

Saddam Hussein's former top aide Tariq Aziz's body has gone missing in Iraq

12/06/2015 12:06 by admin

Amman: The body of Tariq Aziz, Saddam Hussein's former top aide who died last week in prison in Iraq, went missing today after it was snatched in Baghdad while en route to Jordan for burial, Aziz's daughter said.

Aziz's daughter Zeinab said she was told by her mother who was in Iraq and waited to accompany the casket to Jordan that his body went missing at the Baghdad International Airport. No further details were immediately known.

A Royal Jordanian official confirmed that the last flight left Baghdad on Thursday without Aziz's casket. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to reporters.

Calls to the Iraqi government for comment or information were not immediately returned.

Aziz died last Friday in the city of Nasiriyah, where he was imprisoned awaiting execution. Iraqi forensics chief Zaid Ali Abbas says autopsy results Thursday confirmed that he died of a heart attack.

He was the highest-ranking Christian in Saddam's regime and was the international face of the Baath Party in Iraq. He was sentenced in October 2010 to hang for persecuting members of the Shiite Muslim religious parties that now dominate Iraq.

In recent months, a number of other former Saddam loyalists have been suspected of working with the Islamic State militants in what is viewed as a Sunni alliance of convenience against the Shiite-led government in Baghdad.

Another senior Saddam aide, Izzat Ibrahim al-Douri, is suspected of working directly with the Sunni militant group.

In April, a number of Iraqi government officials and members of the country's Iran-backed Shiite militias announced that al-Douri was killed in fighting near Tikrit.

But DNA results were never released to confirm the death as promised.

Aziz's daughter, obviously distraught, would not speculate or who may have snatched the body and for what purpose. In Baghdad, Aziz's wife Violet and airport officials could also not be reached for comment.