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Vanderbilt law professor Mike Newton is an adviser to the judges on the Iraqi high tribunal. He joins us here in person today.

Good to have you with us, Mike, in person especially.

MIKE NEWTON, VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY LAW SCHOOL: Thanks, Miles. O'BRIEN: Is it likely we're going to see this in the next 30 days?

NEWTON: Almost certain because the whole process of the tribunal was to demonstrate the power of law over politics, and the legal process has worked its way through. The appeals court, what they call the cassation (ph) panel, has spoken and so the legal process is complete.

O'BRIEN: There is a provision, though, for the prime minister, Nuri al-Malaki, to issue a stay of execution. Do you think that will happen?

NEWTON: Not likely, primarily because of the awareness of the overall situation. They want to move on with other trials. There are lots of other trials in the pipeline.

O'BRIEN: You mentioned the other trials. And that would be a good reason, I suppose, to keep Saddam Hussein alive as a possible witness on those subsequent trials of accomplices on these current ones. Why wouldn't the legal system there look upon that as a good idea?

NEWTON: Well, the fact is his testimony or other related testimony can be preserved in any number of other ways, witness statements and those sort of things in the referral packet that become trial evidence. But the Iraqis are very ambitious in terms of other cases that will move forward, and many, many other victims will in fact have their day in court, whether Saddam is sitting there or not.

O'BRIEN: What about the other victims in right now he's on trial for the gassing of the Kurds, those allegations? Victims and family members in that case might feel as if they're cheated out of justice.

NEWTON: Well, the prosecution case is almost complete in the Anfall trial. The Anfall trial it had over 50 incidences of chemical weapons against Kurdish civilians, as well as hundreds of villages destroyed, bulldozed under. One of the most powerful things of this whole process has been is normal people coming into court to sit and look at those accused, look them in the eye and tell about happened, and that's been very... O'BRIEN: So in a way, though, if he's executed in the next 30 days, for subsequent trials, subsequent victims, they will not have that opportunity. Is that a miscarriage in some way of justice?

NEWTON: Well, they won't have it with Saddam, but they'll have it with other defendants, other military commanders, other high-ranking Baathist officials, who in fact ordered and facilitated those atrocities through the common plan of the state. This was institutionalized terror where the state used all the power at its disposal to persecute its own civilians. So they're lots and lots of other people. O'BRIEN: I know you've worked long and hard with these judges and you think highly of them, but it it's been difficult for them to run these trials, obviously.

NEWTON: Yes.

O'BRIEN: How much credibility do they have right now, do you think?

NEWTON: Well, when you look at what actually happened in the courtroom and you look at the entirety of the record, the judges strove valiantly to keep the politics out of the courtroom, keep the trials moving ahead, based on law, based on evidence, based on testimony in the courtroom, and the trial judgment itself was 283- pages long, very long, extensive discussion of all of the range of legal issues, full consideration of the facts and the evidence from both the defense and the prosecution. It's a very credible trial record.