



### [Turkish Court Indicts 20 in Connection with the Murder of Khashoggi](#)

Prosecutors in Istanbul, Turkey indicted 20 Saudi nationals accused of planning and carrying out the murder of writer and activist Jamal Khashoggi in October 2018. Intelligence services around the world have long since concluded the architect of the murder was Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who ordered a team of Saudi agents to abduct Khashoggi from the Saudi embassy in Istanbul when he went to collect paperwork to marry his fiancée. Named in the indictment are Saud al-Qahtani, former royal court advisor; and Ahmed al-Asiri, former deputy head of Saudi general intelligence. Both men have close ties to Mohammed bin Salman and are accused of orchestrating the plot at the crown prince's behest. The indictment uses phone records, witness statements, and information from Khashoggi's mobile phone and computer as proof of the Saudi plot against him.

Khashoggi broke with the Saudi royal family in 2017 and moved to the United States, where he became a vocal critic of Saudi Arabia as a columnist for the Washington Post. He visited the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, Turkey in early October 2018 to pick up paperwork for his forthcoming marriage to his Turkish fiancée, Hatice Cengiz, and was never seen again. Khashoggi's body has not been found but a thorough investigation into his disappearance concluded that he was strangled to death in the consulate by Saudi agents tied to Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. Investigators believe that Khashoggi's body was then dismembered with a bone saw and dissolved in acid, all on the grounds of the Saudi consulate in Istanbul. Khashoggi's killing, which Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said was ordered at the "highest levels" of the Saudi government, has strained ties between Turkey and Saudi Arabia. Turkey has accused Saudi officials of obstructing investigations into the killing, while Saudi Arabia has stated that prosecutors in Turkey have not complied with their requests to share information.

Saud al-Qahtani and Ahmed al-Asiri, the two men indicted with close ties to Crown Prince bin Salman, were dismissed from their positions in the aftermath of Jamal Khashoggi's murder as the Saudi government looked for people to take the blame away from bin Salman. Asiri underwent a trial in the Gulf kingdom, but was released due to lack of evidence. Qahtani was never charged by the Saudi authorities. However, a Saudi court imprisoned three people over the murder, and ordered the execution of five others. The identities of these individuals were not made public, but a United Nations rapporteur condemned the verdict, saying the five people killed were not the masterminds of the plot, and justice had not been adequately served. Mohammed bin Salman continues to deny any involvement in Khashoggi's murder, despite the CIA and other intelligence services concluding he was the catalyst for the plot. The crown prince went on "60 Minutes" last fall to take responsibility for the murder "as the executive of the state" but not personally.