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Commission internationale de juristes - Comisión Internacional de Juristas

" dedicated since 1952 to the primacy, coherence and implementation of international law and principles that advance human rights "

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IRAQ: ICJ condemns murder of lawyer in Saddam's trial and calls for effective protection measures

The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) condemns the abduction and subsequent killing of lawyer Sadoon Al-Janabi on Friday 21 October in Baghdad. According to news agencies, Al-Janabi was abducted on Thursday evening by 10 masked gunmen from his office in the capital and his body was found several hours later, with bullet shots in the head. Al-Janabi was one of the defence lawyers in Saddam Hussein' trial and was present during the first hearing on Wednesday 19 October.

Al-Janabi's function as lawyer to one of the co-defendants of Saddam Hussein, as well as the circumstances of his kidnapping, seem to indicate that his murder is connected to his role in the trial. As an organisation that defends, among others, the rights of judges and lawyers worldwide, the ICJ recalls that not only Al-Janabi should have enjoyed his inalienable right to life as any human being, but also that international human rights standards grant a specific attention to their protection. In particular, Article 16 of the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers states that: "Where the security of lawyers is threatened as a result of discharging their functions, they shall be adequately safeguarded by the authorities." The ICJ is particularly concerned to learn that according to press reports, security measures only seem to have been taken regarding four of the five judges and most of the prosecution lawyers, but that defence lawyers did not benefit from such protection measures. Given the prevailing security risks in Iraq, heightened by the sensitivities surrounding the trial of Saddam Hussein, effective protection measures are absolutely vital.

The ICJ calls on the Iraqi authorities to carry out without delay an in-depth investigation into Al-Janabi kidnapping and murder, to bring to justice those responsible and to immediately provide for adequate protection to all the judicial staff involved in the trial, irrespective of whether or when the next hearing takes place.

The ICJ is an international non-governmental organisation comprising sixty of the world's most eminent jurists and has a worldwide network of national sections and affiliated organisations

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