on 5 July 2020. Changes in movement restrictions and health measures from the first round are detailed throughout this report.

Disclaimer: Information contained within this product is based upon the knowledge of staff working at border crossings as well as direct observation of DTM enumerators. This information has not been verified or endorsed officially.



Operational Status and Movement Restrictions

Ibrahim Al-Khalil was open for 24 hours for incoming and outgoing travellers in the week that data collection took place for this round - consistent with the last round. Incoming travellers need permission from the Ministry of Interior except for Iraqis and people with a residence permit in Iraq. Iranians are not allowed to enter. Outgoing travellers can exit without permission from the Ministry of Interior except for Iraqis. Iraqis are also not allowed to enter Turkey for tourism and Iranians are not allowed to cross.

Fishkhabour, unlike the week in which the first round of data collection took place, was temporarily closed for incoming and outgoing travellers and only commercial traffic was allowed in the week of this round. Enumerators were still able to collect information relating to Covid-19 measures at the border crossing.

Bashmagh was open for 24 hours for outgoing travellers (consistent with the last round) and from 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. for incoming travellers (aligning with the operating hours of the Covid-19 test laboratory) in the week of this round of data collection. Outgoing Iraqi and incoming Iranians need permission from the Ministry of Interior.

Public Health Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

As with the first round, all three monitored border crossing points have official public health SOPs on site, outlining measures that should be taken during the pandemic. Procedures covered in the document include preventative measures for staff, health screening and registration of travellers, as well as processes for the notification of suspected cases and medical referrals for unwell travellers. However, none of the three border crossings has a mechanism in place for reducing overcrowding and congestion of travellers to minimize transmission of the virus (ropes, queues, etc). Training on the facilitation of procedures is conducted for border point staff at Ibrahim Al-Khalil and Bashmagh, but not for those working at Fishkhabour.

Health Staffing

Since the first round of data collection, changes to the number of medical personnel at the border points have been recorded: Bashmagh has 11 (up from 5), while Ibrahim Al-Khalil has 36 (up significantly from 12) — 30 at the incoming gate and 6 at the outgoing gate. The number of medical staff at Fishkhabour was not recorded; however, four staff were previously recorded there in the first round. Most or all workers at the three crossings were recorded as using Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to minimize transmission of the virus, including disposable gloves and surgical masks.

Infection Prevention and Control

In terms of infection control, Ibrahim Al-Khalil and Fishkhabour crossings were recorded as having a functional handwashing station

containing chlorinated water or soap. Bashmagh crossing does not have a handwashing station. In addition, supplies of surgical masks were recorded at each of the crossings; they are made available to people suspected to have contracted Covid-19 as well as their travel companions.

Health Screening

All three monitored border crossing points have non-contact thermometers for temperature checking of travellers, as well as dedicated spaces for health screening (cabin, shed, umbrella, etc). However, none of the crossings have an isolation space for further evaluation of suspected cases amongst travellers. Travellers crossing at Bashmagh (incoming and outgoing) and Ibrahim Al-Khalil (incoming) are required to submit a health declaration form.

Unlike the previous round of data collection, Covid-19 tests are available at the Ibrahim Al-Khalil and Bashmagh. In addition, it is now mandatory for all residents of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) to be tested for Covid-19 whilst entering at the border points. Following this, they are required to quarantine at home for 48 hours for the test results to be processed. Travellers residing in Federal Iraq are not subject to this testing and quarantine rule.

Risk Communication

The presence of Covid-19 information products containing advice on symptoms and prevention strategies were recorded at Ibrahim Al-Khalil and Fishkhabour crossings; however, no information products were present at Bashmagh. Consistent with the first round, enumerators at all three locations recorded that staff do not provide this information directly to travellers.

Registration

At all three monitored border crossings, the names and contact details of all travellers are recorded both electronically and on a paper-based system.

Notification and Referral System

Consistent with the first round, an ambulance was observed at each of the three monitored border crossings. Additionally, border point staff refer incoming travellers suspected as having contracted Covid-19 to nearby health facilities. Travellers arriving to Iraq through Bashmagh crossings are referred to a hospital in Penjwen, and those arriving through Ibrahim Al-Khalil and Fishkhabour are referred to hospitals in Azadi, Lilav, and Kavin. Burn units within some hospitals are now being used to provide treatments for patients that have contracted Covid-19.

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