

## **Islamic Tribunal Wins Approval**

**Author:** [Zainab Naji](#)

An unofficial court imposes harsh sentences on Iraqis who work for the Americans and their allies.

An "Islamic resistance" court based in western Iraq has begun to order harsh punishments against Iraqis accused of collaborating with so-called foreign occupiers, inhabitants in the region said.

The court, they said, originated in late 2003 as one of a number of Islamic clerical committees that locals have been using to arbitrate personal and family disputes.

The committees are used in lieu of tribal leaders, considered by many as tainted through their dealings with the US-led Coalition, and it has passed sentence on drug sellers and peddlers of supposedly immoral CDs.

But in recent months, the inhabitants said, this particular court has become more political, passing sentence on translators, truck drivers, informers, and others who allegedly work with the foreigners.

It has also certified lists of so-called collaborators that have been circulated by the insurgents.

Witnesses said the court is presided over by a senior Sunni sheikh knowledgeable in Islamic Sharia law, with another cleric acting as lawyer for defendants.

IWPR spoke to several people who claimed to have testified before the court, while details of some of its more celebrated cases are widely circulated among the region's inhabitants.

Probably the most famous case was the late November trial of "Mohammed the Spy" - one Mohammed Abed, who reportedly invited Americans to his house in the district of al-Qaem, on the Euphrates border.

"It made the neighbours angry because they hate the Occupation" said Adel Abdullah, 42, a resident of al-Qaem who said he was a witness in the trial.

"They informed the Iraqi resistance, who started to watch the house to verify the information.

"We warned Mohammed not to continue in this path but he didn't comply and kept holding parties and meetings in the house.

"Afterwards, the resistance fighters surrounded and raided the house."

Abdullah added somewhat ominously that "he became an example for others".

"I still remember this incident as if it happened yesterday," said Kamel Abd al-Qader, 38, a mechanic. "He

was sentenced to death by the resistance court.”

Qader added that “this was the fate of every spy and traitor who betray their country and people”.

Abed is said to have been beheaded after he was convicted by the court.

The beheading took place in Ana, on the upper Euphrates River about 100 km from the Syrian border and, Qader said, “His head was given to a man from [the tribe of] al-Jumailaat to deliver to Mohammed's family in al-Karbala.”

Salah Ahmed, 45, a storeowner in Ana, said he recalled an incident in the bus station outside his shop.

He said a grim middle-aged man gave an elderly man from the Jumailaat tribe a plastic bag and an old 100-dinar note that still bore the picture of Saddam Hussein.

The old man was told to take the bag and the note to the family of Mohammed Abed in al-Qaem.

A second celebrated case was the early July 2004 trial of two truck drivers, who were accused of using their vehicles to smuggle alcohol hidden in shipments of mineral water.

Omar Mobdir, 25, a waiter at the al-Mafrag al-Kabeer restaurant on the highway near the Syrian border, claimed that he saw the two men being seized.

The drivers, along with several helpers, had come into the restaurant for lunch when three masked men entered and surrounded them.

“Stand up!” they said. “You are under arrest.”

Six more men searched the trucks, and uncovered 10 cases of alcohol hidden beneath the mineral water.

“We gave the court all the evidence including the identifications of those arrested,” said one prosecution witness, who identified himself as Abu Ahmed.

“The court ordered the burning of the trucks and the goods,” the witness said.

“They warned the drivers and workers not to work with the Americans or transport anything to them.”

“Four hours after the arrest, a group of armed men came and burned the trucks,” said Hamid Abdul Jabbar, 19, a mechanic working near the restaurant.

Despite the unofficial nature of the court, many residents of the area respect its judgments.

"We trust this court because it bases its judgment on the Quran and the Sunna [the traditions of the Prophet Mohammed]," said Abdullah Saleem, 40, a public servant at the electricity directorate in al-Ramadi.

"We shouldn't keep silent about traitors and collaborators. They caused us great harm and pain," added Mahmoud Abd al-Nabi al-Anai, 42, an engineer and Baghdad resident who followed the Mohammed Abed case.

"The court's decision is wise and strict," he said.

Zainab Naji is and IWPR trainee.

**Location:** Iraqi Kurdistan

Iraq

**Focus:** Iraq

---

**Source URL:** <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/islamic-tribunal-wins-approval>