# IRAQ RESTARTS OIL EXPORT FROM KIRKUK

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19.11.2018

Financial Tribune (19 November 2018)

Iraq has restarted exports of Kirkuk oil, halted a year ago due to a standoff between the central government and Kurdistans semi-autonomous region, industry sources said on Friday after a new government in Baghdad agreed a tentative deal with Erbil.

The US government has been urging both sides to settle the dispute and resume flows to help address a shortage of Iranian crude in the region after Washington imposed new sanctions on Tehran, Reuters reported.

Flows resumed on Friday at a modest level of around 50,000-60,000 barrels per day versus a peak of 300,000 seen occasionally last year and it was not clear when and by how much they would rise, sources said.

The deal signals new Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi and Oil Minister Thamir Ghadhban are ready to work with Erbil despite previous tensions and a failed independence referendum in September 2017.

The halting of exports from Kirkuk in October 2017 stopped nearly 300,000 bpd flowing out of Iraq toward Turkey and international markets - causing a net revenue loss of some $8 billion over the past year.

Most of Iraqs exports come from southern fields, but Kirkuk is one of the biggest and oldest oilfields in the Middle East, estimated to contain 9 billion barrels of recoverable oil.

Kurdistan is producing and exporting some 400,000 bpd via the pipeline. Kirkuks flow resumption will boost the volume to 450,000-500,000 bpd, short of the 700,000 bpd Kurdistan was exporting in some periods of last year.

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