COVID-19 [Afghanistan]

Bulletin n°6 – CIQP : 15 June 2020

(Customs, Immigration and Quarantine Procedures)

IMPACCT — IMPortation And Customs Clearance Together !

OBJECTIVE / OBJECTIF

This document provides a situational update on airport status and Customs entry points during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ce document fait le point sur le statut des aéroports et des points d'entrée des douanes pendant la pandémie de COVID-19.

NUMBER OF COVID-19 CASES AT THE GHRP'S DATE / NOMBRE DE CAS DE COVID-19 A LA DATE DU GHRP

74

NUMBER OF COVID-19 CASES ON 14 JUNE 2020 / NOMBRE DE CAS DE COVID-19 LE 14 JUIN 2020

24,766

Latest updates highlighted in yellow.

COUNTRY BRIEF / COMPTE RENDU

Afghanistan was included in the United Nations' 2020 COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan (GHRP). The Humanitarian Response Plan for Afghanistan took note of the high risk of a situation in which the country's health system was overwhelmed:

*"Afghanistan's under-developed health system is **thinly spread** due to ongoing conflict with mass casualty incidents and recurrent outbreaks of communicable diseases, especially among internally displaced people (**IDPs**) and **infrastructure challenges**."*

Internal restrictions have been imposed. A country-wide lockdown order is in place, and movement with the provinces is restricted. From 8 April, individuals are required to avoid unnecessary movement except for essential workers. Restrictions in and out of the city have been imposed as well as road closures; the Kabul-Bagram highway has been closed. Public places are closed. The police have been deployed to ensure compliance with restrictions.

AIRPORT STATUS / STATUT DES AEROPORTS

1. Airport / Flight restrictions (updated 24 April 2020).

As of 24 April 2020, international flights to Afghanistan are suspended until further notice. This does not apply to repatriation flights that bring back nationals of Afghanistan. Passenger operations to Dubai International Airport and Al Maktoum International Airport were ceased on 26 March.

Key international carriers (including Emirates, TK, Fly Dubai) have stopped flights into the country. Flights from China are prohibited.

2. Passengers / Quarantine (updated 24 April 2020).

All travellers are asked by the immigration officers regarding travel history to China and Iran over the past month, though no medical documentation is required to enter or exit the country. Travellers who have been to China and Iran in the past month are divided from other passengers for medical checks. Those with COVID-19 symptoms are taken to a designated medical facility for further medical tests while those without symptoms are advised to quarantine at home for 14 days.

Aircrew entering Afghanistan will be confined to an isolated facility until departure in order to prevent the introduction or spread of infections by COVID-19.

IMPORTATION AND CUSTOMS / IMPORTATION ET DOUANES

3. Customs, land, sea (updated 15 June 2020).

All shared borders with Pakistan are no longer closed; after a period of negotiations between Afghan and Pakistani officials, a solution has been found on how to re-start trade while reducing the spread of COVID-19.

As of 11 April, Torkham and Wesh Border Crossing Points (BCPs) with Pakistan have been opened for three days per week, for transit with special conditions. These BCPs

will re-close if as a result of the re-opening of these points, the spread of COVID-19 is exacerbated.

As of 25 February, the border with Iran has been re-opened, with screening measures in place on the border.

The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) has a hub in Afghanistan with flights on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays beween Kabul, Afghanistan and Doha, Qatar. UNHAS Afghanistan has connections with Kabul, Bamian, Chaghcharan, Faizabad, Farah, Gardez, Ghazni, Herat, Kandahar, Khost, Kunduz, Jalalabad, Lashkar Gah, Lal/Sanghi, Lashkar Gah, Mazar, Maimana, Nili, Qala-i-Naw, Sharana, and Zaranj. For enquiries and bookings, please write to unhas.afghanistan@wfp.org or unhas-afg.reservation@wfp.org. More information can be found on the Humanitarian Booking Hub, linked in the '*Useful Links*' section below.

According to a document published by the Afghan Ministry of Income and Trade on 28 March 2020:
- Trucks are sprayed with disinfectant by Afghan Ministry of Health personal while arriving into Afghanistan;
- After trucks are unloaded on the Afghanistan side to go back to Pakistan, the empty truck is sprayed by Pakistan Health authorities.

More information can be found in the document, in the '*Useful Links*' section.

4. Customs, importation procedure (updated 15 June 2020).

Customs which are open for import (updated 15 May 2020):

At the following BCPs, the importation of goods is allowed but exportation is not allowed from Afghanistan. Trucks are crossing the border with consistency:
- Nemroz BCP (Iran);
- Islam Qala BCP (Iran);
- Abo Nasir Farahee BCP (Iran);
- Sherkhan Bandar BCP (Tajikstan);
- Torghondi BCP (Turkmenistan);
- Andkhoy BCP (Turkmenistan);
- Hairatan BCP (Uzbekistan).

At the following airport, normal exportation and importation is occurring:
- Kabul International Airport (for all-cargo flights).

According to a document published by the Pakistan Ministry of Interior on 15 May 2020, the following measures have been imposed at the Western Border with Afghanistan, relating to Torkham and Chaman (Wesh) BCPs:
- Torkham border will remain open for 24 hours / six days a week (except Saturday) and an unlimited number of trucks will be allowed per day while ensuring proper SOPs and guidelines for both Afghan Bilateral Trade and Afghan Transit Trade.
- Chaman border will remain open for six days a week (except Saturday) for specified timings (as already notified) and unlimited number of trucks will be allowed per day while ensuring proper SOPs and guidelines for both Afghan Bilateral Trade and Afghan Transit Trade.

- Saturdays will be reserved for pedestrian movement only as per procedure already in place. Standard Quarantine Protocols / SOPs (as applicable for air passengers) will be implemented for pedestrians as well.

Customs which are closed for export and import (updated 28 April 2020):
- Pathan (Paktia) BCP (Pakistan);
- Urgon (Paktika) BCP (Pakistan);
- Ghulam Khan (Khost) BCP (Pakistan);
- Takhar BCP (Tajikistan).

In addition, an update on 13 May regarding Customs procedures indicated that non-COVID-19-related goods from humanitarian partners are impacted by high demand at Customs offices. Also, humanitarian goods to Afghanistan require a 'Donation letter' received from donor organization. Based on the Exemption Department of the Afghan Customs Department (ACD), the Exemption procedure will be applied to humanitarian goods in crossing Afghan borders/Customs.

Regulations imposed by Pakistani Customs authorities affect cross-border trade between Afghanistan and Pakistan:
- For importation into Afghanistan, cross-border land cargo is only for food and essential items. Rail freight still operational;
- Exportation bans from Pakistan on some medical items apply;
- Cargo shipments (import and export) will be subjected to mandatory inspections.

Customs revenues have been affected by almost 50% decrease in daily revenue collection due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

5. Annex J-5 of the Revised Kyoto Convention: Not ratified.

6. Annex B.9 of the Istanbul Convention: Not ratified.

7. ASYCUDA user: Yes.

8. ASYREC user: No.

USEFUL LINKS / LIENS UTILES

CIQP Bulletins for other countries are available here.

Country-specific:

Government of Afghanistan – Ministry of Industry and Trade, Mechanisms for unloading and loading commercial and transit goods (Dari) (28 March 2020)

Government of Pakistan – Ministry of Interior, Sealing of Western Border of Pakistan (15 May 2020)

Relief Web, Afghanistan Flash Update: Daily Brief: COVID-19, No. 53 (14 June 2020)

Relief Web, COVID-19 Multi-Sector Humanitarian Country Plan – 24 March 2020

UN OCHA, Afghanistan COVID-19 Access Impediment Report (17 May-7 June) (10 June 2020)

Humanitarian Booking Hub, UNHAS hub – Afghanistan

General:

Agility, Global Shipping Updates: COVID-19

International Air Transport Association (IATA), *Coronavirus Outbreak – Update*

International Air Transport Association, Government Measures Related to Coronavirus (COVID-19)

International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), COVID-19 airport status

International Organization for Migration, Points of Entry Status

International SOS, Travel Restrictions, Flight Operations and Screening

United Nations, Global Humanitarian Response Plan: COVID-19

United Nations, Global Humanitarian Response Plan: COVID-19 – May Update

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Observatory on Border Crossings Status due to COVID-19

Wilhemnsen, COVID-19 Global Port Restrictions Map

World Customs Organization, HS classification reference list for COVID-19 medical supplies (3rd edition)

World Customs Organization, COVID-19 – WCO Updates

World Customs Organization, List of national legislation of countries that adopted temporary export restrictions on certain categories of critical medical supplies in response to COVID-19

World Health Organization, Coronavirus disease (COVID-2019) situation reports

World Trade Organization, COVID-19: Trade and Trade-related measures

If you have any questions / comments / additions, please contact:

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