

Kurds Deny Russian Claims That Turkey Buys IS Oil

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A screenshot from a video showing tanker trucks transporting oil.

The Iraqi Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) on Thursday said that satellite photos presented by Russia's Defense Ministry this week showing Islamic State militants selling oil to Turkey were in fact images of Kurdish trucks, the Turkish state-run Anadolu news agency reported.

KRG spokesman Safeen Dizayi told the news agency that the Islamic State, an extremist group banned in Russia, is not selling oil to Turkey — as President Vladimir Putin and a number of Russian officials have asserted in the two weeks since Ankara downed a Russian military jet.

The head of KRG's energy commission, Serko Cavdet, told Anadolu that the images showed Kurdish tanker trucks transporting oil from a region under their control to the Turkish Port of Ceyhan, and that the Islamic State could not have transported oil through Kurdish territory, as they are fighting the extremist group.

"The KRG exports its oil via pipelines and tankers to Turkey for sale to buyers around the world," Cevdet said. "The Russian satellite images showed these tankers ... Russia has no proof of any oil transactions between Turkey, the Kurdish region, and the Islamic State," he said, referring to IS by another name.

Turkish officials have also denied Russia's claims. Turkish President Recep Erdogan went so far as to promise Putin he would step down if allegations that Turkey was buying IS oil were revealed to be true.

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