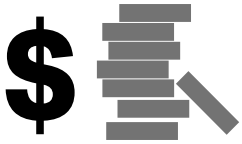
# THE VALUE OF AVIATION
# IRAQ

## The economic impact of aviation in Iraq

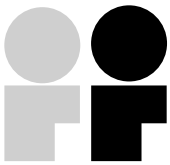
The aviation sector and its quantifiable economic effects made up 2.7% of Iraq's GDP and 2.4% of the country's employment in 2025. This covers the sector itself, its supply chain, employee spending, and international air transport-enabled tourism to Iraq.

### GDP and employment created by aviation in Iraq in 2025



**6.9**
USD billion

**2.7%**
of GDP



**296.2**
thousand jobs

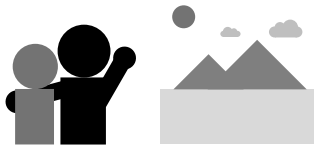
**2.4%**
of employment

*Included economic impacts:*
***Direct** – within aviation sector, **Indirect** – aviation supply chain,*
***Induced** – employee spending, **International tourists arriving by air***

### Breakdown of GDP and employment created







| Airlines | Airports, ANSPs, civil manufacturing | International tourists arriving by air |
|---|---|---|
| USD 2 billion | USD 1.9 billion | USD 2.9 billion |
| 92.6 thousand jobs | 91.6 thousand jobs | 112 thousand jobs |

Source: Air Transport Action Group, 2026. Aviation Benefits Beyond Borders report based on data from Oxford Economics.
Note: Economic impacts are calculated using Oxford Economics' Aviation: Benefits Beyond Borders methodology with inputs sourced from publicly available statistics and recognized industry datasets wherever possible, with modelling-based estimates applied where direct data are not available. Estimates do not include domestic tourism spending, nor the wider catalytic benefits of aviation on trade, investment, productivity gains, and enhanced connectivity, among others.
Note: Average 2025 exchange rate: USD 1 = IQD 1,300

# Air transport brings millions of people safely to global destinations

Around 3.4 million air passengers departed from Iraq in 2025, based on Origin-Destination(O-D) traffic, making Iraq the 85th largest air passenger market globally.

## Air travel from Iraq in 2025, Origin-Destination (O-D)

**3.4**
million
passenger departures

**GROWTH**

**-4.4%**
10-year growth

**-10.7%**
year-on-year growth

**RANK**

**85th**
Global
▼ 1 since 2015

**9th**
in Middle East
▼ 1 since 2015

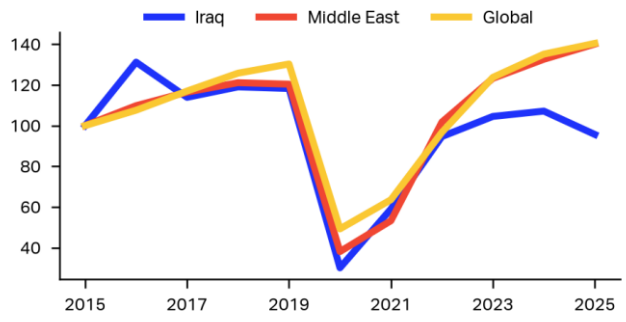
**SHARE**

**0.1%**
of global departures

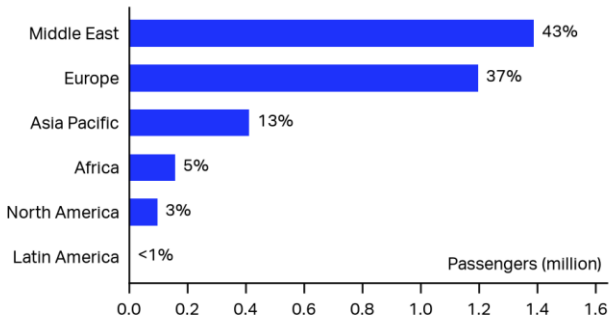
**2.1%**
of Middle Eastern departures

International: 3.3 million passenger departures, 9.1% 10Y growth, -6.7% YoY growth

### Total passenger departures, O-D, 2015-2025, index 2015=100




### International passenger departures by destination region, O-D, 2025




| Top air travel markets<br>Inbound & outbound | Top origin cities<br>Inbound | Top destination cities<br>Outbound |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Türkiye | 1. Dubai | 1. Dubai |
| 2. United Arab Emirates | 2. Beirut | 2. Amman |
| 3. Iran | 3. Istanbul | 3. Istanbul |
| 4. Germany | 4. Sharjah | 4. Beirut |
| 5. Lebanon | 5. London | 5. Tehran |

Source: IATA Sustainability & Economics using IATA DDS data.
Note: O-D (origin-destination) departures measures passengers beginning their journey in Iraq, to their final destination, excluding transfer and transit passengers.
Top air travel markets based on total O-D passenger traffic between Iraq and other markets in 2025. Top outbound and inbound cities are based on round-trip passenger journeys.
IATA DDS data are derived from ticketing and sales transactions using IATA methodologies and estimates; therefore, results may not exactly match officially reported traffic statistics.

# Air transport directly connects Iraq to 28 different countries

In 2025, there were 8 airports and 36 operating airlines in Iraq, providing a total of 113 regularly scheduled commercial passenger routes for Iraq, connecting to 28 countries with about 86 daily international departures.

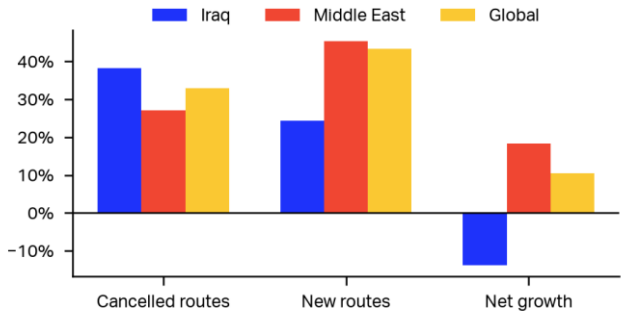
## Air Connectivity in Iraq

**8**
**Airports in 2025**
6 in 2015

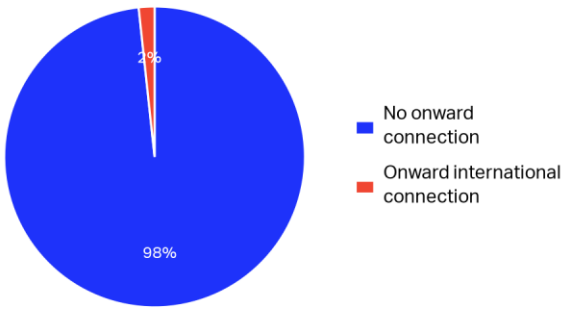
**36**
**Airlines in 2025**
35 in 2015

| | | Total | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Available routes | Connected countries | Daily int. departures |
| 2025 | Total | 113 | 28 | 86 |
| | Global rank | 78th | 83rd | 69th |
| | Middle East rank | 7th | 10th | 9th |
| 2015 | Total | 131 | 24 | 72 |
| | Global rank | 68th | 86th | 72nd |
| | Middle East rank | 5th | 11th | 11th |

### Route network change, 2015 to 2025, % of 2015




### Onward connections of international arrivals, 2025

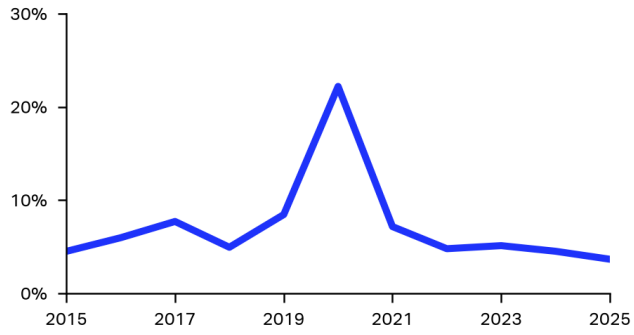



Source: IATA Sustainability & Economics using OAG & IATA DDS data.
Note: Airport, airline, and route counts include only those with regularly scheduled passenger services from Iraq. Airports with fewer than 1,000 regularly scheduled seats in 2025 are excluded.

## Air Cargo provides Iraq timely and safe access to global markets

Although air transport accounted for an estimated 0.1% of Iraq's traded goods by weight, it carried 3.9% of their total value.
Iraq's airports handled around 20.2 thousand tonnes of air cargo in 2025, ranking Iraq as the world's 109th largest air cargo handler market and the 11th largest in the Middle East.

**Iraqi air cargo, value, % of total, 2015-2025**




**Iraqi air cargo, share of trade, 2025**

**0.1%**
of trade by weight

**3.9%**
of trade by value

**Air cargo handled in Iraq, 2025**

**20.2**
thousand tonnes
air cargo handled

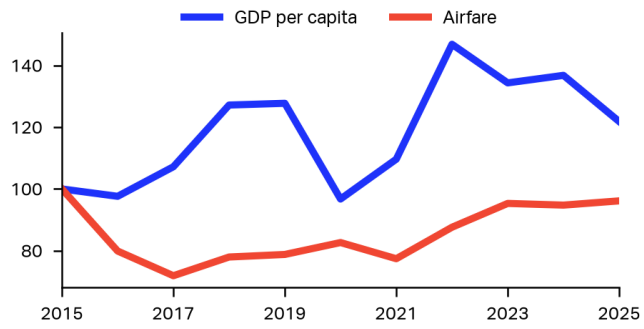
**109th**
Globally
11th in Middle East

Source: Airports Council International (ACI) for air cargo handled, Global Trade Tracker (GTT) for imports and exports by air.
Note: Iraq's trade by air includes imports and exports. It is based on a sample of 50 countries that report their trade by means of transport in 2025, which represents around 40% of the total global goods trade.

## International air travel from Iraq has become more affordable over the past decade

Iraq's nominal GDP per capita increased by 21.8%, while the average nominal air fare for an international ticket from Iraq increased by -3.9%, over the past decade. Therefore, international air travel has become more affordable for local residents over this time period.

**Nominal GDP per capita & average international fare, Iraq, 2015-2025, index 2015=100**




Source: IATA DDS, World Bank. Nominal GDP per capita and fare developments measured in USD terms.