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## Charges Presented Against 5 Former Allies of Saddam Hussein

By [EDWARD WONG](#)

BAGHDAD, Iraq, Feb. 28 - An Iraqi investigative judge on Monday presented the first charges in the coming trials of senior officials of Saddam Hussein's government to a judicial panel, setting the stage for the trials to begin.

The charges, for crimes against humanity, were brought against five high-ranking members of the old government in the equivalent of a grand jury hearing. The men are accused of being responsible for executing nearly 160 residents of the mostly Shiite village of Dujail, about 35 miles north of Baghdad, and imprisoning up to 1,500 others after an assassination attempt in 1982 against Mr. Hussein by a few village residents.

The highest-level former official charged was Barzan Ibrahim al-Hassan, a half brother of Saddam Hussein and a former high-ranking official in the intelligence services.

The referral of the charges, as the procedure is called in the Iraqi special tribunal, took place a day after senior Iraqi officials said that another half brother of Mr. Hussein, Sabawi Ibrahim al-Hassan, a suspected major financier of the insurgency and also a former high-ranking security official, had been arrested in Syria. Mr. Hussein and his half brothers have the same mother.

The other four men who faced charges on Monday were Taha Yasin Ramadan, a former deputy prime minister and also a former vice president; Awad Hamad al-Bandr al-Saadun, a former chief judge in the Revolutionary Court; Abdullah Kadam Roweed al-Musheikhi, a former senior member of Mr. Hussein's Baath Party from Dujail; and his son, Mizher Abdullah Kadam Roweed al-Musheikhi, another former senior Baathist from Dujail.

The two officials from Dujail were arrested Feb. 21 as they slept in the village after an investigation that began in July had determined that they were culpable in the horrific events of 1982, a Western legal expert said on the condition of anonymity.

The expert said this set of charges was the first brought during the various investigations into the crimes of the old government because the investigators had apparently been able to complete their work relatively quickly on this case. "It was just done and I guess the judge concluded there's no reason not to refer these individuals," he said.

Reporters were barred from attending the proceedings on Monday, which took place in a temporary courtroom on the grounds of Baghdad International Airport. But Western officials presented a video afterward at a news conference in the fortified Green Zone that showed 10 minutes of scenes from the hearing.

The first images showed the five men sitting at a wooden table, with the room flanked by Iraqi policemen in blue body armor. The men's hands were cuffed in front of them and they stared vacantly into space. Barzan al-Hassan's thin frame was draped in a light-blue work shirt, while three of the men wore traditional dark robes, and the youngest, Mizher Roweed al-Musheikhi, wore a suit.

The men were summoned individually to sit before the investigative judge, Raad Juhee, who addressed them. A few images showed some of the men, including Mr. Hassan, muttering some words, but the video was shown without recorded audio, and so it was impossible to discern what was said. Some of the men were shown scribbling on paper held in their laps, presumably legal documents of some sort.

The trials in this case will not begin for at least 45 days. Other charges could still be brought against the men, and all five face, as a maximum sentence, the possibility of death.

The events in Dujail in 1982 began with an unsuccessful assassination attempt against Mr. Hussein as he rode through the village. In the days afterward, hundreds of people were arrested and as many as 15 were immediately executed, according to a statement from the Iraqi Special Tribunal. As many as 1,500 others spent years in prison though they were never charged or brought to trial, and 143 others were brought to show trials and executed.

Mr. Hassan commanded the forces that descended on Dujail. Mr. Ramadan ordered the razing of all natural resources around the village, like date palm groves, to drive the residents into poverty, the Western expert said. Mr. Saadun presided over the show trials, he added.

The two former Baathists from Dujail are accused of being instrumental in coordinating the imprisonments and executions.