

# Saddam's execution: Questions

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According to the official reports, the execution was witnessed by 14 members of Iraqi government. This means that the voices, we hear in the video, belong either to the three executioners, or to Saddam Hussein, or to the members of the Iraqi government. If this is true, then:

1. Who and why shouted, "Long live Muqtada Al-Sadr", and then, "Muqtada, Muqtada, Muqtada"? Why would members of Iraqi government want to do this? This does not make any sense. If they didn't, who did? Was the execution contracted out to the Mahdi Army? Who contracted it out, Americans or the Iraqi government? Why?
2. Why the chanting, we hear in the video, sounds like a bunch of young guys from the street, rather than "distinguished" members of the government? One would expect members of the government to behave in a more professional way.
3. Why the three executioners look, dress, and act like civilian guerrilla fighters rather than professional officers that would be expected to carry out a sentence of such historical and political importance in front of the members of the government?
4. Who recorded the cell phone video and published it on the internet fully knowing that this would provoke a long lasting violence between Sunni and Shia Muslims in Iraq. The video seems to clearly "prove" that the Shia government and Mahdi Army executed Saddam. Who wants and needs a bloody, full scale civil war in Iraq? The timing of the execution, that was carried out on the morning of the Eid al-Adha, can only be explained by a desire to upset both radical and moderate Muslims and therefore to increase the size and scope of the expected conflict.

It is highly unlikely that "the organizers" of Saddam's execution did not and would not think about the above questions and consequences. What is really going on here?

Prof. Juan Cole's comment:

I can hear the chanting of Muqtada, and also the name Muhammad Baqir (al-Sadr), whom Saddam killed in 1980. Anyone hearing this in Arabic would say the execution was revenge by the Sadrists, including the Da'wa Party, which follows Muhammad Baqir.

<http://www.juancole.com>

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