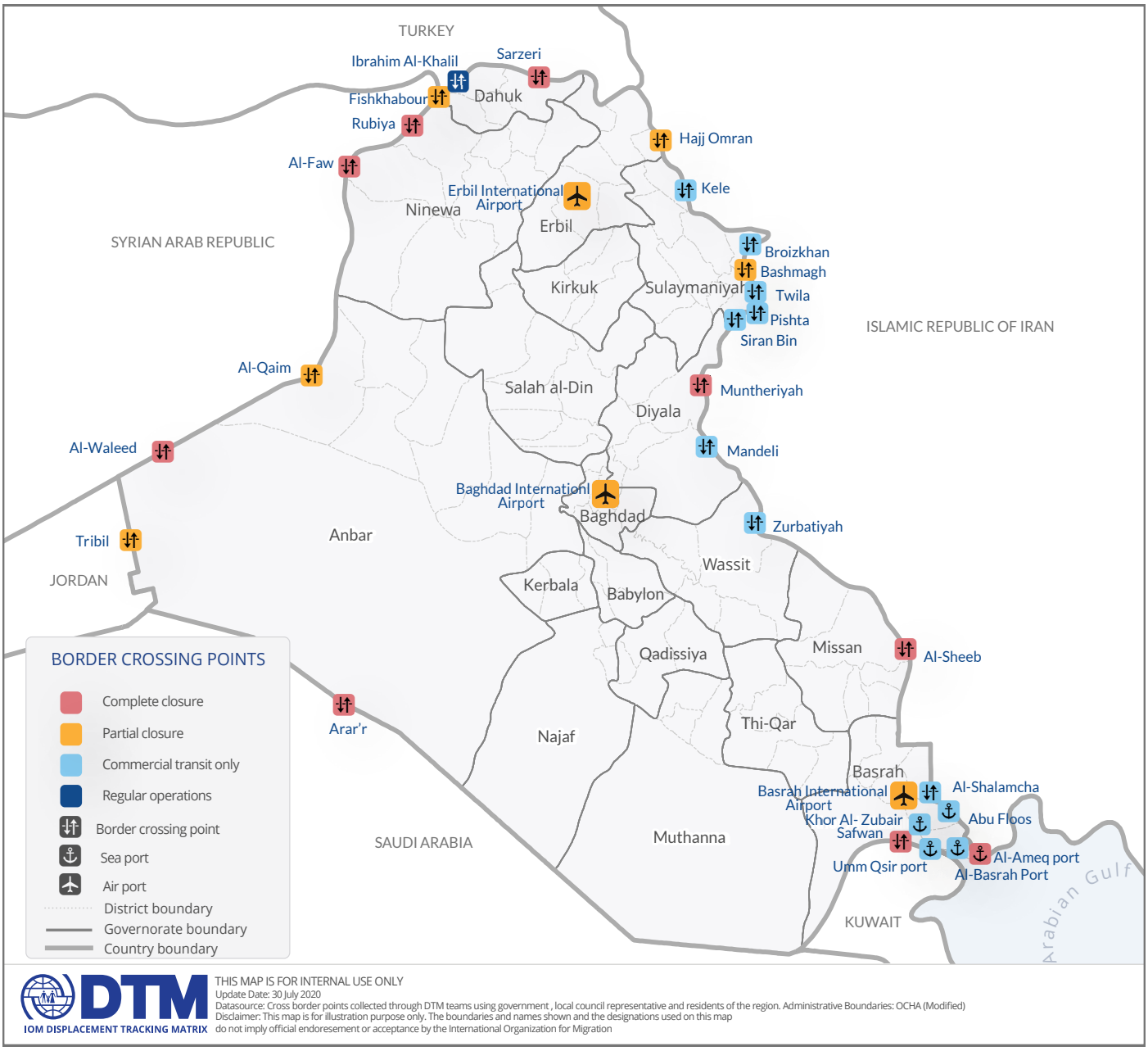
IOM IRAQ

IRAQ MOBILITY RESTRICTIONS DUE TO COVID-19

14–27 JULY 2020

In response to the coronavirus disease (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) assessed 30 locations between 14-27 July 2020, of which 9 were reported as closed, 8 partially closed, 12 open only for commercial traffic, and 1 fully open. This report presents an overview of mobility restrictions for the 21 monitored PoEs which are fully open or 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 27 July 2020



Data has been collected on the following geographic units:

- **3 airports** (currently or recently functioning airports with designated International Air Transport Association codes): Baghdad, Basra 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 14 and 27 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.

Across Federal Iraq, in response to local epidemiological situations, the GoI continued to impose different measures across governorates, to prevent further spread of the virus. Non-essential movement restrictions between governorates remained in effect, while a curfew between 9:30pm to 5:00am was also in place within all governorates except Kirkuk. Across the country, essential services relating to health and food remain exempt from these restrictions, so long as they adopt strict health regulations. These regulations also apply in shops and malls, following GoI granting them permission to re-open on 16 July. In addition, restaurants and cafes are permitted to offer take-away and delivery orders to customers, but are not allowed to welcome customers to dine in.

Furthermore, between 14-27 July, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) extended the restrictions on non-essential civilian and vehicular movements between Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) and Federal Iraq. Exemptions to these restrictions can be made to people working in health, commercial, and agriculture industries, as well as KRG residents or those holding KRG identity cards. Restrictions on movements between KRI governorates also remain in place; exemptions are subject to special approval via an online application system administered by governorate authorities. Unlike in Federal Iraq, curfews are not imposed in any KRI governorates.

Additionally, on 23 July, the Iraqi Civil Aviation Authority (ICAA) officially re-opened Baghdad and Basra International Airports for the first time since March, with commercial airlines permitted to resume incoming and outgoing flights. The ICAA has also published new public health measures for staff and passengers at airports, to limit the spread of COVID-19. These measures include a requirement for all people to wear face masks and use hand sanitizer whilst moving through terminals, as well as practice social distancing (1 metre) from others. In addition, all passengers are required to undertake temperature checks before entering terminals. Flights for emergencies, medical evacuations, carrying cargo, and chartering also remained operational between 14-27 July.

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, 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.

Table 1 displays the status of all PoEs that were fully open, partially closed, and open for commercial transit only across Iraq between 14-27 July. Changes to operational status from the previous period (30 June – 13 July) took place at Baghdad and Basra International Airports, which opened to a limited number of commercial flights on 23 July, after having been previously open for special flights only. In addition, the status of Ibrahim Al-Khalil crossing (Iraq-Turkey) has changed from being partially closed to fully operational, while Hajj Omran (Iraq-Iran) is now partially open after previously being open for commercial transit 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 (limited commercial flights)	Incoming and outgoing
Basra	Abu Floos	Iran	Commercial transit only	Incoming
Basra	Khor Al Zubair	Seaport	Commercial transit only	Incoming and outgoing
Basra	Umm Qasr	Seaport	Commercial transit only	Incoming
Basra	Al-Basra	Seaport	Commercial transit only	Outgoing
Basra	Al-Shalamja	Iran	Commercial transit	Incoming
Basra	Basra International Airport	Airport	Partial closure (limited commercial flights)	Incoming and outgoing
Diyala	Baladruz/Mandeli	Iran	Commercial transit only	Incoming
Duhok	Ibrahim Khalil	Turkey	Open	Both
Duhok	Fishkhabour	Syria	Partial closure	Both
Erbil	Hajj Omran	Iran	Partial closure	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

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 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 transit only
- Other
- Unknown

For further information on the methodology, definitions and explanation please refer to the to the Methodology Framework.

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