

Vague verdict and anonymous motives.

The Iraqi Rusafa Criminal Court recently delivered a verdict against the accused criminal, Ahmed Hamdawi Awwad, for the heinous murder of esteemed security expert Hisham al-Hashimi, who fell victim to an assassination in front of his own home back in July 2020. However, the issuance of this verdict, long overdue and plagued by countless delays, has only further fueled suspicions of the defendant's clandestine extraction orchestrated by undisclosed executioners to an enigmatic destination.

The enigma shrouding this case and the deliberate withholding of pertinent information have triggered profound concerns among numerous parties, including our unwavering "Protect Human Rights Defenders in Iraq, NOW!" campaign. These concerns emanate from our grave doubts regarding the attainment of genuine justice and the elusive accountability of the perpetrators. It remains inexplicable how the convicted defendant, implicated in this verdict, could have had any conceivable ties to the late Mr. Hisham al-Hashimi. What unfathomable motive propelled him to commit this abhorrent crime?

Moreover, it is disconcerting to note that the convicted defendant not only maintains an affiliation with the Ministry of Interior but also holds a high-ranking officer position. A person well-versed in the law and acutely cognizant of the grave consequences, their motivations and the forces protecting them demand urgent elucidation. These pressing questions and inquiries necessitate comprehensive answers from the relevant authorities without delay.

Undoubtedly, we extend unwavering support to every stride taken toward the realization of justice. However, the conspicuous prevalence of impunity casts an indelible shadow over the human rights landscape in Iraq, as hundreds of pending cases and lawsuits against accused individuals remain languishing in unresolved limbo. The case of Al-Hashimi represents only a fragment of this grim reality, for the progress of investigations into the Sinak massacre and Al-Zaytoun Bridge incident remains veiled in obscurity despite the passage of several years. Furthermore, the killers of Ihab al-Wazni, Amjad al-Dahamat, and numerous others continue to elude capture. Instead of holding these perpetrators accountable, the families of the victims are perpetually exposed to perilous circumstances. Hollow promises that tread the path of procrastination, stalling, and the deliberate fostering of ambiguity within legal procedures are categorically unacceptable.

Immediate and resolute measures must be undertaken to hold these criminals accountable, along with the entities that enable and collude with them, particularly individuals within the security services. Regrettably, some members of the security forces themselves have been implicated in acts of murder and assassination. It is an indispensable imperative to purge these security services of all abusive elements, a pivotal stride toward ensuring the prosecution and just punishment of these ruthless killers. The current government and judicial institutions must seize this vital opportunity to vigorously pursue the cases and lawsuits filed against the myriad perpetrators of murder, assassination, and enforced disappearances.

The "Protect Human Rights Defenders in Iraq, NOW!" campaign stands resolute in its unwavering commitment to support and foster efforts aimed at the promotion of justice and the safeguarding of human rights in Iraq. We shall remain ever-vigilant in monitoring the situation, meticulously tracking



developments, and tirelessly laboring to elevate awareness and exert immense pressure to attain justice and hold all those complicit in these abhorrent crimes fully accountable.

"Protect Human Rights Defenders in Iraq NOW! Campaign"

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