

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) Humanitarian Import Process to Federal Iraq

ORGANISATIONS REGISTRATION AND TAX EXEMPTION

To operate in Federal Iraq, any agency /organisation must be officially registered and licensed to operate and act either as a humanitarian actor, standing alone, or in partnership with a United Nations agency. For the Iraq Central Government – the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) and the Ministry of Interior (MoI) are the authorities that superintend the licensing of humanitarian actors and allow importation of humanitarian goods.

Normally, a humanitarian organisation importing humanitarian items into Iraq requires a facilitation letter requesting those items to be tax and customs exempted. *UN agencies are protected from customs fees through the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations. NGOs are granted customs and tax exemptions through the customs law 84 (23) and specifically through the NGO law introduced in 2011.*

CUSTOMS AND CLEARANCES INSTITUTIONS

The Iraq Customs Authority is a governmental department supervised by the Ministry of Finance (MoF). The facilitation of humanitarian imports by **United Nations agencies** is processed through the MoFA after an official request on the agency's letterhead paper, along with the complete set of shipping documents, is submitted. MoFA will then advise the MoF and its subsidiary Customs Department and will issue the tax exemption letter. Exemption for imports by **NGOs** is processed directly through the MoF. The Ministry of Interior (MoI) facilitates access at the entry and exit points to the country but doesn't have control on custom officials and procedures.

PROCEDURES AND DOCUMENTATION

For the importation of humanitarian commodities all regular and standard shipping documents will have to be provided. The import process for food, Non-Food-Items (NFIs) and medical items into South and Centre Iraq via different entry points such as Umm Qassr Port (Basrah), Al Maqal Port (Basrah), Tureibil (Iraq –Jordan Border) and/or Baghdad International Airport (BIAP), requires exemption certificates prior to the arrival of the shipments to the country. *It is strictly advisable to obtain and seek necessary approvals, exemption and clearance letters, prior to the arrival of the shipment to Iraq to avoid long storage and/or demurrage charges. Long delays in clearance also cause damages to the shipment and therefore the items may not be fit for human consumption.*

For **food and medical items**, additional documents such as Certification of Origin, Certification of Conformity (CoC), and Health Certificate, issued by relevant government authorities i.e. Ministry of Agriculture, will be required for regulated commodities.

Specific or sensitive humanitarian cargo, such as armoured vehicles, telecommunication & PPE (Personal Protection Equipment), will have to be processed and cleared by the MoI and relevant security agencies.

Note: All documents including packing lists have to be translated into Arabic.

Required Documents for Customs Clearance for Humanitarian Cargo

- Bill of Lading;
- Packing List;
- Commercial Invoice/Donation Certificate;
- Radio activity Certificate mainly (*items shipped ex Japan only*);
- Certificate of Analysis from country of origin (*medical items only*);
- Certificate of Origin (*food and medical items only*);
- Certificate of Conformity - by Bureau Veritas (BV) or Technische Überwachungsverein (TUV) companies (*food and medical items only*);

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- Health Certificate (*food and medical items only*);

Note: All shipping documents should be legalized in Place of Loading by an Iraqi Embassy; cargo being imported via Ibrahim Khalil should have CoC from Intertek only, while for Federal Iraq the CoC should be issued by BV or TUV.

Note: Organisations are advised to check with COSQC “ Central Organization for Standardization and Quality Control” in Baghdad for any updates/revised food specifications for the import of food items.

Medical Shipments – UN Agencies

Medical shipments will have to be coordinated through the MoFA and the Ministry of Health (MoH). Parallel to the application for custom fees and tax exemptions to MoFA, UN agencies’ requests have to be submitted to the International Health Department (IHD) of the MoH, responsible for processing and approving the requests related to medicines.

The IHD will advise KIMADIA, a public company reporting to the MoH responsible for clearance processing and regulating the necessary measures to import medical items, including medical service devices and their spare parts. Once MoFA and MoH have approved the requests for exemption, MoFA will communicate and advise the MoF for further action. After the MoF signature, the communication is passed on to the Customs General Directorate in Baghdad to facilitate the shipment through.

Medical Shipments – NGOs

INGOs are not required to apply to MoFA, but have to present the gift certificate along with the other shipping documents to the MoH to obtain the exemption letter. In the event that the consignment is a donation to a ministry/entity, the latter will initiate the clearance process. The IHD of the MoH will refer the documents to KIMIDIA for further processing.

Certification of Conformity and Testing

Upon arrival, regulated commodities without a Certificate of Conformity have to be tested by Iraqi Authorities. Medical items would be released to the warehouse of consignee with the condition of not distributing till the result is out. Samples will be used for testing, and the process can take several days. *Some UN Agencies have been advised that the testing is not required for medical items as long as the consignee is a UN organisation.*

Food and NFIs

Exemptions for food and NFIs should be channelled through MoFA for UN agencies and Customs /MoF for INGOs.

Importers have to strictly adhere to the following guidelines (*reference to table and picture below*):

- Food with 1 year or less of expiry period will not be permitted in country if one third of the period passed before entry date.
- Food with more than 1 year of expiry period will not be permitted in country if half of the period passed before entry date.

No	Commodity	Expiry Date
1	Wheat Grain	Not mentioned / addressed in Standards guidelines
2	Wheat Flour a- Normal Bags (cloth and plastic) b- Paper padded bags (weight 1kg)	6 Months 1 Year
3	Pulses	Expiry Date Excluded / not to be written
4	Rice	24 Months
5	Lentils (Whole Husk)	Expiry Date Excluded / not to be written
6	Canned Meat	2 Years

7	Canned Fish(Full or section potted oil)	4 Years
8	Bulgar	24 Months
9	Sugar	Expiry Date Excluded / not to be written
10	Vegetable Oil	24 Months
11	Canned Pulses	
	a- Metal cans	18 Months
	b- Glass cans	12 Months

Specification Letter for food items - MoH

العدد : ١١٩٠١ / ١٩٠٢ / ١٢
التاريخ : ١٢ / ٨ / ٢٠١٤

جمهورية العراق
وزارة الصحة
دائرة صحة البصرة
قسم الصحة العامة
شعبة الرقابة الصحية

الى / برنامج الغذاء العالمي
م / اجابه

تحية طيبة ...
كتابكم ذي العدد ١٧ في ٢٠١٤/٨/١٢
نرفق طياً جدولاً بالمواد الغذائية وماورد في المواصفه العراقيه رقم ٢٠١٢/ ١٨٤٧ (التحديث الثاني)
من تواريخ الصلاحيه لكل منها .

للتفضل بالاطلاع مع التقدير ...

المرفقات
- نسخه من الجدول .

الطبيب الاختصاص
زيد طارق مكي
مدير قسم الصحة العامة
٢٠١٤/٨/١٢

الطبيب الاختصاص
نجس صديق خالد
مدير شعبة الرقابة الصحية

نسخة منه
- مكتب قسم الصحة العامة / للعلم مع التقدير
- شعبة الرقابة الصحية / وحدة المستورده / للمتابعه مع الاوليات .

Main entry points used by humanitarian organisations for importation into Iraq:

- Baghdad International Airport
- Umm Qassr Port (Basrah)
- Al Maqal Port (Basrah)
- Tureibil (Iraq –Jordan Border)

CONTACTS

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