

Exxon's \$53 billion Iraq deal hit by contract snags, Iran tensions – sources



BASRA, Iraq/BAGHDAD (Reuters) – Just weeks ago, U.S. energy giant ExxonMobil looked poised to move ahead with a \$53 billion project to boost Iraq's oil output at its southern fields, a milestone in the company's ambitions to expand in the country.

But now a combination of contractual wrangling and security concerns, heightened by escalating tensions between Iraq's bigger neighbor Iran and the United States, has conspired to hold back a deal, according to Iraqi government officials.

The negotiations have been stymied by terms of the contract that Baghdad objects to, said four Iraqi officials involved in the discussions who spoke to Reuters on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the matter.