

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) Humanitarian Import Process via Ibrahim Khalil Border

KRI PROCEDURES

Customs clearance for the importation of humanitarian goods into Iraq is tax free for all legal and registered aid organisations performing activities in the region. In the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), the Joint Crisis Coordination Centre (JCC) facilitates the tax exemption process requested by humanitarian agencies, as well as custom clearance procedures, through the One Stop Shop (OSS). The OSS, established in coordination with the Logistics Cluster, is composed of representatives from different ministries and relevant authorities (i.e. Ministry of Health, Finance and Foreign Relations). Only registered humanitarian organisations can benefit from OSS services.

To import cargo through KRI, all shipping documents must be submitted to the JCC for approval, before the organisation is presented with a Tax Exemption Letter (TEL).

CLEARING PROSSESS

Humanitarian organisations can either outsource the exemption services by contracting Clearing and Forwarding (C&F) agents, or process the documents through authorised staff members. C&F agencies should have declared tax returns for at least the previous year, in order to be able to act on behalf of any agency. C&F agents must also have a valid contract with the requesting UNA/INGOs. Each organisation has to appoint three designated staff who will be responsible for submitting the clearance requests to JCC.

INSPECTION & TESTING

All commodities entering Iraq need a Certificate of Origin (CoO) from the manufacturer and are inspected at the border. Any cargo that does not have a CoO and/or fails border inspections would be either returned or disposed of.

In addition to the CoO, some items also require a Certificate of Conformity (CoC) (*the Logistics Cluster can provide the list of these items upon request*). Cargo not included in the list will still need to go through inspection and testing at the border. For example, medical equipment and consumables require a CoC, while it is not a requirement for medicines and would have to undergo testing at the border. Intertek is the only Inspection and Quality Control Company authorised to provide a CoC for KRI. For items not requiring CoC, pre-inspection (PI) at the country of origin, even if undertaken by Intertek, will not exempt them from being tested at the border.

The inspection labs at Ibrahim Khalil are operated by New Standard Company 24 hours a day. Humanitarian organisations are encouraged to have clearing agents or supplier representatives present at the border crossing to answer questions during the inspection phase. Between three and six samples of each item can be taken, depending on the type and quantity of commodities (up to 10 percent of the cargo). The results are ready within 24 hours. A sample is always kept by the inspection entity for a period of three months, after which it is disposed of. When results are negative, in general a second test is conducted. If an organisation or supplier does not agree with the outcomes of the inspection and testing, it has the right to appeal to court.

Inspection rules and fees vary depending on the type of test conducted (IQD 5,000 for a physical test, IQD 15,000 for a chemical test and IQD 20,000 for microbiological test), according to government standard procedures. A blanket inspection fee that covers 45 tests regardless of type costs USD 550. Humanitarian organisations can submit an official request to the Directorate of Customs to be exempted from the inspection fees or CoC requirements for specific items, but not from the inspection itself.

Note: Commodities entering KRI from central Iraq without CoC are subject to inspection. Trucks are not held, but items cannot be distributed until the outcomes of the testing are shared with Erbil custom authorities for further clearance. The results from tests undertaken in Baghdad will have to be translated into Kurdish.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS FOR CUSTOMS CLEARANCE FOR CARGO IMPORTED THROUGH IBRAHIM KHALIL

| DOCUMENT | GENERAL CARGO | MEDICAL ITEMS | FOOD ITEMS |
|---|---------------|---------------|------------|
| Packing list (translated into Kurdish) with Waybill. | X | X | X |
| Commercial Invoice / Donation certificate | X | X | X |
| Certificate of Origin | X | X | X |
| Certificate of Analysis (CoA) | | X | X |
| Kurdistan Medical Control Agency (KMCA) form | | X | |
| JCC approval | X | X | X |
| Tax exemption letter | X | X | X |
| <i>*Certificate of Conformity (CoC) required for Intertek list items only</i> | | | |

Note: all Turkish trucks crossing the Ibrahim Khalil border should be issued with Waybills at the point of dispatch mentioning the details of the cargo and consignee.

All of the above mentioned documents should be submitted to JCC along with a detailed summary both in English and Kurdish on the requesting agency's letter head, specifying the destination and the humanitarian nature of the shipment. All of this should be done prior to the arrival of shipments at the border and/or prior to loading the cargo on trucks at the point of departure. All documents should be signed and stamped by one of the three authorised people within the organisation. Documents and applications should be submitted from Sunday to Thursday from 9:00 to 14:00.

After JCC issues the approval, a hard copy of the stamped letter must be collected from the JCC office, and then submitted to the customs authorities at the border. Each page of the letter must be stamped by JCC to be valid. In case of changes in the shipment, delays on the estimated time of arrival, or breakdowns on roads, a new request needs to be submitted for JCC approval with the new details.

It may take up to 48 hours, to get approvals from JCC. Classified items such as communication equipment, electronic devices, armoured vehicles (and their spare parts) require additional approvals from the Ministry of Interior, which may result in an additional week of wait time prior to clearance.

In addition to the TEL process with JCC in Erbil, a similar exemption process should be done in Baghdad if the goods are being distributed/consumed in southern and central Iraq using KRI entry points for importation. Detailed exemption process for southern and central will be elaborated in a separate document.

CONTACTS

JCC Contact Details for general enquiries are as below:

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Iraq Logistics Cluster contacts:

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OSS contact details can be requested via Logistics Cluster contacts.