

Truth and Myth Regarding the Lashing Sentence of Raif Badawi

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The below compiles analysis of the two publicly available videos. The goal is to separate the facts from the many fabricated aspects of the lashing sentence of Raif Badawi (رائف بدوي).

Time code references relate to the two videos posted to YouTube and subsequently widely circulated. All referenced images have been hyperlinked to their appropriate source.

TRUE:

1. Background: The initial lashing punishment took place on Friday, January 9, 2015, beginning at precisely 1:00 p.m. Location was at Al-Jaffari Mosque, in the front, across the street from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Building, on Al Madinah Al Munawarah Rd. (*see map 1 below*). The green outline shows where the lashing activities took place; the red outline is where beheadings took place (the activities which gave this area the moniker “Chop-Chop Square”).
2. Units of the Saudi Arabian National Guard (SANG) were on hand in the mosque front and in the immediate vicinity (*both videos*).
3. Attempts were made to prevent videotaping of the event through Arabic-language announcements immediately prior to the event ([video 2](#)).
4. Estimates of the (standing) audience are approximately 500 persons, primarily men, teens and boys. (See *video 1* image below, from the first [video](#) to surface shows men running to attend the event.)
5. RB was shackled at the ankles and wrists. (*See image 0:13 from video 2 below.*)
6. An announcement regarding RB’s sentence was made by an official and the lashing commenced ([video 2](#)).
7. The lashings were administered with a cane of undetermined material, possibly bamboo. (*See image 0:06 from video 2 below.*) The cane length was approximately 3 feet and thickness appeared approximately twice that of a standard pencil.
8. The speed of the lashings was swift. Playback of the original *video* shows the speed was approximately 130 beats per minute. Therefore the week’s lashing allotment was carried out in under half a minute.
9. The officer administering the lashings raised his right hand and upper arm for each blow. (*See image 0:09 from video 2 below.*)
10. RB was fully clothed (See *video 2.*) and his back was to the mosque. He was, therefore, facing Mecca, in exactly the same orientation of the Muslim prayer of all the mosque attendees a few minutes earlier.
11. The lashings were administered with wide vertical spacing, from RB’s upper back to his lower thighs. ([video 2](#))
12. Just before the 50th blow, RB is seen to move away from the cane. He seems to also have been counting. (See *Image 0:13 from video 2 below.*)

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13. At the 50th blow, the administrator of the lashing is heard to say, “*Allahu akhbar*,” and some in the audience replied in the same way. ([video 2](#))
14. RB was escorted back to the van and the audience dispersed. (*See Image 0:19 below.*)

COMMON MYTHS:

1. The officer administering the lashings had a Qur’an under his arm, thereby limiting the arcs of his swings (See Video 2 below). ([Discussion example.](#))
2. The lashings lasted 15 minutes (Amnesty International, quoting a widely retweeted tweet.)
3. RB was tied up to a pole (See Cartoon A below).
4. RB was [made to lie down](#).
5. The lashings were administered by [more than one person](#).
6. RB’s skin was exposed to the lashings (Below Myth Example B – circulated on Twitter and blogs).
7. The lashings were administered with a [huge cane](#)/stick/a pole/whip (See cartoon A below).
8. RB lifted up his hand in a “V” symbol. His hands were restrained outward by an officer. ([Blogs](#), sourced from Twitter, with extensive retweets)

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[VIDEO 1](#)



[VIDEO 2](#)

0:00



[VIDEO 2](#)

0:06



Truth and Myth about The Lashing Sentence of Raif Badawi

[VIDEO 2](#)
0:09



[VIDEO 2](#)
0:12



[VIDEO 2](#)
0:13



[VIDEO 2](#)
0:19



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CARTOON A



[MYTH EXAMPLE B](#)

