



ALQST (London - 8 October 2018): “Disappearance” of Jamal Khashoggi requires independent, apolitical investigation and robust response from international community

The trattered credibility of Saudi Arabia government in the balance as fate of journalist Jamal Khashoggi mired in controversy.

ALQST is appalled and dismayed at unconfirmed reports citing unnamed sources in the Turkish police that prominent Saudi Arabian journalist Jamal Khashoggi has been murdered in the Saudi Arabian consulate in Istanbul. The Saudi Arabian authorities have refuted the allegations. It is now widely believed that he is dead.

Yahya Assiri, Director of ALQST stated that “*Turkey should immediately call on the United Nations to despatch an investigative team to establish the fate of Jamal Khashoggi. We urge the international community to call on the government of Saudi Arabia to end its reckless conduct, expressed through waves of arbitrary arrests now numbering over a thousand and - now possibly a murder on sovereign territory in another state.*”

Addressing what could be done, Assiri added, “ALQST calls on human rights activists to stage protests outside Saudi Arabian diplomatic legations to protest against the mounting violations both at home and abroad. Saudi Arabia appears out of control and we need to show that it cannot go on.”

Background

Jamal Khashoggi, 59, a columnist for the Washington Post, is a respected commentator who has published widely both in English and Arabic, and has over a million followers on Twitter. A former government and journalist in his native Saudi Arabia, he left the country in 2017 and has since stated that had he remained, he would have been arrested. He has written articles that have criticised Mohammed Bin Salman.

On 2 October Jamal Khashoggi entered the Saudi Arabian consulate in Istanbul in order to obtain papers confirming his divorce. His fiancée, Hatice Cengiz, a Turkish national, waited over 10 hours for him to return. She asserts he did not do so.

Unsourced reports have suggested that Jamal Khashoggi was dismembered and removed from the consulate. Karen Attiah, an editor at the Washington Post expressed her despair in a [tweet](#).

In a 5 October 2018 [interview](#) with Bloomberg news, Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman Al Saud, often called MBS, stated that in the last three years the government has arrested 1500 people. He asserted that:

"[...] most of their cases have nothing to do with freedom of speech and most of them will return to their homes when the process is finished. Anyone against whom we have clear, accurate information -- based on Saudi laws -- that they have links with intelligence against Saudi Arabia or extremism or terrorists, they will face Saudi law."

ALQST has recorded scores of arbitrary arrests since the appointment of Mohammed Bin Salman, followed by days or months of incommunicado detention, when those detained without an arrest warrant, by non-uniformed security personnel have not been allowed to contact family, let alone legal representatives. Those detained are not permitted to challenge their arrest, which has often been made citing vague provisions relating to national security for actions that do not amount under international standards to criminal conduct. Trials in Saudi Arabia are routinely unfair: defendants are denied access to legal representation, are unable to challenge evidence or opaque charges, as in the case of [Essam al-Zamel](#).

The government has undertaken waves of mass arrests, notably in September and October / November 2017, best known for the detention of former government officials and business figures, whom the government held for months at a luxurious hotel in Riyadh and who were forced to hand over assets to the authorities. In May 2018, the government arrested tens of human rights activists, including women's rights advocates, at least eight of whom remain in custody. None are known to have been charged. Others, including journalist [Marwan al-Muraisy](#), continue to face arrest.

[ALQST](#), is an independent non-governmental organisation that advocates for human rights. We monitor and document human rights violations that occur in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia at the hands of authority figures

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