

High treason

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Treason is criminal disloyalty. Historically, in common law countries, **high treason** is treason against the state. It was differentiated from petty treason (or *petit* treason), which was treason against a lesser lawful superior (such as a servant killing his master). Petty treason was restricted to cases of homicide in 1351, and came to be considered a more serious degree of murder.

As common law jurisdictions around the world abolished petty treason, the concept of high treason gradually faded, and today use of the word "treason" generally refers to what was historically known as high treason. In Canadian law, however, there are still two separate offences of *treason* and *high treason*, but both of these, in fact, fall in the historical category of high treason.^[1] In Canada, the main difference in law between *treason* and *high treason* depends on whether the nation is at war. In nations without a common law legal system, the distinction between high and petty treason did not exist.

High treason is criminal disloyalty to one's government. Participating in a war against one's native country, attempting to overthrow its government, spying on its military, its diplomats, or its secret services for a hostile and foreign power, or attempting to kill its head of state are perhaps the best known examples of high treason. High treason requires that the alleged traitor have obligations of loyalty in the state he or she betrayed, but this will usually be satisfied by being present in the state at the time of the offence, or being a citizen of the state if abroad. Foreign spies, assassins, and saboteurs, though not suffering the dishonor associated with conviction for high treason, may still be tried and punished judicially for acts of espionage, assassination, or sabotage, though in contemporary times, foreign spies are usually repatriated in exchange for spies of the mentioned nation held by another nation.^[2] High treason is considered a very serious – often the most serious possible – crime, by the civil authorities. A conviction, by a Canadian court, for high treason, results in a mandatory life sentence (albeit with the possibility of parole after 25 years).

Until the 19th century, counterfeiting coins was considered high treason in the United Kingdom^[3] as it was considered to be an act of debasing the currency of The Crown.

See also

- High treason in the United Kingdom
- List of people convicted of treason

References

- Criminal Code of Canada* (<http://www.canlii.org/ca/sta/c-46/sec46.html>) Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20070330221809/http://www.canlii.org/ca/sta/c-46/sec46.html>) March 30, 2007, at the Wayback Machine., section 46.
- Cf. "U.S., Russia reach deal on exchanging spies" (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/07/08/AR2010070803476.html>). *The Washington Post*. July 9, 2010. Retrieved April 2, 2013. and many similar reports
- Treason Act 1351; Coinage Act 1832

Retrieved from "https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=High_treason&oldid=764028889"

Categories: Treason

-
- This page was last edited on 6 February 2017, at 17:30.

- Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.