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THE MURDER OF JAMAL KHASHOGGI AND THE FUTURE OF MIDDLE EAST POLITICS

İSMAİL NUMAN TELCİ



 SETA



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ABSTRACT

The murder of Jamal Khashoggi, a prominent journalist of Saudi nationality, has caused a grave fracture in global and regional politics in terms of both its method and its impact. The respected journalist who was accepted in the intellectual circles particularly in the United States (U.S.) was killed in Turkey, at the compound of the consulate of his own country. The killing of Khashoggi has thrust Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the U.S. to the center of the global agenda. From the beginning, Turkey ensured by its strategy that the incident took an international dimension, and thus exerted serious pressure on the administrations of both Saudi Arabia and the U.S. Ankara aims to bring the incident to full light and ensure the punishment of those responsible in the shortest term, and is using all of its means to that end. Eighteen days after the incident, the Saudi Government announced that Khashoggi died during a brawl at the consulate and that a group of Saudi intelligence agents were the responsible party. It was implied in the statement that Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman had nothing to do with the murder; this caused the reactions of experts and analysts who are closely following the case. The international community, unsatisfied with this announcement, took steps in the presence of both the U.S. and Turkey, and demanded the revelation of the identities of those who ordered the killing of Khashoggi. Every passing day, a new development



The analysis examines who Khashoggi was, why he became a target, the developments that have taken place since his murder, and the repercussions and impact of the incident on regional and international politics.

occurs regarding the incident. Apparently, it will continue to set the agenda of Middle Eastern politics in the upcoming period. This analysis examines the details of Khashoggi's heinous murder, the reactions of international actors to the incident, and its possible implications in Middle Eastern politics. The analysis also discusses the developments, in the above context, since October 2, the day Khashoggi walked into the consulate building.

INTRODUCTION

The international community has focused on the fate of Saudi journalist Khashoggi from the onset. No one heard from him after the prominent journalist entered the Consulate General of Saudi Arabia in Istanbul on October 2. The statement issued by the Saudi administration announcing Khashoggi's death 18 days later escalated global reactions. Particularly, Turkey and the U.S. administration, as well as Turkish and American public opinion, have closely followed the killing of Khashoggi, a columnist for the *Washington Post*, and put a great deal of pressure on Saudi Arabia since the moment he disappeared. As a matter of fact, it may be said that the Saudi discourse in the Khashoggi murder has changed as a result of this pressure. In the early days of the incident, Saudi officials insisted that they knew nothing about the killing of Khashoggi at the consulate building and that he had left shortly after entering the premises. However, they acknowledged in a statement issued on October 20 that Khashoggi died after discussions between him and the persons who met him at the consulate led to a quarrel and a

brawl; and his body was removed by a local accomplice of the perpetrators.

As the international community remained unsatisfied by the announcement, calls to find out whether or not the Saudi administration is involved in this grievous case continued. The killing of Khashoggi has turned into an incident that will bear dramatic consequences both at regional and global levels. At the beginning, the incident was considered to create tension between Turkey and Saudi Arabia, but later on, it also escalated the tension between the Saudi and the U.S. administrations.

Although it has been quite a while, international reaction grows as the case lingers and questions remain unanswered, putting Saudi Arabia at the center of global pressure. The number one reason for this is that strong claims exist that the Riyadh administration is involved in the incident. Thus, with the intention to find answers to leading questions on the issue, the current analysis explores who Khashoggi was, why he became a target, the details of his murder, the developments that occurred afterwards, and the repercussions and impact of this incident on regional and international politics.

WHO WAS JAMAL KHASHOGGI AND WHY WAS HE A TARGET?

Born in Medina in 1958, Khashoggi was a descendant of a well-known family of Turkish origin that had migrated to the western Hijaz region of the Arabian Peninsula 300 years ago, in Ottoman times. He had globally known relatives including his grandfather Mohammed Khashoggi, one of the private doctors of King Abdelaziz al Saud, the founder of Saudi Arabia. The prominent arms dealer Adnan Khashoggi, who made it to the list of the "richest people in the world" in the 1970s and 1980s, was his uncle. A celebrity businessman Dodi Fayed, who died together

with his then companion Princess Diana in a traffic accident in Paris, was Khashoggi's cousin. Hasan Khashoggi, who survived a terrorist attack at Reina nightclub in Istanbul in 2017, is also a member of the Khashoggi family.¹

Jamal Khashoggi earned a BA in Business Administration at Indiana State University in the U.S. During his youth, he sympathized with Islamic movements – in particular, the Muslim Brotherhood. In this period, he criticized the effectiveness of the religious establishment in Saudi Arabia, especially the negative approach against the movements representing political Islam. Later on, he continued his professional life in the media sector and worked for the leading newspapers in the country.

Khashoggi was a journalist who never compromised on his criticisms, yet enjoyed good relations for long years with the royal circles of Saudi Arabia. Khashoggi advocated that his country should go through a process of serious political, cultural, religious, and economic reforms. For this reason, he was known as a reformist dissident in Western circles. Khashoggi's tenure as of 1991 as editor-in-chief of *Al-Madina*, one of the oldest dailies in Saudi Arabia, was one of the highlights of his professional career. After about eight years in this position, Khashoggi worked at *Arab News*, one of the few Saudi newspapers published in English. In those years, he continued his criticisms of the country and drew reactions for his narrative about religious clerics in particular. He had to resign twice from *Al Watan* for this reason.²

In that particular period, Khashoggi focused on Salafism and radicalization in his criticisms and became the target of Wahhabi religious clerics. In those years, he became an

adviser to Turki al Faisal who served as the director of intelligence for long years and was once the ambassador to Great Britain and the U.S. As a result, Khashoggi enjoyed access to information at the state level of the Saudi regime. Lastly, Saudi billionaire Alwaleed bin Talal tapped him to lead his TV station, *Al-Arab*, based in Bahrain; however, the enterprise was shut down hours after it was launched, for hosting a Bahraini opposition figure.³

Khashoggi's break with the regime in Saudi Arabia deepened after the Arab Spring protests that swept across many countries in the Middle East starting from Tunisia in 2010. He became a vocal critic of his own government's stance in this process. Khashoggi did not support revolution and reform movements in the region, and accused the Riyadh administration of being "narrow minded."⁴ After King Abdallah of Saudi Arabia passed away in 2015, the policies of the new king, Salman, were also subject to his criticisms.

The final break between Khashoggi and the King Salman administration occurred in December 2016. During a presentation at the Washington Institute on November 10, Khashoggi was critical of Donald Trump's ascension to the U.S. presidency, asserting that Trump's Middle East policies would yield negative consequences for the region. As these remarks made the Riyadh government furious, *Al Hayat* under Khashoggi was banned from publishing. Saudi authorities also banned him from writing in newspapers, appearing on TV, and attending conferences.⁵ As the tension between Khashoggi and the regime remained intact following this development, he planned to emigrate, and eventually settled in the U.S.

1. Donna Abu-Nasr, "Who Is Jamal Khashoggi? A Saudi Insider Who Became an Exiled Critic", Bloomberg, October 10, 2018; "Cemal Kaşıkçı Kim?", *Deutsche Welle* Türkçe, October 19, 2018.

2. Ian Black, "Jamal Khashoggi Obituary", *The Guardian*, October 19, 2018.

3. Sarah Deeb, "Missing Saudi Journalist Once a Voice of Reform in Kingdom", *The Washington Post*, October 7, 2018.

4. "Jamal Khashoggi Disappearance: Turkey Asks to Search Saudi Arabia's Consulate in Istanbul", CBC News, October 8, 2018.

5. "Saudi Journalist Banned from Media after Criticising Trump", Middle East Eye, December 4, 2016.

Khashoggi's criticisms were very tough on interference in Yemen,⁶ which was initiated by the Crown Prince whose grip on Saudi administration is increasingly tighter; on the sanctions against Qatar and the strong anti-Iran policies; on support for the Sisi regime in Egypt; and on the operations against the opposition figures and the clergy in Saudi Arabia.⁷ Specifically, Khashoggi's articles in the *Washington Post* during the last year have created distress in Riyadh. Although Khashoggi has no considerable supporters within the regime, the Saudi administration has followed his writings very attentively, and, in a sense, targeted him.

Yet another point on which Khashoggi drew the reaction of the Saudi government was that he was lately following a political line closer to a Turkey-and-Qatar-centered political bloc that has emerged with growing influence in the region.⁸ He earnestly advocated this political alliance that supports the Muslim Brotherhood as well. Since the Saudi regime considers the Muslim Brotherhood its most serious threat, his support of this alliance disturbed some circles close to the Saudi government. Although a political crisis does not seem to exist between Turkey and Saudi Arabia, it is a fact that Ankara and Riyadh compete with each other in regional politics. In fact, one of the conditions set by Saudi Arabia during the period of sanctions on Qatar was that Doha should "close down Turkish military bases in Qatar" – an indication of how annoyed Riyadh is by Ankara's increasing influence over the region. Besides, it may be said that Saudi Arabia and Turkey, as the leading countries in the region, do not wish to pitch against each other for the sake of preventing regional crises.

6. "Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Must Restore Dignity to His Country - By Ending Yemen's Cruel War", *The Washington Post*, September 11, 2018.

7. Jamal Khashoggi, "Read Jamal Khashoggi's Columns for the Washington Post", *The Washington Post*, October 6, 2018.

8. Jamal Khashoggi, "Saudi Crown Prince's Vision 2030 and His Repressive Measures", *Sharq Forum*, March 20, 2018.

INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL ACTORS' REACTION TO THE KHASHOGGI MURDER

The incident was not easily kept under wraps because Khashoggi was one of Saudi Arabia's prominent intellectual figures. It is known that although he generally adopted a stance of criticism against the Saudi government, Khashoggi held critical positions in the Saudi administration and knew many secrets of the Saudi state. For this reason, his disappearance made a bigger impact than expected. At this point, the Saudi administration is trying to solve the case with the least possible damage to itself by appealing, in particular, to the U.S. and Turkey.

Jamal Khashoggi was a journalist who never compromised on his criticisms, yet had good relations for long years with the royal circles of Saudi Arabia.

Turkey leads the countries that have been vocal about the Khashoggi case. Since the incident occurred at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, Turkey has become a direct interlocutor regarding the issue. Since the killing took place in Turkey albeit at a diplomatic mission, it seriously damaged Ankara's global and regional image. In recent years, Istanbul is considered a safe haven by refugees, dissidents, and émigrés who flock from repressive regimes and civil wars in the Arab world - Syria and Egypt, in particular. The murder of Khashoggi created a perception that Istanbul is unsafe.⁹ Thus, Turkey has legitimately reacted against Saudi Arabia in regards to this incident.

9. "An Arab Haven in Turkey: Why Dissidents Are Gathering in Istanbul", *The Economist*, October 11, 2018.

However, it cannot be said that Ankara has directly taken a stance against the Riyadh administration as a result of the incident.¹⁰ The extent of the bilateral relations, engagements in regional politics, and the vital position of Saudi Arabia in the power balance of the Middle East hold Ankara back from a head-on clash with Riyadh at this point. On the other hand, Turkey's main concern is to shed light on this murder case by pursuing judicial or legal proceedings, and hold those responsible accountable to the judiciary.¹¹ At this point, Turkey is avoiding to come face to face with Saudi Arabia and does not wish to couple this case with the future of bilateral relations. But instead, Turkey wishes to carry the case to the international level and discuss it at the international level.¹² Hence, Ankara intends to share the responsibility with the international public opinion. Concordantly, Turkey has announced that it would support the launch of an international investigation by the United Nations.¹³

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Therefore, in summary, Turkey's position is that it regards this incident as "a premeditated murder" and desires to uncover the perpetrators without interfering in the domestic affairs of Saudi Arabia. On the one hand, Turkey wishes to bring the perpetrators to court, and, on the other,

10. "US and Turkey Seek to Avoid Rupture with Saudi Arabia", *The Financial Times*, October 17, 2018.

11. Raf Sanchez, Bob Crilly and Nick Allen, "Turkey 'Will Not Allow a Cover Up' as Saudi Arabia Admits Jamal Khashoggi Was Killed at Consulate", *The Telegraph*, October 20, 2018.

12. Lina Alsaafin, "What Is behind Turkey's Strategy in Handling the Khashoggi Case?", *Aljazeera*, October 15, 2018.

13. *Ibid.*

maintain bilateral relations with Saudi Arabia.¹⁴ During his address to the AK Party on October 23, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan emphasized that the killing of Jamal Khashoggi was premeditated and those who are responsible for the killing should be tried in Turkish courts.¹⁵ In order to help the investigation, Turkey allowed the Saudi Arabian attorney general to get involved in the process. The Saudi attorney general came to Turkey in late October and held a number of meetings with Turkish officials who are responsible for the investigation, including Istanbul's chief public prosecutor. However, the atmosphere during the meetings was tense and the Turkish side refused to hand over all visual and audio evidence of the investigation to the Saudi attorney general. Following unproductive meetings, the Saudi attorney general left Turkey. Days after his departure, President Erdogan wrote a piece for the *Washington Post* and particularly indicated that "the order to kill Jamal Khashoggi came from a top level politician inside the Saudi Kingdom."¹⁶ This shows that despite Turkish cautious approach to Saudi Arabia, Ankara will continue to put pressure on the Saudi leadership to resolve the issue.

Saudi Arabia, too, is trying not to be at loggerheads with Turkey. Even though short-term showdowns take place, the Saudi government will extend this process over a period of time and not allow the potential tension between the two countries to deepen. However, there are strong signs of difference of opinion in the Saudi administration with regard to their policy vis-à-vis Turkey. It is surmised that the Crown Prince Bin Salman, in particular, takes a stern stance towards Turkey – under the influence of the Unit-

14. Burhanettin Duran, "Kaşıkçı Skandalında Ankara'nın Dört Seçeneği", *Sabah*, October 20, 2018.

15. "Başkan Erdoğan'dan Cemal Kaşıkçı cinayetine ilişkin önemli mesajlar!", *Sabah*, October 23, 2018.

16. "Recep Tayyip Erdoğan: Suudi Arabistan'ın, Cemal Kaşıkçı'nın öldürülmesi hakkında hâlâ cevaplamaı gereken birçok soru var", *The Washington Post*, November 3, 2018.

ed Arab Emirates (UAE) leadership. Despite the existing different opinions and policies, cooperation between these two ancient countries of the Islamic world is of vital importance for the future of regional politics.¹⁷

It has become unavoidable for the U.S. to stand in the sidelines in the Jamal Khashoggi case for two reasons: First, Khashoggi was a columnist at the *Washington Post*, one of the leading newspapers in the U.S. He lived in the country with a green card granted by Washington, and was a respected figure in the media and academic circles in many Western countries and, in particular, the United States. Thus, as soon as the incident leaked out, the U.S. administration could not refrain from debunking the case due to the global reactions and calls from these circles.

Yet another dimension of the incident is the close ties between President Donald Trump and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.¹⁸ The Trump administration has put Saudi Arabia in the center of its Middle East strategy. Trump's support for Salman despite the civil war in Yemen and the sanctions against Qatar has caused reactions both inside and outside the U.S. For this reason, the Trump administration is stranded in a difficult position in the face of strong allegations about possible involvement of the Saudi regime in the Khashoggi case. In fact, the U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo paid a visit to Riyadh and met with King Salman and the king's son Bin Salman. According to some international media outlets, Pompeo allegedly warned Crown Prince Bin Salman that "his future as king is in

peril" and that "his future as king would depend on how he handles the situation."¹⁹

It was also asserted that the U.S. Congress and the House of Representatives pressured President Trump to take action against Saudi Arabia. Reportedly, both Republican and Democrat Congressmen requested an investigation under the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act into the disappearance of Khashoggi.²⁰ Under the Global Magnitsky Act, the president, upon receipt of a letter from the chairman and ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, must make a determination and is authorized to impose sanctions with respect to a foreign person responsible for extrajudicial killings, torture, or other gross violations of internationally recognized human rights violations against individuals who seek to obtain, exercise, defend, or promote human rights and freedoms, including freedom of expression.

U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Bob Corker, one of the lawmakers who requested from the President to invoke the Magnitsky Act, said the following:

They can undergo their own investigation, but the U.S. administration must make its own independent, credible determination of responsibility for Khashoggi's murder under the Global Magnitsky investigation as required by law.

"We should also halt all military sales, aid and cooperation immediately. There must be a severe price for these actions by Saudi Arabia," Rand Paul, another Republican congressman, tweeted.²¹

As one of the influential names in the U.S. political circles, Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla) said in a statement that the Khashoggi case should be as-

17. Raghida Dergham, "Saudi-Turkish Strategic Cooperation: Opportunities and Challenges", *The Huffington Post*, January 2, 2016.

18. Hamad Althunayyan, "The US-Saudi Relations in the Trump Era", *Aljazeera*, May 19, 2017; Aaron David Miller and Richard Sokolovsky, "Donald Trump Has Unleashed the Saudi Arabia We Always Wanted - and Feared", *Foreign Policy*, November 10, 2017; Michael Hirsh, "The U.S.-Saudi Relationship: Too Faustian to Fail?", *Foreign Policy*, October 10, 2018; Alex Ward, "Why the US Won't Break up with Saudi Arabia over Jamal Khashoggi's Likely Murder", *Vox*, October 18, 2018.

19. "Pompeo'dan Suudi Velihti'na Uyarı: Kaşıkçı Vakası Yüzünden Kral Olman Tehlikede", *Sputnik Türkiye*, October 18, 2018.

20. "Temsilciler Meclisi'nden Trump'a Kaşıkçı Mektubu: Magnitsky Yasası Kapsamında Araştırılsın", *Sputnik Türkiye*, October 19, 2018.

21. "ABD Kongresi Üyeleri Baskıyı Artırıyor: Suudi Arabistan'a Magnitsky Yasası Uygulansın", *Sputnik Türkiye*, October 21, 2018.

sessed in the frame of human rights and for this reason, the Magnitsky Act should be put into work. “Saudi Arabia will pay a ‘heavy price’ if allegations that the kingdom killed a prominent journalist prove true,” said Sen. Lindsay Graham (R-SC).²² In the same line, U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee member Sen. Bob Corker (R-TN) and Sen. Robert Menendez (D-NJ) with other 20 senators sent a letter to President Trump demanding a probe into Khashoggi’s disappearance under the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act.²³

For the present, showdowns have taken place between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia due to the Khashoggi murder case. Upon Saudi officials’ announcement of the death of Khashoggi, President Trump even said that if Saudi Arabia is found responsible for Khashoggi’s death, he will consider “severe consequences”.²⁴ In fact, Trump’s remarks, upon Pompeo’s return to the U.S. after a short trip to Saudi Arabia, are interpreted to mean that he will not take any further risks to defend Prince Bin Salman.²⁵ On the other hand, the Saudi government and the media outlets close to the administration claim that the incident had nothing to do with the Saudi regime and react against allegations, broadcasts, and publications. Turki Aldakhil, the general manager of *Al Arabiya News Channel*, one of the leading newspapers in Saudi Arabia, referred to Washington’s possible sanctions on Riyadh as “Washington is backstabbing itself,” warning and threatening the Trump administration.²⁶

22. Clare Foran, “Awaiting Trump Response, Key GOP Lawmakers Call for Answers, Action on Missing Saudi Journalist”, CNN, October 16, 2018.

23. Rob Berschinski, “An Explainer: Senate’s Letter on Khashoggi and the Global Magnitsky Act”, Just Security, October 12, 2018; “Corker, Menendez, Graham, Leahy Letter Triggers Global Magnitsky Investigation into Disappearance of Jamal Khashoggi”, United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, October 10, 2018.

24. “Trump: Öyle Görünüyor ki Cemal Kaşıkçı Öldürüldü”, NTV, October 18, 2018.

25. Kemal İnat, “Bak Kral, Seni Ben Bile Kurtaramam Artık!”, *Türkiye*, October 20, 2018.

26. Turki Dakhil, “US Sanctions on Riyadh Would Mean Washington Is Stabbing Itself”, *Al Sharq Al Awsat*, October 14, 2018.

Another riveting point in this period is that some Arab countries stated that they are in solidarity with the Saudi administration. Following the announcement issued by Saudi Arabia on the details of Khashoggi’s death, Egypt, Bahrain, the Palestinian Authority, Jordan, and Yemen announced their full support of the Riyadh administration.²⁷ What these countries have in common is that they all support the regional politics of Saudi Arabia after King Salman inherited the throne. They seem to remain on Riyadh’s political line with regard to the political and economic sanctions on Qatar and the wrestle with Iran.

THE IMPACT OF THE KHASHOGGI MURDER ON THE POLITICS OF SAUDI ARABIA

Political and media circles covering the incident reacted against the Saudi administration’s approach to the killing of Jamal Khashoggi. Particularly in the early days of the incident, the Saudi government claimed that they knew nothing about the murder. Later, this transpired not to be true and yet the government put the blame on some “rogue” killers who were affiliated with Syrian intelligence. All these were considered as obvious attempts to deflect blame from the Riyadh administration.²⁸ This has incriminated the Saudi administration and Crown Prince Bin Salman, in particular. Conceivably, developments thus far are likely to have a permanent impact on Saudi politics.

The most important impact would be the dismissal of Crown Prince Bin Salman from office. Although this is strongly supported by the

27. “Suudi Arabistan’a O 5 Ülke Destek Verdi”, *Hürriyet*, October 20, 2018.

28. Michael Hirsh and Lara Seligman, “Many in Washington Are Not Assuaged by Saudi Admission in Khashoggi Death”, *Foreign Policy*, October 18, 2018; Christopher Torchia, Zeynep Bilginsoy and Sarah Deeb, “Saudi Account of Khashoggi Killing is Widely Denounced”, *The Washington Post*, October 20, 2018.

international community, the ongoing power struggle inside Saudi Arabia for the last year hints that the Crown Prince holds a strong position and will not step down without a fight. In fact, the official statement issued by Saudi Arabia on the death of Khashoggi does not even imply the prince's involvement in this case.²⁹ Not to mention that King Salman named Crown Prince Mohammed as the head of a committee to restructure the kingdom's intelligence agency.³⁰

The only solution mechanism for the removal of Crown Prince Bin Salman from office appears to be the pressure of the international community. Significant mistrust against the Crown Prince is observed in the U.S. and European political circles and public opinions. Many members of the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives demand the punishment of Khashoggi's real killer and for pressure to be put on Saudi Arabia.³¹ Similar demands are also voiced by the U.S. media's leading figures.³²

In this sense, a striking development was that many political figures, businessmen, and media representatives cancelled their reservations for the Future Investment Initiative – also known as “Davos in the Desert” – which was scheduled for October 23-25 in Riyadh. Among the top level participants who cancelled their reservations – their total number exceeded 30 - were the U.S. Secretary of Treasury, the Trade Minister of Great Britain, the Finance Ministers of the Netherlands and France, and IMF Director Christine Lagarde. Furthermore, business and media circles

reacted against the murder of Khashoggi. CNN, Bloomberg, *The Financial Times*, *The Economist*, The World Bank, HSBC, UBER, and Ford also cancelled their reservations for this meeting.³³

THE FUTURE OF THE MIDDLE EAST IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE KHASHOGGI MURDER

Although the Saudi government in its official statement emphasized that Crown Prince Bin Salman was not involved in the incident, the world public opinion and governments of many countries continue to voice their doubts on the matter. For this reason, the legitimacy of the Saudi government will be questioned more in the upcoming period and Riyadh's room for maneuver in regional politics will narrow. On the other hand, the fracture in regional politics caused by Khashoggi's murder will affect events and future projects in the Middle East.

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In this context, U.S. President Trump's “Middle East Strategic Alliance” initiative, also known as the “Arab NATO,” is one of the regional projects to be directly affected by the Khashoggi murder. The Middle East Strategic Alliance is planned to be formed by six members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Egypt, and Jordan. The alliance, however, is stained by the negative impact of the Khashoggi murder. In

29. “Saudi Public Prosecutor: Preliminary Investigations into Case of Citizen Jamal Khashoggi Showed His Death”, Saudi Press Agency, October 20, 2018.

30. Ben Hubbard, “Saudi Arabia Says Jamal Khashoggi Was Killed in Consulate Fight”, *The New York Times*, October 19, 2018.

31. “Senators Call for US Probe of Saudi Arabia in Khashoggi Case”, Voice of America, October 10, 2018; “US Senators Urge Trump to Explore Sanctions against Saudi Arabia over Khashoggi”, Sputnik, October 11, 2018; Doina Chiacu, “US Senator Accuses Saudi Prince of Ordering Khashoggi Killing”, Reuters, October 16, 2018.

32. “US Media Grilling Trump over Khashoggi Case”, Anadolu Agency, October 17, 2018.

33. “Cemal Kaşıkçı Olayı: ‘Çöl Davosu’ Olarak Adlandırılan Suudi Arabistan'daki Yatırım Zirvesinden Kim Çekildi, Hangi Firmalar Hala Sponsor?”, BBC Türkçe, October 18, 2018; “Amerikalı ve İngiliz Bakanlardan Suudi Zirvesine ‘Kaşıkçı Boykotu’”, Sputnik Türkiye, October 18, 2018.

this scope, President Trump planned a summit in Washington to be held on October 12-13, but the meeting was cancelled due to the changes in the agenda caused by the Khashoggi murder.³⁴

Yet another consequence of the Khashoggi murder as far as the Gulf region is concerned is that it could deepen mistrust among the region's countries. The already existing tension between Qatar and Saudi Arabia and the UAE in addition to differences of opinion between Oman-Kuwait and the Riyadh-Abu Dhabi regimes could deepen because of Khashoggi's murder. Countries that are concerned by Saudi Arabia's aggressive foreign policy, such as Oman and Kuwait, are worried that they could be affected by the negative atmosphere of this incident. In fact, the Saudi media, in the process, intensified campaigns against Qatar and the negativity between the two countries has mounted.³⁵

The fracture in regional politics caused by Khashoggi's murder will affect events and future projects in the Middle East.

One more project that would likely be affected by the Khashoggi murder is President Trump's political plan to resolve the Palestine-Israel conflict, referred to by him as the "agreement of the century."

The details of this plan, the steps of which are implemented in phases, are not clear yet, but it may be said that the plan will never affect Israel's occupier position. To the contrary, it will

make the Israeli occupation permanent.³⁶ This is indicated by the U.S. announcement recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and, in connection with the former, the move of the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem.³⁷ It is of importance for the next phases of this plan that leading Arab countries, such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt, have not issued any declaration of intention against it.

On the other hand, Crown Prince Bin Salman plays a key role in the implementation of the "agreement of the century." Allegedly, Jared Kushner, one of the architects of this agreement and Trump's adviser, shared the details of the agreement with the prince.³⁸ If the future of the Saudi administration turns ambiguous and the negative perception against Washington, Tel-Aviv and Riyadh governments in the Arab public opinion deepen due to Khashoggi's murder, the U.S. policy on the solution of the Palestine-Israel conflict will be put at risk.

The Khashoggi murder is also likely to have a serious impact on Saudi foreign policies. At this point, the ongoing Saudi military intervention in Yemen would be subject to global reactions. Many Western countries already criticize the Saudis' human rights violations in Yemen. Some others seem to take steps to halt arms sales to the Riyadh administration.³⁹ The negative atmosphere in the aftermath of the Khashoggi murder will force global rediscussions of human rights violations and the devastation of humanity in Yemen, which will in turn put pressure on Saudi Arabia.

34. İsmail Numan Telci, "Trump's Middle East Strategic Alliance: A Failed Project?", *The New Turkey*, October 20, 2018.

35. "A Kingdom Divided 'Fake News' from Qatar or a Sign of MBS' Brutal Rule: Saudi Arabia Roiled by 'Murder' of Journalist", *Haaretz*, October 15, 2018; Khaled M. Batarfi, "The Lies and Deception in the Khashoggi Case!", *The Saudi Gazette*, October 16, 2018; Khalid Al-Suleiman, "Why Do They Want to Destroy Saudi Arabia?", *Okaz*, October 17, 2018.

36. 'Yüzyılın Anlaşması' İsrail'in İşgalini Pekiştiriyor", *Anadolu Ajansı*, June 28, 2018.

37. "ABD Başkanı Donald Trump, Kudüs'ü İsrail'in Başkenti Olarak Tanıdı", *BBC Türkçe*, December 6, 2017; "ABD'nin Kudüs Büyükelçiliği Açıldı", *Anadolu Ajansı*, May 14, 2018.

38. "ABD'den 'Yüzyılın Anlaşması' Planı: Suudi Prens Detayları Paylaşmış", *Anadolu Ajansı*, January 10, 2018.

39. Tony Czuczka, "Germany Halts Weapons Sale to Saudi Over Khashoggi Case, Indicates Minister", *Business Standard*, October 21, 2018; Tony Czuczka and Patrick Donahue, "Merkel Throws Future Military Sales to Saudi Arabia into Doubt", *Bloomberg*, October 21, 2018.

CONCLUSION AND ASSESSMENT

The impact of Khashoggi's murder on Middle Eastern politics will be seen on bilateral relations as well. The future direction of the relations between Turkey and Saudi Arabia is of vital importance for the future of regional politics. The Riyadh administration should review some parts of its foreign policy with which Turkey seems uncomfortable. The expectations of Ankara include the following: Turkey's priorities in Syria should be paid attention to; the sovereignty of Qatar, one of Turkey's key allies, should be respected; policies in accord with the sensitivities of the Islamic countries in the Palestinian case should be generated; and a more temperate position should be adopted in policies towards Iran. Otherwise, political competition between Ankara and Riyadh will take a sharp turn and Ankara will not be able to avoid adopting aggressive policies in the region.

It is time for Saudi Arabia to adopt a new approach to its Middle East policies. The aggressive foreign policy of Saudi Arabia, since 2015 in particular,⁴⁰ has not generated any positive outcome either for itself or for the regional countries. To the contrary, these policies have caused trouble between the Riyadh administration and

neighboring countries, and have harmed successful neighborly relations of long years. Even the future of the GCC is in jeopardy as Qatar, Kuwait, and Oman are disturbed by Riyadh's foreign policies. In addition, Saudi Arabia's rigid policies towards Iran push Tehran and Riyadh to take tougher stances (against each other) and bring them to the brink of a hot conflict. Furthermore, the Saudi government taking the side of the U.S. and the Israeli administrations in the Palestinian issue puts it at risk of falling from grace in the Arab public opinion.

All these developments push Saudi Arabia into isolation in a period when the entire Arab world needs reforms, innovations, developments, and cooperation more than ever. Although it appears that the Riyadh administration will make temporary gains in the short term owing to the aforementioned policies, they will yield devastating results both for Saudi Arabia and the region in the long term.

Khashoggi's murder, as one of the most grievous incidents in recent years, will be remembered for many years, but it has already become a turning point in Middle Eastern politics. It is important for Saudi Arabia and other countries to make comprehensive assessments and draw lessons from this incident. The most critical of these lessons would be to allow freedom of expression for dissidents, to have respect for different opinions, and to honor and exalt human rights.

40. İsmail Numan Telci, "Suudi Arabistan'ın Dış Politikasında Aktivizmi Anlamak", *Yeni Şafak*, July 21, 2015.

The murder of Jamal Khashoggi, a prominent journalist of Saudi nationality, has caused a grave fracture in global and regional politics in terms of both its method and its impact. The respected journalist who was accepted in the intellectual circles particularly in the United States (U.S.) was killed in Turkey, at the compound of the consulate of his own country. The killing of Khashoggi has thrust Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the U.S. to the center of the global agenda. From the beginning, Turkey ensured by its strategy that the incident took an international dimension, and thus exerted serious pressure on the administrations of both Saudi Arabia and the U.S. Ankara aims to bring the incident to full light and ensure the punishment of those responsible in the shortest term, and is using all of its means to that end.

Eighteen days after the incident, the Saudi Government announced that Khashoggi died during a brawl at the consulate and that a group of Saudi intelligence agents were the responsible party. It was implied in the statement that Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman had nothing to do with the murder; this caused the reactions of experts and analysts who are closely following the case. The international community, unsatisfied with this announcement, took steps in the presence of both the U.S. and Turkey, and demanded the revelation of the identities of those who ordered the killing of Khashoggi. Every passing day, a new development occurs regarding the incident. Apparently, it will continue to set the agenda of Middle Eastern politics in the upcoming period. This analysis examines the details of Khashoggi's heinous murder, the reactions of international actors to the incident, and its possible implications in Middle Eastern politics. The analysis also discusses the developments, in the above context, since October 2, the day Khashoggi walked into the consulate building.



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