

### **Investigation 3: The Corruption of Black Gold**

**Title: Babylon's Oil Curse: 3.2 Billion Barrels Underground, Poverty on the Surface**

**By: "The Shadow Expert"**

Beneath Babylon's soil lies a confirmed oil reserve of **3.2 billion barrels**, a fortune capable of turning the province into another Dubai. Yet, on the surface, Babylon suffers from dilapidated infrastructure and devastating unemployment. The story of Babylon's oil is not one of neglect, but of deliberate "strategic obstruction." "Technical disputes" and "security conditions" are used as code words to extort international companies and indefinitely postpone investment, costing Iraq an estimated **\$2 billion annually**.

The "Kifl" oil field is the lost crown jewel. The 2011 memorandum of understanding with Turkey's "TPAO" was not the only attempt. Our records show that three other international firms (from Malaysia, China, and Russia) submitted bids between 2014 and 2019, only to withdraw after months of negotiations. The real reason was not "technical."

A high-level source within the Ministry of Oil, with whom we communicated via secure channels, revealed that the "administrative complexities" mentioned in the leaked 2016 document pertained to a demand for unofficial "local partners" to receive a **15%** share of the

contract's value. These off-the-books demands are the true reason for the flight of serious investors.

The current production of a mere **10,000 barrels per day** is just a test run to keep the field operational—a laughable figure compared to its true potential of over **150,000 bpd** in the first phase alone. This delay is not just a financial loss; it is a political decision designed to keep the province economically weak and dependent on the central budget, making it easier to control politically.

Babylon's oil is a hostage in a power struggle between the central government and influential local factions. Every day of delay in developing this wealth is a betrayal of the people of Babylon, who live on top of a treasure they cannot touch. International bodies interested in Iraq's stability must realize that corruption in the energy sector is no longer just theft of public funds; it has become a tool for asserting political dominance and deliberately perpetuating poverty.