

Head of Qi card, bank officials handed jail sentences for stealing 13 billion dinars

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Bahaa Abdulhussein pictured in a press conference in 2016. Photo: Qi Card/Twitter



ERBIL, Kurdistan Region – The head of Iraq's Qi card company and officials from the country's largest bank have been sentenced to three years each in prison for stealing more than 13 billion dinars.

The Integrity Commission said Qi Card Director Bahaa Abdulhussein, Rafidain Bank's General Manager Afrah Muhammad, and the director of the bank's credit card department, Walaa Jawad, were found guilty of stealing 13.1 billion dinars in bank revenues.

Abdulhussein is already serving a four-year jail sentence for corruption after being found guilty of bribing, the former Director of Public Pensions in January.

They were sentenced by Baghdad's Karkh Criminal Court on Thursday.

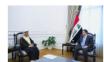
The Qi Card service is common throughout Iraq and is used to pay the monthly salaries of government employees. According to its website, it is a joint venture partially represented by Rafidain Bank.

The perpetuation of corruption in Iraq amongst a deepening economic crisis was emphasized by the head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) at a Security Council briefing in August.

"Corruption remains endemic, and its economic cost untold as it continues to steal desperately needed resources from the everyday Iraqi, eroding investor confidence," Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert said in her virtual address to the council.

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