
Saudi Arabia to Condemn 5 to Death Over Khashoggi Murder, Crown Prince MBS Shielded

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Saudi Arabian prosecutors will seek the death penalty for five of the 11 suspects detained over the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, the Saudi state news agency SPA reported Thursday, as a Saudi court held a first hearing on the case.

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Saudi Arabia said it also sent new letters to the Turkish public prosecutor asking for "any evidence connected to this case," which has rattled the Saudi royal court and [damaged the reputation of 33-year-old Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman \(MBS\)](#).

Khashoggi was a close ally of the royal family before becoming a critic of MBS and began writing for the Washington Post and speaking to international media about Saudi politics when he moved to the United States last year.

Saudi officials have rejected accusations that the crown prince ordered his murder in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, in which Khashoggi's body was dismembered,

removed from the building, and handed over to an unidentified "local cooperator."

The whereabouts of Khashoggi's remains are still unknown, but a Turkish television channel Monday showed men carrying suitcases purportedly containing the remains into the residence of the Saudi consul general in Istanbul.

"The initial hearing for the 11 individuals indicted by the Public Prosecution in the case of the murder of citizen Jamal Khashoggi was held today ... in the Criminal Court of Riyadh," a statement from the Saudi prosecutor carried by SPA said.

The prosecutor's office said it was seeking the death penalty for five individuals of the 11 indicted. Ten other suspects were still under investigation.

SPA added that the defendants' lawyers attended the hearing and the court approved a request from the 11 who asked for more time to prepare their defense. It did not give details on the next hearing.

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The statement said the kingdom was still waiting for responses to requests for information sent to Turkish officials.

Last week, Saudi King Salman put Ibrahim al-Assaf, a veteran former finance minister, in charge of foreign affairs, in an effort to improve the kingdom's image after the crisis caused by the killing.

Assaf replaced Adel al-Jubeir, and experts in Saudi politics said the move reflected a perception that Jubeir was tainted by having served as Riyadh's chief global defender during the Khashoggi affair.
