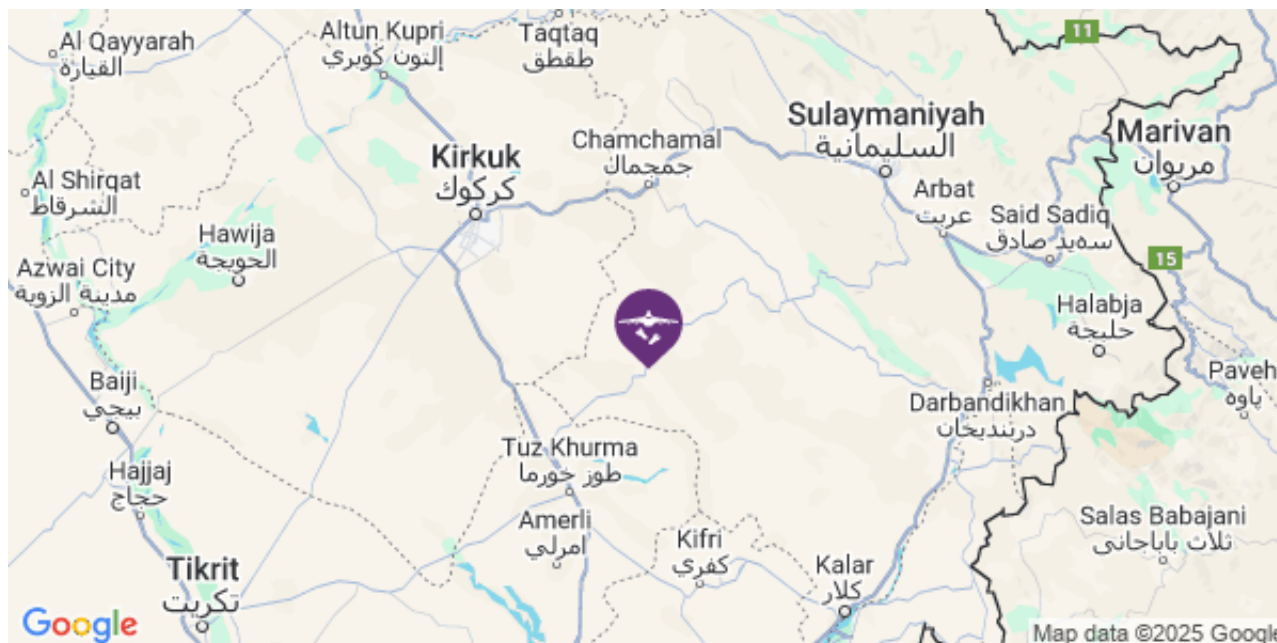


Air Strike



03

FEB
19:57 UTC

Iraq Alert (UPDATE): UAV attack targets Khor Mor Gas Field in KRG's Sulaymaniyah on February 2; indicates persistent threat to strategic infrastructure

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Current Situation:

- Iraq's Security Media Cell stated that an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) struck near a fuel tank within the Dana Gas Company [Khor Mor gas site] in Qadir Karam Subdistrict of Chamchamal, igniting a fire. However, there were no casualties or material damage, and production remained unaffected.
- The Kurdistan Regional Government's (KRG) Counter-Terrorism Directorate (CTD) stated that the attack was launched from Kirkuk's Bashir area by "armed outlawed factions."
- As of the time of writing, no group has claimed responsibility for the attack.
- Iraqi Prime Minister (PM) Mohammad Shia al-Sudani ordered the formation of a technical committee to investigate the UAV attack.

Source: [Security Media Cell](#)

Assessments & Forecast:

1. The Khor Mor gas field, one of the largest in the KRG, provides around 452 million standard cubic feet of gas per day, feeding the KRG's vital power plants to meet local energy needs. Since 2007, it has been operated by Pearl Petroleum, a consortium of the Emirati Dana Gas and Crescent Petroleum, which holds exclusive rights to develop, produce, and market hydrocarbons from the field under an agreement with the KRG. In recent years, the field has periodically come under attacks, including on [April 26, 2024](#), when several employees were killed and production was halted for a few days. This occurred days after Dana Gas publicly reported on the site's planned expansion (manifested in the "KM250 project") that was expected to be completed in the second half of 2024.
2. As in previous attacks, and as indicated by the Kurdish CTD, the likely perpetrators of the most recent strike are Iran-backed militias. This is because these groups are likely the key backers of a campaign designed to disrupt the development of the KRG's oil and gas infrastructure, especially when it involves firms from the Emirates, which Iran and its regional allies view as a foe. Iran-aligned factions, in this context, have an interest in curbing large infrastructural Emirati projects, diminishing the KRG's energy development, and more broadly, working to preserve Iraq's heavy reliance on Iran for natural gas imports. The likelihood of the involvement of Iran-backed factions is also supported by the indication that a UAV was used in the attack, which is a capacity these groups possess and have utilized through Iranian proliferation.
3. Potential advancements within the context of the "KM250 project" could have been a motivating factor for renewed attacks against the site. Furthermore, the attack also follows Dana Gas's partner, Crescent Petroleum's meeting with PM al-Sudani in January to discuss other private-sector energy contracts, including the Khashm al-Ahmar-Ijana field in Diyala, which is expected to supply Iraq with 100 million standard cubic feet of gas. More recently, on February 1, the Iraqi Parliament approved a budget amendment, reflecting an agreement between the federal government and the KRG regarding subsidizing production costs of international oil firms operating in the KRG. This may resolve a dispute that hindered oil exports from the KRG. All of the above could have been perceived by hardline Iran-backed factions as developments that would be to their detriment, prompting a desire to reengage in attacks as part of an intimidation tactic to curb development on these fronts.
4. **FORECAST:** Despite the federal government's and the KRG's investigation of the incident and the likely bolstering of security measures in northern Iraq, it cannot be ruled out that additional aerial attacks would recur, especially against the Khor Mor facilities and sites associated with Dana Gas and other associated bodies. As was highlighted in the fact that the latest UAV impacted near a fuel tank within Dana Gas's site, these attacks bear extensive risks to those operating at the site, given the used UAVs' relative accuracy. This was highlighted in the April 2024 attack, when an explosive-laden drone directly hit a tank at the site.

Recommendations:

Those operating or residing in northern Iraq on February 3 and over the coming days are advised to avoid travel to the Khor Mor Gas field and associated infrastructures, given the risk of further aerial attacks against these sites.