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## THE POLITICS OF KIRKUK IS A THORNY PROBLEM FOR IRAQ

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The dual flags of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) wave across Kirkuk, symbolising a larger struggle over control of the oil-rich city.

Kirkuk has been a political flashpoint in Iraq for decades.

At least four minority groups – Arabs, Kurds, Assyrians, and Turkmen live there.

But the KRG has been arguing with Baghdad's central government over control of the city. They say they earned that right after the Kurdish Peshmerga pushed Daesh out of the city in 2014.

"We think this flag should wave and stay here, we have shed our blood for Kirkuk for years. We have martyrs, we protected our city from Daesh, we resisted them," said Ahmet Sabir.

Iraqi Turkmen Front Deputy Chairman and MP for Kirkuk province Hasan Turan said, "By waving the flag of northern Iraq, Kurdish parties are trying to give Kirkuk a different identity. We can never accept this."

Human Rights Watch last year accused the KRG of forcing Sunni Arab families to leave the city. It is an accusation that the KRG denies.

TRT World's Zeina Awad explains tensions in Kirkuk.

<http://www.trtworld.com/mea/the-politics-of-kirkuk-is-a-thorny-problem-for-iraq-352976>

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