

Two six-month terms for two fathers who killed their children

By Rana Husseini

AMMAN — A 75-year-old man was handed a six-month prison term last week by Irbid's Criminal Court for murdering his married daughter for reasons of family honour in Ajloun in October 2001.

Even though the law was recently amended to prevent short sentences for such crimes, the tribunal reduced Mohammad B.'s original charge of premeditated murder to a misdemeanour, and invoked Article 98 of the Penal Code "after it was proven to the court that the defendant killed his daughter in a fit of fury," a judicial source told The Jordan Times on Monday.

The defendant had confessed to killing his 27-year-old daughter Subheih with a sharp object, similar to a meat cleaver, to cleanse his family's honour "after learning from her husband that his daughter was not a virgin [before marriage]."

Mohammad had wed his daughter to a Sudanese national one month prior to the incident, the court said.

On the day of the incident, Oct. 8, the victim visited her father at his farm in Ajloun, the court said, adding that later in the day "her husband called her and divorced her over the phone and told her father she was not a virgin [before their wedding]."

Upon confronting her with the news, the court said, the woman reportedly confessed to her father that she had been engaged in affairs before her marriage.

"[Her father], the defendant, became enraged and struck his daughter on the head with the cleaver-like

object, killing her instantly," the court said.

The defendant then turned himself in to police, and has been in custody since October 2001.

In its ruling, the tribunal said the defendant, who hailed from a rural and conservative background (in Ajloun Governorate), could not remain silent

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about his daughter's actions which tarnished his family's reputation and brought shame to the entire family."

Therefore, the court ruled that the defendant benefited from a reduction in penalty because he committed his crime in a rage, the court ruled.

The judicial source said "the reason her husband was one month late in informing her family that their daughter had

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allegedly had sexual intercourse before was because she begged him to conceal the matter."

**Father receives 6-month
sentence
for 'misdemeanour'**

A second defendant received a six-month prison term from the same tribunal after being convicted of accidentally killing his child with a belt buckle in a domestic dispute in Irbid last year.

The defendant, in his early 20s, was originally charged with manslaughter in the death of his son Ahmad on Sept. 2.

However, the tribunal decided to reduce the charge to a misdemeanour "because it was proven to the court that the defendant did not intend to kill his two-year-old son."

The defendant meant to hit his wife with his belt but missed and instead struck his child on the head, the court said.

"The defendant benefits from a reduction in penalty as stipulated in Article 98 because his wife insulted him verbally in the presence of relatives, which violated the norms and traditions and is considered a dangerous and unlawful act on the part of the wife, which provoked her husband [to beat her with his belt]," the court said.

The child was rushed to Princess Basma Hospital in Irbid, where attending doctors tried to save his life, but failed and he was declared dead a few hours later of a brain haemorrhage.

The boy was the couple's only child.

Last week's verdicts, handed down by Justices Hani Rafati, Yassin Abdullat and Sami Matais in Irbid, are subject to appeal by a higher court.