

Hussein Trial in '82 Deaths Set to Begin Next Month

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BAGHDAD, [Iraq](#), Sept. 4 - The trial of Saddam Hussein will begin in six weeks, the government said Sunday, when he and seven aides face a special tribunal on charges of massacring almost 150 residents from the town of Dujail, the scene of a failed assassination attempt against Mr. Hussein 23 years ago.

Laith Kubba, a spokesman for the prime minister, Ibrahim al-Jaafari, said the trial would begin Oct. 19, four days after a national vote on a proposed new constitution. The trial raises the possibility that Mr. Hussein, who faces the death penalty if convicted, could be hanged within months.

Four days ago, Iraq carried out its first court-ordered execution since the fall of Mr. Hussein's government, hanging three people convicted in May in the southern city of Kut of rapes and killings.

Great efforts will be made to "ensure the transparency of the trial" of Mr. Hussein, Mr. Kubba said at a news conference.

"We should view this trial as a national event, and not just as a trial for Saddam on the killings he committed," he said.

Mr. Kubba said Mr. Hussein would be tried with seven associates, including Barzan Ibrahim, a half-brother of Mr. Hussein and a former top official of the Mukhabarat secret police, and Taha Yassin, who was vice chairman of the Baath Party's Revolutionary Command Council. The charges stem from the killing of 143 people and the imprisonment of hundreds of families after the assassination attempt in Dujail on July 8, 1982, he said.

After the failed attack on Mr. Hussein, Iraqi officials executed men and boys from Dujail, a largely Shiite town 35 miles north of Baghdad. Investigators for the special tribunal that will try Mr. Hussein have said another 1,500 Dujail residents were later ordered incarcerated in a prison in a desolate stretch of desert near the Saudi Arabian border.

One of the lawyers for Mr. Hussein's family contended Sunday that a trial so soon would give too little time to prepare an adequate defense, and he said he doubted that the trial would start by Oct. 19.

In an interview with The Associated Press, the lawyer, Abdel Haq Alani, said the trial date was the "wish of the ruling group in the Green Zone, but certainly not the court" - an allusion to the Iraqi government leaders who live in the heavily fortified compound in central Baghdad.

"We haven't been served an official notice about the date of trial," Mr. Alani told The A.P. "It was only a statement made by an Iraqi government official to the media, which absolutely has no value in the law."

The [United States](#) military said 13 insurgents were killed in heavy fighting on Sunday in the city of Tal Afar in northwestern Iraq, as troops from the Third Armored Cavalry Regiment continued efforts begun in May to take control of the city, where insurgents have controlled many neighborhoods since late last year.

Seven of the insurgents were killed by American helicopter fire after American troops were attacked with rocket-propelled grenades and machine guns fired from a mosque in Tal Afar, the military said.

Iraq to Reopen Embassy in [Kuwait](#)

CAIRO, Sept. 4 (AP) - Iraq plans to reopen its embassy in Kuwait within weeks, for the first time since it closed after Saddam Hussein ordered the invasion of Kuwait in 1990, Hoshiyar Zebari, the Iraqi foreign minister, said Sunday.

"We reached the final agreement with the Kuwaiti government to resume our diplomatic activities and we will reopen our embassy within the few coming weeks," he said by telephone from Baghdad.

Asked if Kuwait would reopen its embassy in Baghdad in return, Mr. Zebari said the issue "is left to the Kuwaiti government itself and its estimation about the situation in Iraq."

Iraq and Kuwait have been working to normalize ties since the American-led invasion in 2003 that toppled Saddam Hussein.