
UN Official: Secret Khashoggi Trial Violates International Law

29/03/2019



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The United Nations special rapporteur on extrajudicial executions, Agnes Callamard, has called out Saudi Arabia on holding secretive judicial hearings for the 11 suspects accused of the murder of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi.

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Callamard, who is leading the international inquiry regarding Khashoggi's death, said that unless the hearings are open to the public, they are in violation of international law.

“The current proceedings contravene international human rights law according to which the right to a fair trial involves the right to a public hearing,” the UN rapporteur stated.

In order for Saudi Arabia to address this lack of transparency, aside from opening the hearings to the public, Callamard has called for authorities to release the names of the suspects, as well as provide an update on the 10 individuals who were [initially arrested](#) for the crime.

Both the UN human rights office and the International Bar Association have requested that the Saudi government grant them access to the court.

“The government of Saudi Arabia is grievously mistaken if it believes that these proceedings, as

currently constituted, will satisfy the international community, either in terms of procedural fairness under international standards or in terms of the validity of their conclusions,” Callamard pointed out.

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The 11 suspects were indicted by the country's public prosecutor one month after Khashoggi was murdered. Five of the suspects could be given the death penalty if convicted for ordering or committing the crime. A former top aide to Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Saul al-Qahtani, was linked to the crime and fired, but is not one of the 11 facing trial in Riyadh.

The Crown Prince has also been implicated in the crime, with [the CIA's](#) and some Western countries' findings. Prince Mohammed vehemently denies the accusations.

The UN director at Human Rights Watch Louis Charbonneau says the Khashoggi murder trial should be opened to UN observers, activists and international media, adding that the criminal justice system in Saudi Arabia has "an abysmal record" of [human rights violations](#), including detention without charge or trial and denial of representation.

Khashoggi was killed on October 2, 2018 at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, while reportedly seeking necessary documents for his [upcoming wedding](#).
