

Iraq DF 'working on approval' for downtown store

Iraq Duty Free is in the process of securing approval from the relevant authorities to operate the first downtown duty free store in Iraq to be located in Baghdad.

The project is currently at the 'drawing board' stage, with work expected to begin in January or February 2020 should approval be granted. The opening is pegged for next June.

Speaking exclusively to *TRBusiness*, Fouad Jabbour, General Manager, Iraq Duty Free said: "The idea is that this will be a downtown duty free shop catering to all diplomatic corporations, all employees of international companies with international passports who are living in Baghdad and all visitors who come over to do business in the city."

With just five million tourists a year visiting Iraq (*Source: IraqiNews.com*) for religious festivals and the ancient cities, the downtown duty free store will allow expats living in Baghdad to purchase as foreigners.

NEW CONTRACT AT KIRKUK AIRPORT

"No Iraqis will be allowed to purchase from the store," Jabbour remarked.

The facility itself will span around 550sq m and be a 'fully-fledged' duty free shop with all the traditional products. "It will adopt the same image as the stores in Baghdad, Basra and other airports."

The past two years have been busy for the company, which completed the renovation of its arrivals and departures operations in the Iraqi Airways terminal at Baghdad International Airport. Both were up and running in **December 2018**.

This year, turnover to date is up +17% on last year with the major drivers perfumes and cosmetics.

IDF has also begun renovating its stores at the International Airlines Terminal in Baghdad Airport. The new arrivals duty free shop is due to open by 10 November 2019 with the revamped departures shop set to be operational by the end of March 2020.



The new Iraq Duty Free downtown store will offer all the traditional product categories including confectionery.



The revamped arrivals and departures shops in the Iraqi Airways terminal at Baghdad International Airport have been operational since December 2018.

Meanwhile, Iraq Duty Free has secured a contract to operate arrivals and departures shops at Kirkuk Airport, which was officially inaugurated in September 2018. The departures store will span 250sq m and the arrivals shop 190sq m. Both outlets will open once the airport is operational by the end of June 2020. *TRBusiness* understands the facility has been used as a military base for several years.

According to local media reports, the revamp began in late 2017 with the first phase (*the arrivals and departures section and main entrances*) said to be complete. Currently, it is unclear which destinations (*domestic or international*) the airport will serve.

Over in Basra, the retailer is to expand the existing arrivals store from 25sq m to 72sq m. The new shop will have the same identity/image as the company's other airport outlets. The project is being undertaken with the support of the Civil Aviation Authority and General Manager of Basra Airport.

Jabbour added: "We're also opening another shop at Basra International Airport in the terminal which has been allocated to Emirates Airlines."

All achievements, renovations and expansions could not be undertaken without the continuous support of Ali Khalil, Civil Aviation Director, Iraq Civil Aviation Authority. "He trusts the results will project a new image of Iraq to travellers and that the new-look and renovated shops will elevate the image of its stores to the same status as those run by international duty free operators worldwide."

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Look out for an extensive video interview with Fouad Jabbour, General Manager, Iraq Duty Free.

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