

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 18, 2022

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
2201 C St., NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken,

Following the Iraq War, the United States advocated for a constitutional process in Iraq that was inclusive of all ethnic and religious groups in the country. However, the roles and powers of federal, regional, and governorate authorities has fueled division between the national government, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), and other political actors since its adoption. Particularly, articles 111 and 112 of the Iraqi Constitution state that Iraq's natural resources are the property of "*all the people of Iraq in all regions and governorates,*" and that "*the federal government, with the producing governorates and regional governments, shall undertake the management of oil and gas extracted from present fields.*" The Iraqi constitution also enshrined the authorities of a region, including clarifying that authorities not explicitly given to the central government were the responsibility of the regional, government.

Articles 111 and 112 permit the KRG to develop oil and gas resources in areas subject to KRG administrative control with relative independence from Baghdad. The KRG has reached oil and gas development contracts with American and allied companies subject to a KRG law based on this interpretation, and the KRG has built and used its own oil export infrastructure.

By attracting foreign investment, the Kurdistan Region's economic transformation has been remarkable, seeing its oil production grow from 0 to 450,000 barrels per day in just the last 15 years. The U.S. Development Finance Corporation has committed \$300 million to financing American companies to help develop this energy future for the Kurdistan Region. As a result of these investments, the KRG's gas resources could be poised to help both Iraq and eventually wean Turkey and southern Europe off Russian and Iranian gas supplies, especially as we maintain sanctions against Russia for its illegal invasion of Ukraine.

Iran, recognizing this threat to their foreign energy markets, earlier this year fired rockets into Erbil, destroying the home of Kurdistan's most prominent oil businessman. Furthermore, Iranian-backed sectarian militias took a Kurdish refinery offline and launched at least five separate rocket and drone attacks against Kurdish oil infrastructure.

As you are aware, in February 2022 the Iraqi Federal Supreme Court ruled the KRG's oil and gas law to be unconstitutional directing the KRG to align their operations with federal directives. The KRG remains in negotiation with the Iraqi federal government.

As a result of the Iraqi Federal Supreme Court's decision, Iraq's government has unevenly enforced the court's decision, cancelling 2 American and 2 European fuel contracts with the KRG. Of note, Baghdad has not cancelled the contracts the KRG signed with Russian or Chinese firms.

We are concerned that these actions risk destabilizing Iraq, raising tensions in the region, and further disrupting international oil markets. It is thus in America's national security interests to facilitate a resolution to this dispute between the Iraqi government and the KRG.

Therefore, we urge the Department to engage both the Iraqi government and the KRG to help resolve this dispute, ensuring the Kurdistan Region's autonomy and economic rights, and ensuring Iraq will continue to be a multi-ethnic secular republic, free from Iranian interference.

Thank you for your kind attention to this request. We look forward to hearing from you on this issue of utmost importance.

Sincerely,



Michael Waltz
Member of Congress



Dina Titus
Member of Congress



Doug Lamborn
Member of Congress