

Iraq on total lockdown until March 28 over virus fears

March 22 2020

Iraq on Sunday imposed a total nationwide lockdown until March 28 to fight the novel coronavirus, as the number of cases grew and the death toll climbed to 20.

Most of Iraq's 18 provinces had so far imposed their own local curfews but the new measures would include the whole of the country, according to a new decision by the [government](#)'s crisis cell.

Schools, universities and other gathering places would remain closed, as would the country's multiple [international airports](#), it said in a statement seen by AFP.

Many had feared a potential influx of cases from neighbouring Iran, where 1,685 people have died after contracting the COVID-19 respiratory illness.

Iraq first shut its 1,500-kilometre border with Iran about a month ago and deployed troops to enforce the decision.

The virus has killed only 20 people in Iraq while 233 others are infected but there are concerns that many cases are going undetected, as only 2,000 people of the country's 40-million population have been tested so far.

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