



Iraq

Reimposition of curfew will put upward pressure on HIGH operational risk

 SECURITY OPERATIONAL

COVID-19

On 13 February, the Supreme Committee for Health and Safety announced the reimposition of a nationwide night-time curfew to control an increase in COVID-19 cases.

COVID-19 cases have been rising since 17 January, and the government will remain concerned about a rapid increase in cases due to new COVID-19 variants.

Iraq will likely maintain its extant bans on international travel while reintroducing a curfew and restrictions on activity.

The new restrictions will have a limited impact on business operations; they will nonetheless put upward pressure on HIGH operational risk.

Foreign businesses using shift workers should check for required permissions for land travel at night or calibrate staff schedules to comply with the curfew.

New restrictions

The curfew will run from 20.00 to 05.00 from 18 February to 4 March.

From 15 February (until further notice), schools, universities, salons, parks, wedding and funeral venues and sites of religious congregation will be closed. Mosques will be allowed to open only at prayer times. There are limited exceptions to educational closures for some students studying for final exams, such as medical students. Educational closures will last one month, but the other restrictions are indefinite. Staff capacity at government offices will reduce to 50%.

The measures will only be applied in the federal provinces; the Kurdistan Region has not yet introduced equivalent restrictions.

The restrictions will be applied, as daily COVID-19 case rates have almost quadrupled recently. Since falling from a first wave peak of 5,055 cases on 23 September 2020, cases fell steadily to 645 on 17 January. On 12 February, however, cases reached 2,530; hospitalisation and death rates have also gradually risen.

Iraq already has travel bans on Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Denmark, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, India, Ireland, Japan, Luxembourg, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, the UK, the USA and Zambia. Travellers from these countries can only enter if they are foreign diplomats, international NGO staff or from nominated foreign companies. Entry is conditional on a negative COVID-19 test result from within 72 hours before departure.

Business implications

For foreign business not already affected operationally by existing travel restrictions, the new measures will likely cause some additional but minor operational disruption. Companies with shift workers should calibrate staff schedules to comply with the curfew and will likely have to obtain permissions for land travel after dark.

We hope you will find our services of interest and value. Do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or feedback about this service.

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