
IRAQI AUTHORITIES ISSUE ARREST WARRANTS FOR OFFICIALS ACCUSED OF CORRUPTION

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In the strongest clampdown on corruption since 2003, Iraq's Supreme Judicial Council and Commission of Integrity issued several arrest warrants and arraignments for senior officials accused of corruption.

Spokesman for the prime minister's office, Saad al-Hadithi, announced that a number of top officials will be brought to justice within ten days, but the move will do little to curb the protest movement that has been raging since early October.

The Commission issued many arrest warrants for current and former governors, presidents, provincial councilors and other officials.

Hadithi did not provide further details about whether the anti-corruption campaign would target ministers or officials of higher ranks.

As the protests spread, authorities may have to sacrifice a number of scapegoats to preserve the regime, especially since all the reforms carried out by concerned agencies, including the government and parliament, still do not meet the demonstrators' aspirations.

Regarding the arrests, the Commission revealed it arraigned a parliament member for spending funds for purposes other than those allocated to them during his tenure as Salaheddine governor.

It accused him of misusing 10 billion dirhams allocated for the governorate's security and civil expenses.

The department explained that the court also decided to summon Samarra district mayor and accountant.

In the Dhi Qar governorate, three top officials were arraigned, including former governor Yehya al-Nasseri, the director of education and the head of the investment authority.

In Babel, the Hilla Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for Governor Karar al-Abadi for failing to attend a hearing for his corruption trial. The court set December 19 as the date for his sentencing.

The Commission also issued a warrant for the arrest of a Babel provincial council member and the arraignment of the former health ministry general inspector.

In Najaf, the Commission summoned several senior officials, including former chairman of the provincial council, the governors advisor and a former member of the investment board. They will be questioned for illegally issuing an investment license to an Arab company to construct Najaf airport.

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