

POPULATION FLOW OVERVIEW, TRAVELLERS' PROFILE AND COVID-19 AWARENESS

DATA COLLECTION PERIOD: AUGUST 2020

OCTOBER 2020

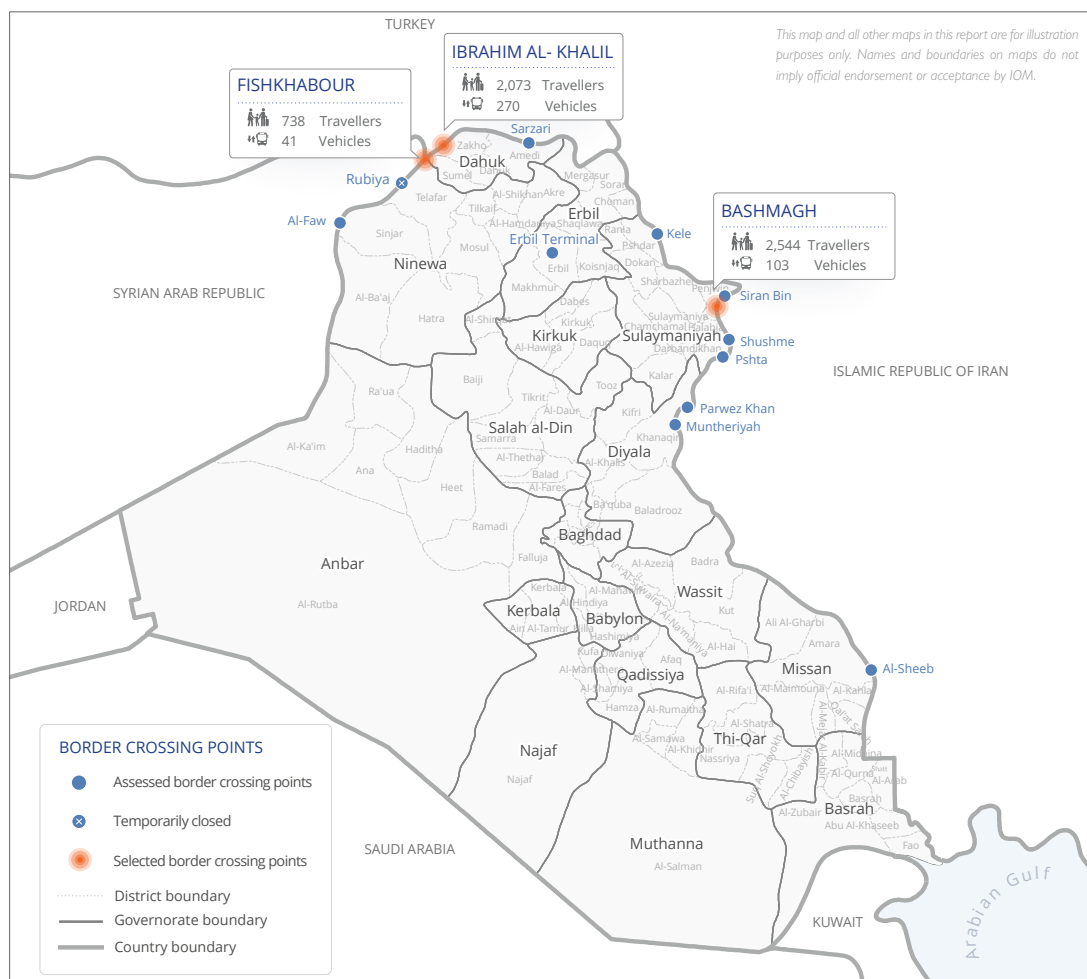
DTM Iraq collects data at border crossing points with neighboring countries – the Islamic Republic of Iran (Iran), the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria) and Turkey – to better understand migration movements in the Middle East. Cross-border monitoring is drawn from IOM's DTM standard methodology, designed to capture and describe migration flows and is part of the Regional Evidence for Migration Analysis and Policy (REMAP) project, funded by the European Union, targeting Afghanistan, Bangladesh, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq and Pakistan.

The data for this report was gathered through two separate approaches – a headcount of all travellers entering or leaving Iraq and a sample survey of travellers at three border crossing points in August 2020. Border crossing points were selected based on observations conducted in May 2019 by IOM's Rapid Assessment and Response Teams (RARTs). Out of 16 locations assessed, five border crossing points were selected for data collection: Ibrahim Al-Khalil, bordering Turkey, Fishkhabour, bordering Syria, and Bashmagh, Zurbatiyah (Wassit Terminal) and Al-Shalamcha, bordering Iran.¹ Due to mobility restrictions imposed by Iraqi authorities since March

2020 aimed at curbing the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), data collection took place at three out of five selected border points.² The report presents an overview of the overall movements of travellers observed at each of three monitored border crossing points during August 2020, their socio-demographic characteristics and reasons for travel. It is also focused on their awareness of COVID-19 symptoms, prevention measures and risk factors.

In this report, the term 'travellers' refers to all individuals who are crossing the international border with Iraq for any given reason and thus includes several categories of people. Most travellers are entering or exiting Iraq temporarily to visit family, do trade or business, or receive medical treatment. Fewer are planning to stay or leave the country for a longer period – or even indefinitely – for work-, family- or education-related purposes, or humanitarian reasons. Some of them are planning to change or have already changed their place of usual residence.³

Map 1: Monitored border crossing points



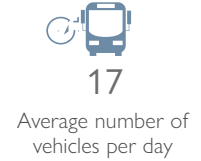
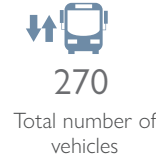
1 Further detail on the selection of respondents, survey methodology and how the border crossing points were selected are available in the Methodological Overview on the last page or at the Iraq DTM portal. Available at http://iraqdtm.iom.int/files/Remap/iotm_dtm_CROSS_BORDER_MOVEMENT_MONITORING_METHODOLOGICAL_OVERVIEW.pdf

2 Please refer to the report "Iraq Mobility Restrictions due to COVID-19" for more details on the mobility restrictions imposed since March 2020, aimed to curb the spread of the virus. Available at <http://iraqdtm.iom.int/COVID19/MovementRestrictions>

3 According to the IOM definition, "migrant – an umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common lay understanding of a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons" (IOM (2019), Glossary on Migration – Switzerland). For the purpose of collecting data on migration, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) defines "international migrant" as "any person who changes his or her country of usual residence" and "usual residence" as "the place at which the person has lived continuously for most of the past 12 months (that is, for at least six months and one day) or for at least the past 12 months, not including temporary absences for holidays or work assignments, or intends to live for at least six months" (UN DESA (1998), Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration, Revision 1 – USA).



BORDER POINT PROFILE
IBRAHIM AL-KHALIL
BORDERING COUNTRY: **TURKEY**



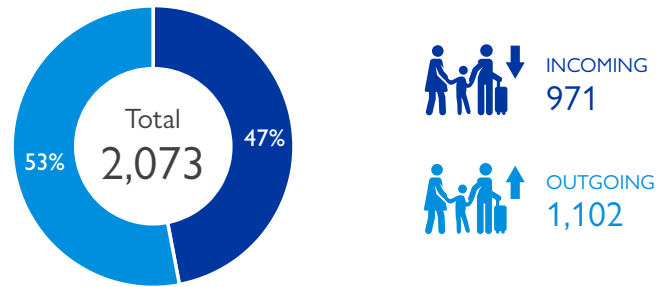
At the Ibrahim Al-Khalil point, data collection took place from 4 August to 27 August 2020, weekdays only from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. During this period, this border crossing point was open every day for 24 hours for incoming and outgoing travellers. Incoming travellers needed permission from the Ministry of Interior, except for Iraqis and those with a residence permit in Iraq. Iranians were not allowed to enter. Outgoing travellers could exit without permission from the Ministry of Interior except for Iraqis who needed permission from the Ministry of Interior and were not allowed to travel for tourism.

All residents of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) had to be tested for Covid-19 when they entered the border points. They were afterwards required to quarantine at home for 48 hours for the test results to be processed. Travellers residing in Federal Iraq were not subject to this testing and quarantine rule.

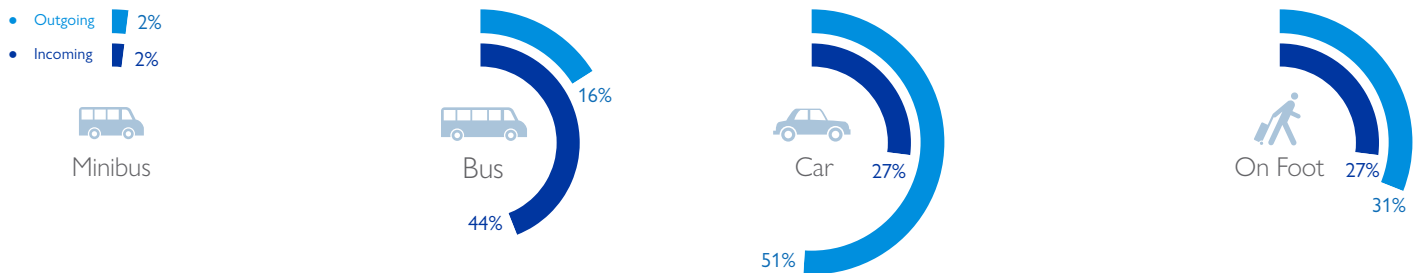
During this period, the Ibrahim Al-Khalil border crossing point witnessed a larger flow of travellers compared to other points assessed. DTM identified 2,073 individuals crossing the Ibrahim Al-Khalil border point between 2 and 27 August, with 971 entering Iraq after being abroad (incoming flow) and 1,102 individuals exiting Iraq to another country (outgoing flow). On average, the border was crossed by 130 travellers per day (combining incoming and outgoing flows) and 17 vehicles (including private cars, buses and minibuses). This is a significantly lower number compared to the previous round collected in between 1 and 30 July, when 4,342 individuals crossing the Ibrahim Al-Khalil border point.

Around half of incoming travellers crossed this border point by bus or minibus, around one third crossed by car and around one third crossed on foot. Half of outgoing travellers crossed this border point by car, one third crossed on foot and the rest, around one fifth, crossed by bus or minibus.

Number and percentage of travellers by type of flow

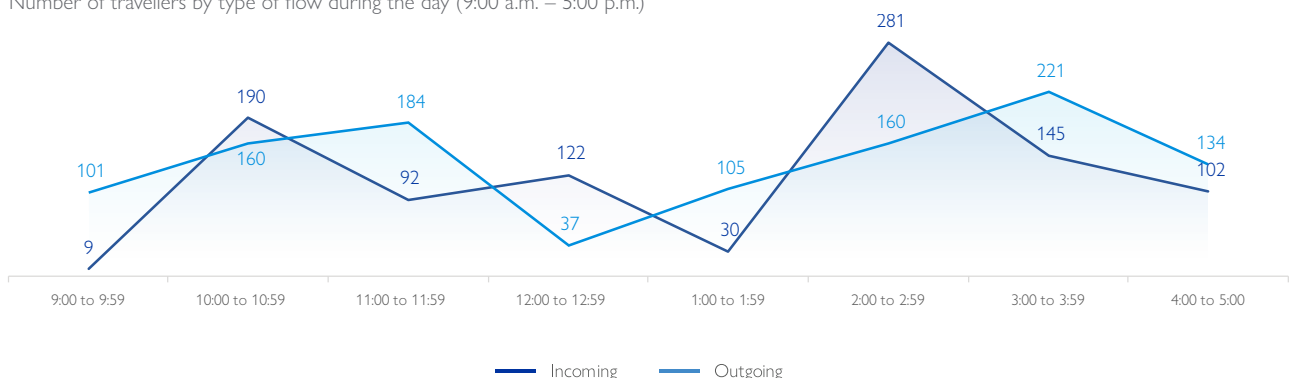


Percentage of travellers by means of transportation



The number of incoming travellers slightly exceeded the number of outgoing travellers for this border crossing point with peak crossings between 2:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m.

Number of travellers by type of flow during the day (9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.)





TRAVELLERS' PROFILE

IBRAHIM AL-KHALIL

BORDERING COUNTRY: TURKEY

Most incoming and outgoing travellers were men. Women represented 23 per cent of incoming and 25 per cent of outgoing flows. Around two thirds of incoming and outgoing travellers were aged 35–60 years and the rest were aged 18–34 years, with a small portion of travellers aged over 60 years (that is, 1% of incoming and 3% of outgoing travellers).

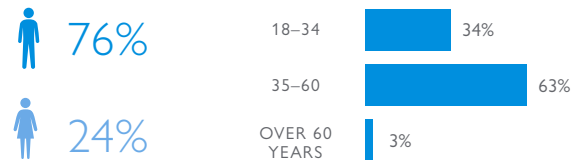
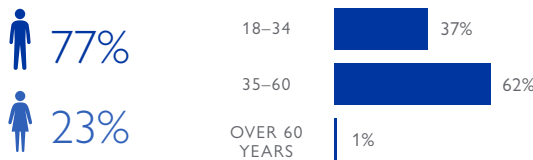
The majority (72%) of incoming flows were Iraqis and the rest were from Turkey, Syria and Russia. Incoming Iraqis either reside in Iraq (54%) or abroad (46%). Most incoming foreign travellers usually reside abroad, that is 100 per cent of Turkish nationals and 71 per cent of other nationals. The main reasons for entering Iraq were family visit (48%), followed by business or trade (25%). In August, a significantly larger number of travellers entered Iraq for business or trade compared to July, when only four per cent travelled due to this reason. Half of incoming flows entered Iraq temporarily for a duration of up to three months, a little more than one third entered for a longer term of three months or more and the remaining 11 per cent were undecided as to the duration of their travel. This is consistent with the previous round collected in July.

Most of outgoing flows were Iraqis either residing in Iraq (61%) or abroad (39%) and 16 per cent were Turkish nationals residing in their home country (94%). The remaining five per cent were Ukrainians, Germans or Georgians residing in their home countries. The top three reasons for exiting Iraq were family visit (32%), medical treatment (26%) and business or trade (15%). In August, a significantly larger number of travellers exiting Iraq for business or trade, compared to July when only six per cent travelled due to this reason. Around half (55%) of outgoing travellers exited Iraq temporarily for a duration of up to three months. The portion of temporary travel continued to increase compared to the previous rounds collected in July when 42 per cent exited Iraq for up to three months, and June when 26 per cent exited Iraq for up to three months. One third exited Iraq for a longer term of three months or more and the remaining 14 per cent were undecided as to the duration of their travel.

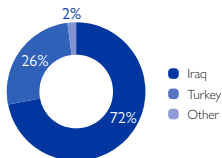
INCOMING

OUTGOING

AGE AND GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF TRAVELLERS

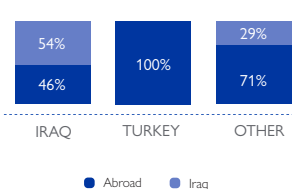


MAIN NATIONALITIES OF TRAVELLERS

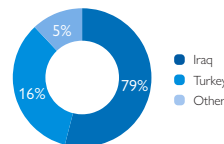


Other countries of nationality were Syria and Russia

COUNTRY OF USUAL RESIDENCE BY NATIONALITIES

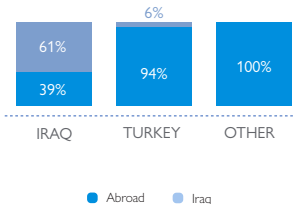


MAIN NATIONALITIES OF TRAVELLERS

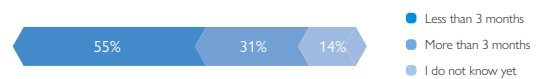
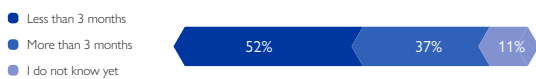


Other countries of nationality were Ukraine, Germany and Georgia

COUNTRY OF USUAL RESIDENCE BY NATIONALITIES



INTENDED LENGTH OF JOURNEY



REASONS FOR TRAVEL





COVID-19 AWARENESS OF TRAVELLERS

IBRAHIM AL-KHALIL

BORDERING COUNTRY: TURKEY

Travellers were asked about their awareness of COVID-19 symptoms, prevention measures and risk factors. The majority of incoming and outgoing travellers were aware of main symptoms such as fever and dry cough, but fewer reported knowing that difficulty breathing/shortness of breath are common symptoms (36% of incoming and 46% of outgoing travellers). The same applies to prevention measures, with most incoming and outgoing travellers aware of washing hands regularly and maintaining distance but fewer aware of covering mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing and avoiding touching face.

Travellers would either go to a public primary health care center or hospital in case of symptoms (37% of incoming and 31% of outgoing) or call the hotline and follow instructions (35% of incoming and 24% of outgoing). Around one fifth of the incoming flow and a third of outgoing flow would stay home and wait for symptoms to improve or worsen.

Some travellers reported having health conditions for which COVID-19 is often more severe. Specifically, incoming flow had 7 per cent of travellers with diabetes, 6 per cent with serious heart conditions. Outgoing flow had 3 per cent of travellers with diabetes, 5 per cent serious heart conditions and 3 per cent with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis.

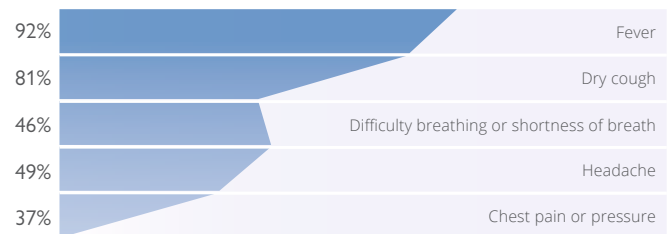
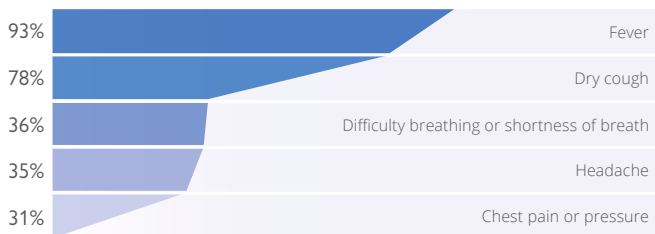


INCOMING



OUTGOING

COVID-19 SYMPTOMS AWARENESS



ACTIONS IN CASE TRAVELLERS OR SOMEONE FROM THEIR FAMILY HAVE COUGH, FEVER OR DIFFICULTY BREATHING

37% Go to public primary health-care centre or hospital

9% Go to a private clinic or hospital

35% Call the hotline and follow instructions

0% I do not know

18% Stay home and wait for symptoms to improve or worsen

31% Go to public primary health-care centre or hospital

11% Go to a private clinic or hospital

24% Call the hotline and follow instructions

0% I do not know

34% Stay home and wait for symptoms to improve or worsen

VULNERABLE GROUPS

7% diabetes

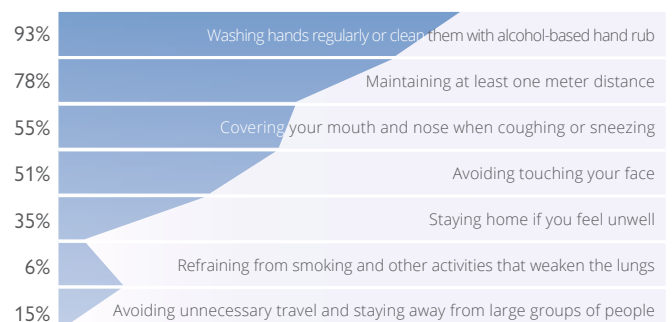
6% serious heart conditions

3% diabetes

5% serious heart conditions

3% chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis

COVID-19 PREVENTION MEASURES AWARENESS





BORDER POINT PROFILE
FISHKHABOUR
BORDERING COUNTRY: SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC



738

Total number of travellers



148

Average number of travellers per day



41

Total number of vehicles



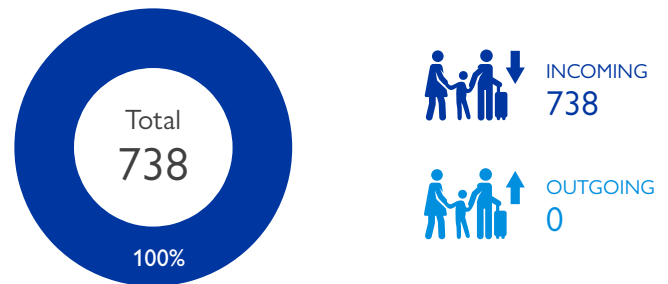
8

Average number of vehicles per day

At the Fishkhabour point, data collection took place from 23 August to 27 August 2020, weekdays only from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. From 1 August to 22 August 2020, Fishkhabour was closed and starting from 23 August was open for incoming travellers only.

All residents of KRI had to be tested for Covid-19 when they entered the border points. They were afterwards required to quarantine at home for 48 hours for the test results to be processed. Travellers residing in Federal Iraq were not subject to this testing and quarantine rule.

Number and percentage of travellers by type of flow



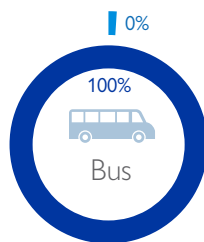
During this period, the Fishkhabour border crossing point witnessed a slightly higher flow of travellers as compared to the previous round collected in July, although it was closed for most of the month. DTM identified 738 individuals entering the Fishkhabour border point between 23 and 27 August. On average, the border was crossed by 148 travellers per day (combining incoming and outgoing flows) and eight buses. This is a slightly higher number compared to the previous round collected in between 1 July and 30 July, when 687 individuals crossed the Fishkhabour border point. All travellers crossed this border point by bus, which is consistent with the previous round of data collection.

Percentage of travellers by means of transportation

- Outgoing 0%
- Incoming 0%



Minibus



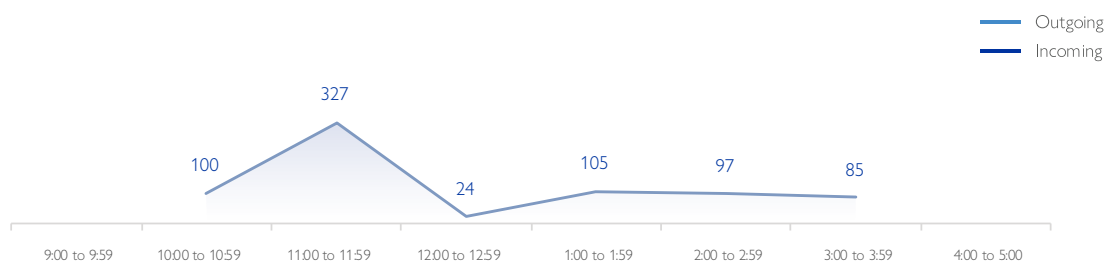
Car



On Foot

The peak crossings were between 11:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m

Number of travellers by type of flow during the day (9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.)





TRAVELLERS' PROFILE

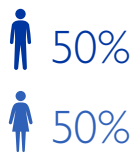
FISHKHABOUR

BORDERING COUNTRY: SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

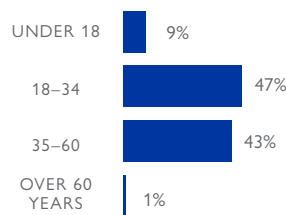
Incoming travellers were men and women (equally distributed), with 50 per cent men, and 50 per cent women, crossing. 50 per cent were men and 50 per cent were women. Generally, travellers at this point were younger compared to other border points; around half were aged 18–34 years, around two fifths were aged 35–60 years and the remaining nine per cent were younger than 18 years. All incoming travellers were Syrians, most of whom reside in Iraq, and only 11 per cent reside in their home country. Family reunion was the main reason to cross for the majority of travellers (93%) with a small portion travelling for education (8%) and employment (2%). Unlike travellers at other border points, most travellers (92%) at the Fishkhabour entered Iraq for a longer term of three months or more and only 8 per cent travelled temporarily for a duration of up to three months.

INCOMING

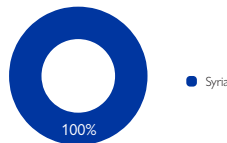
GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF TRAVELLERS



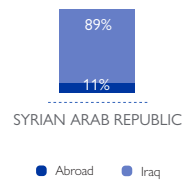
AGE DISTRIBUTION OF TRAVELLERS



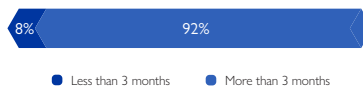
MAIN NATIONALITIES OF TRAVELLERS



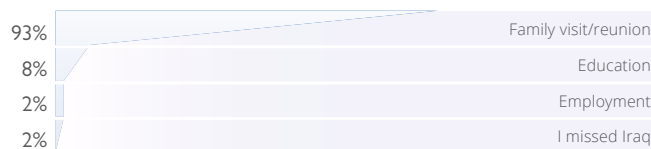
COUNTRY OF USUAL RESIDENCE BY NATIONALITIES



INTENDED LENGTH OF JOURNEY



REASONS FOR TRAVEL





COVID-19 AWARENESS OF TRAVELLERS

FISHKHABOUR

BORDERING COUNTRY: SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

Travellers were asked about their awareness of COVID-19 symptoms, prevention measures and risk factors. The majority of incoming travellers (93%) were aware of fever as a main symptom but fewer reported knowing that dry cough (56%) and difficulty breathing/shortness of breath (58%) are common symptoms. The same applies to prevention measures: most incoming travellers were aware of avoiding touching face and covering mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing but fewer were aware of maintaining distance.

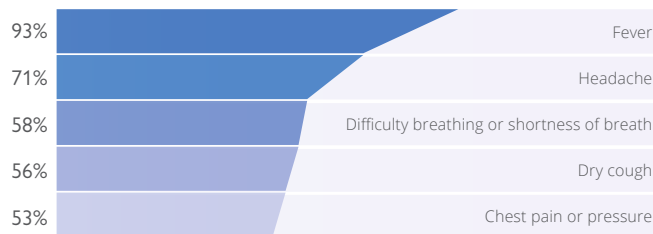
Travellers would either go to a public primary health-care centre or hospital in case of symptoms (33%) or call the hotline and follow instructions (52%). Around one fifth of the incoming flow would stay home and wait for symptoms to improve or worsen.

Some travellers reported having health conditions for which COVID-19 is often more severe. Specifically, incoming flow had 14 per cent of travellers with diabetes, 5 per cent with liver disease, and 5 per cent with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis.



INCOMING

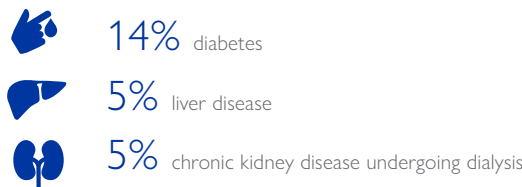
COVID-19 SYMPTOMS AWARENESS



ACTIONS IN CASE OF TRAVELLERS OR SOMEONE FROM THEIR FAMILY HAVE COUGH, FEVER OR DIFFICULTY BREATHING



VULNERABLE GROUPS



COVID-19 PREVENTION MEASURES AWARENESS





BORDER POINT PROFILE

BASHMAGH

BORDERING COUNTRY: ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN



2,544

Total number of travellers



212

Average number of travellers per day



103

Total number of vehicles

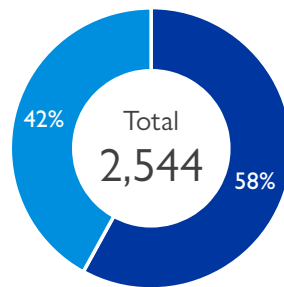


9

Average number of vehicles per day

At the Bashmagh point, data collection took place from 10 August to 27 August 2020, weekdays only from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. From 4 August to 9 August 2020, data collection was interrupted due to access issues. During the data collection period, incoming flow at the Bashmagh was allowed every day from 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. (aligning with the operating hours of the Covid-19 test laboratory). Outgoing Iraqis and incoming Iranians needed permission from the Ministry of Interior.

Number and percentage of travellers by type of flow



INCOMING
1,479

OUTGOING
1,065

During this period, the Bashmagh border crossing point witnessed a slightly higher flow of travellers compared the previous round collected in July. DTM identified 2,544 individuals crossing the Bashmagh border point between 10 and 27 August, with 1,479 entering Iraq after being abroad (incoming flow) and 1,065 individuals exiting Iraq to another country (outgoing flow). On average, the border was crossed by 212 travellers per day (combining incoming and outgoing flows) and nine vehicles (private cars). This is a slightly larger number compared to the previous round collected between 1 and 23 July, when 2,327 individuals crossed the Bashmagh border point. Most travellers crossed this border point on foot, with only a few crossings in private cars, which is consistent with the previous round of data collection.

Percentage of travellers by means of transportation

- Outgoing 0%
- Incoming 0%



Minibus

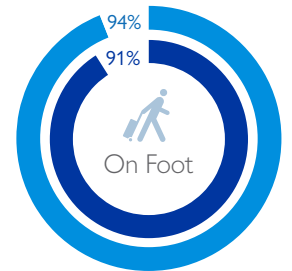


Bus



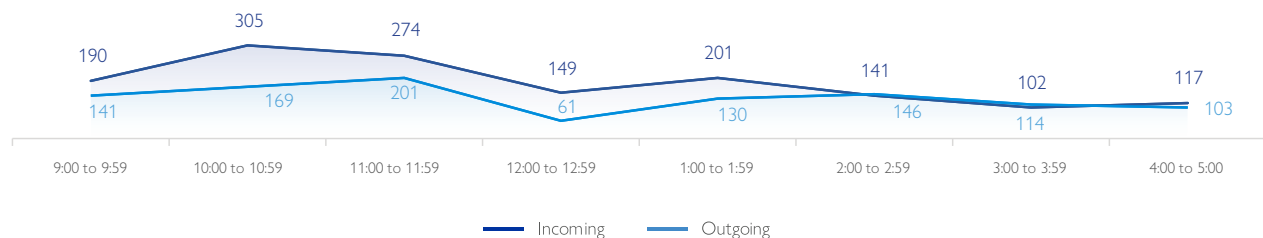
Car

6%
9%



The number of incoming travellers slightly exceeds the number of outgoing travellers for this border crossing point.

Number of travellers by type of flow during the day (9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.)





TRAVELLERS' PROFILE

BASHMAGH

BORDERING COUNTRY: ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

Most incoming and outgoing travellers were men. Women represented 26 per cent of incoming and 34 per cent of outgoing flows. Half of incoming and outgoing travellers were aged 35–60 years and the rest were aged 18–34 years with a small portion of travellers aged over 60 years, this is two per cent of incoming and four per cent of outgoing travellers.

Around two-thirds of incoming flows were Iranians residing in their home country and around one third were Iraqis residing in their home country. Business or trade was the main reason of travel for half of incoming flow followed by employment (28%) and family visit (14%). Around half of incoming flows entered Iraq temporarily for a duration of up to three months, 44 per cent entered for a longer term of three months or more and the remaining 9 per cent were undecided as to the duration of their travel.

Around three-fifths of outgoing flows were Iraqis residing in their home country and around two-fifths were Iranians residing in their home country. The main reasons for travel were family visit (40%), medical treatment (28%) and business or trade (16%). Around three-fifths of outgoing flows exited Iraq temporarily for a duration of up to three months and only a small portion, 6 per cent, exited Iraq for a longer term of three months or more. Around one third of outgoing flows were undecided as to the duration of their travel, which is a significantly larger number than for travellers at other border points.



INCOMING

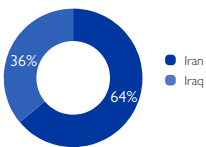


OUTGOING

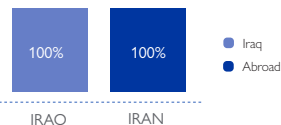
AGE AND GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF TRAVELLERS



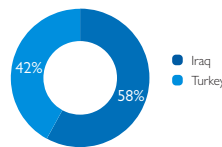
MAIN NATIONALITIES OF TRAVELLERS



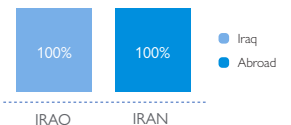
COUNTRY OF USUAL RESIDENCE BY NATIONALITIES



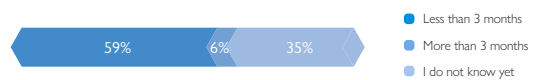
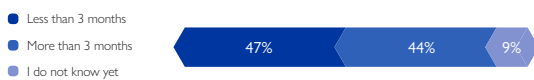
MAIN NATIONALITIES OF TRAVELLERS



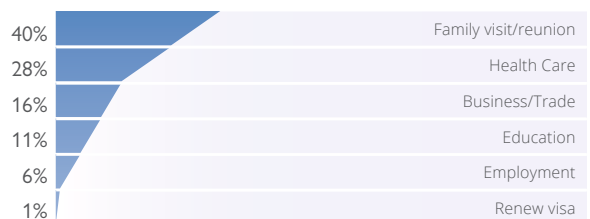
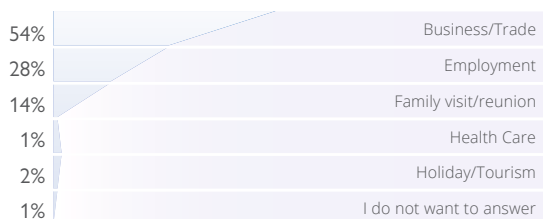
COUNTRY OF USUAL RESIDENCE BY NATIONALITIES



INTENDED LENGTH OF JOURNEY



REASONS FOR TRAVEL





COVID-19 AWARENESS OF TRAVELLERS

BASHMAGH

BORDERING COUNTRY: ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

Travellers were asked about their awareness of COVID-19 symptoms, prevention measures and risk factors. The majority of incoming travellers were aware of main symptoms such as fever (80%), difficulty breathing/shortness of breath (76%) and dry cough (69%). Most outgoing travellers were aware of main symptoms such as chest pain (67%), and difficulty breathing/shortness of breath (67%) but fewer reported knowing that fever (37%) and dry cough (46%). The same applies to prevention measures: most incoming and outgoing travellers were aware of washing hands regularly and maintaining distance, but fewer were aware of covering mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing and avoiding touching face.

Incoming travellers would either go to private or public hospital in case of symptoms or call the hotline and follow instructions. Most outgoing travellers would go to a public primary health-care centre or hospital in case of symptoms and fewer would call the hotline and follow instructions.

Some travellers reported having health conditions for which COVID-19 is often more severe. Specifically, incoming flow had 7 per cent of travellers with diabetes, 8 per cent with serious heart conditions, and 3 per cent with liver disease. Outgoing flow had 11 per cent with diabetes, 12 per cent serious heart conditions and 8 per cent with liver disease.

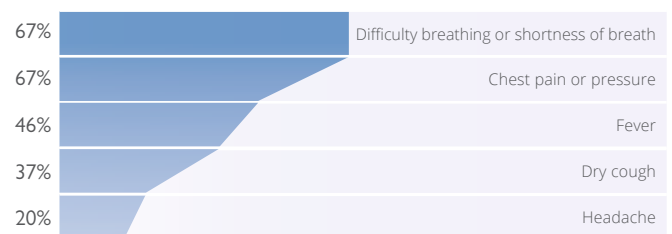
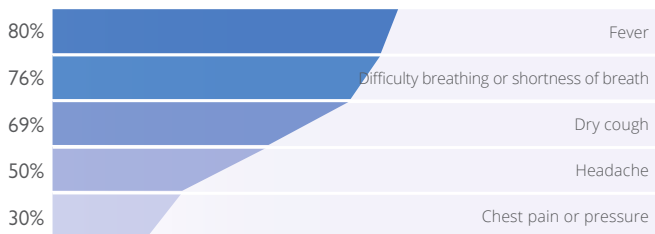


INCOMING

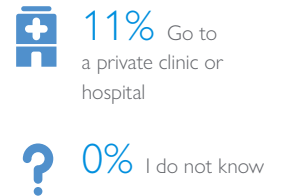


OUTGOING

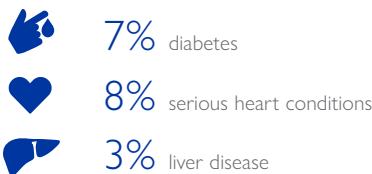
COVID-19 SYMPTOMS AWARENESS



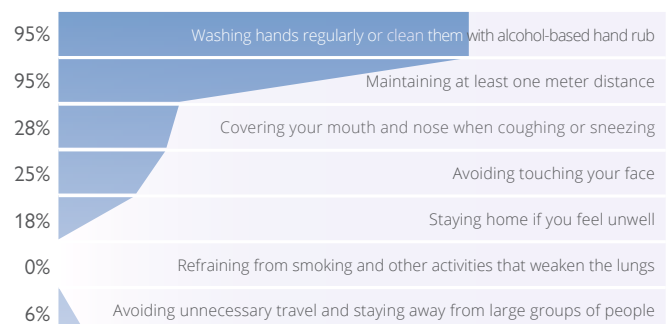
ACTIONS IN CASE OF TRAVELLERS OR SOMEONE FROM THEIR FAMILY HAVE COUGH, FEVER OR DIFFICULTY BREATHING



VULNERABLE GROUPS



COVID-19 PREVENTION MEASURES AWARENESS



METHODOLOGY

The data collection for this report took place at three border crossing points during the months of August 2020 on weekdays only, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. with a lunch break of 30 minutes between 12:30 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. Data was collected through IOM's enumerators, composed of 14 staff members deployed across Iraq (35% of enumerators are female).

The border crossing points were selected based on observations conducted in May 2019 by IOM's Rapid Assessment and Response Teams (RARTs).⁴ Specific criteria were used to select the border crossing points: 1) high volume of daily crossings leading to border countries; 2) diversity, both in geography and type of border point (official/unofficial border points, bus stations, etc.); and 3) ability of staff to reach and operate from the location for daily data collection and fund optimization.

Out of 16 locations assessed, five border crossing points were selected for data collection:

- Ibrahim Al-Khalil in Dahuk Governorate, bordering Turkey;
- Fishkhabour in Dahuk Governorate, bordering the Syrian Arab Republic;
- Bashmagh in Sulaymaniyah Governorate, bordering the Islamic Republic of Iran;
- Zurbatiah (Wassit Terminal) in Wassit Governorate, bordering the Islamic Republic of Iran;
- Al-Shalamcha in Basrah Governorate, bordering the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The data collection methodology for cross-border monitoring in Iraq was developed in cooperation with the IPAZIA Ricerche. The methodology includes two different approaches: 1) headcount of all travellers entering or leaving Iraq, and 2) survey of randomly sampled travellers identified as entering or exiting Iraq.

The counting exercise aims to enumerate all individuals crossing national borders and to identify the total volume of travellers who enter Iraq after being abroad (incoming flow) and travellers who exit Iraq to another country (outgoing flow). Counting was conducted by observation, using tablets to record the type of flow (incoming/outgoing), the time of crossing (day, hour, minutes) and the number of travellers by means of transport (whether by private car, taxi, bus or minibus – up to 15 seats).

The survey aims to collect information about travellers and was conducted through face-to-face interviews, using tablets to record socio-demographic characteristics and reasons for travel. Respondents were selected randomly through the adoption of a 'systematic step/interval' – i.e. travellers are systematically selected at fixed intervals from the start of the workday. The interval was fixed at 1:3 (one in every three individuals will be selected for an interview). All travellers aged 18 years and older who were crossing borders were eligible for an interview, regardless of their nationality. Sampling weight was applied to generalize the characteristics of travellers.

Data presented in this report is representative of the migrants crossing at each of the three selected border points between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. during weekdays only. Data should not be generalized to all of inter and intra-regional migration; rather, the data captures information on migration at the three border points monitored. Data collected in assessed border points should not lead to assumptions about flows in non-assessed border points or areas without monitoring points.

DISCLAIMER

The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout the report do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IOM concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning its frontiers or boundaries. IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organization, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in the meeting of operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants. This document was produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The views expressed herein can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the European Union.

⁴ Please refer to the methodological note for more details. Available online at: <http://iraqdtm.iom.int/>



Funded by
the European Union

© 2020 International Organization for Migration (IOM)

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior written permission of the publisher.