

## 《上千中国人伊拉克撤退失败》

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Chinese nationals employed by a Chinese company in northern Iraq returned to their construction site on Tuesday after the first bus taking them to safety was stopped by government forces outside the capital, Baghdad.

The over 1,000 workers are employees of China Machinery Engineering Corp (CMEC), which is building a power plant near Samarra - in northern Iraq - where there have been clashes between Iraqi government forces and militants of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

The Beijing-based website Caixin quoted one of the construction workers as saying that most of his co-workers were headed to Baghdad in a convoy of buses on June 20.

According to a woman in China who has five family members working at the site, none of the workers managed to make it to the capital city. She was told to wait for further news - and was also told that all the managers were also unable to leave Samarra.

Caixin said that most Chinese companies in Iraq are involved in construction, and they are especially vulnerable to the weakening security situation because their income mainly comes from payments from project owners. The workers involved in the CMEC project hope to see the plant get through the unrest, as they fear losing their jobs.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said there are over 10,000 Chinese workers in Iraq. Unlike CMEC, most of the companies are located in the relatively safe southern part of the country, away from the fighting, and the Foreign Ministry hopes that a mass evacuation will not be necessary.