



Kangaroo Court

Definition: people who decide to have a trial, done in their own way, against someone they want to find wrong things about or punish. It is done without respect for human rights or the truth.

Full Explanation

1. A group of people who decide to have an unofficial trial of their own against someone they want to punish. It is done without respect for human rights.

Example: Prisoners who decide to punish a fellow prisoner for a wrong they consider has been done. The prisoners hold their own court and decide on a punishment for the offender who may, in fact, be innocent.

These courts ignore principles of law and justice and demand unfair punishments. Quite often the decision has already been made before the court meets.

2. This term might be used to describe any court that appears to be dishonest and in which the principles of law and justice are ignored or where a court delivers a judgment that seems to have been decided in advance.

Derivation: kangaroo court is a slang term of uncertain origin. It is thought that the term began in the United States when pioneer judges went from town to town conducting courts. They were hired by the townspeople. These “leaps” from town to town created the image of a kangaroo.