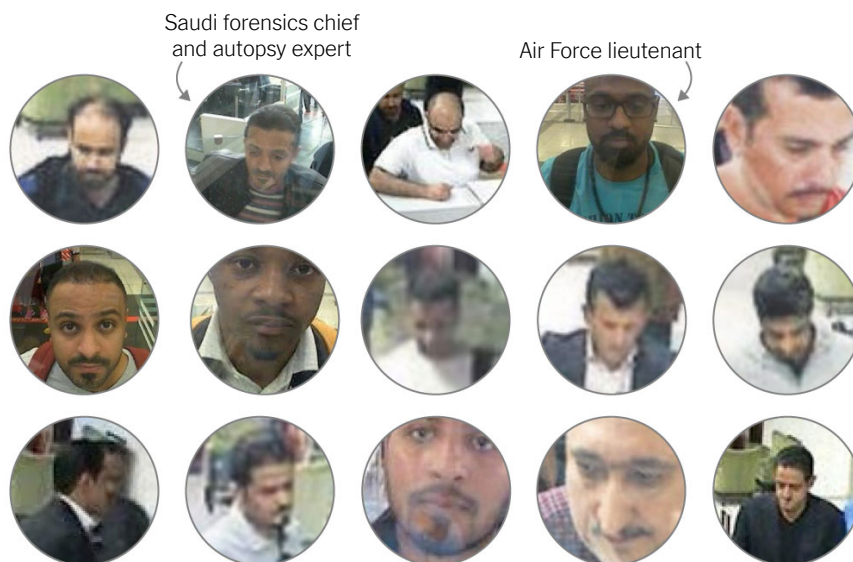


Naming Names, Turks Turn Up Heat on Saudis in Consulate Case



Source: Sabah and Turkish officials

By **David D. Kirkpatrick** and **Malachy Browne**

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ANKARA, Turkey — A Turkish newspaper close to the government has published a list of 15 men it says formed a hit squad of Saudi government agents the Turks suspect of killing and dismembering a prominent critic inside the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul.

While Turkey has not leveled the charges publicly, two Turkish officials speaking on the condition of anonymity confirmed that the government considers the men to be Saudi operatives who flew last week to Istanbul in pursuit of Jamal Khashoggi, the dissident. Mr. Khashoggi has not been seen since he entered the consulate on Oct. 2.

One of the men on the list published by the newspaper, Sabah, is an autopsy expert at Saudi Arabia's internal security agency, according to the two Turkish officials. Another appears to be a lieutenant in the Royal Saudi Air Force. The officials, citing confidential intelligence, said all worked for the Saudi government.

Turkish officials have said that Mr. Khashoggi was killed at the consulate and that his dismembered body was taken away — an allegation the Saudi government has vehemently denied. Mr. Khashoggi, a veteran Saudi commentator, United States resident and Washington Post columnist, had become a prominent critic of the kingdom's rulers.

Saudi leaders, including Prince Mohammed bin Salman himself, have said that Mr. Khashoggi left the consulate freely, shortly after he entered, and that they have no knowledge of his fate.

Turkish officials have cited confidential intelligence to support their contention that Mr. Khashoggi is dead, but have declined to disclose that evidence.

In recent days, anonymous Turkish officials have leaked a steady stream of details about the alleged killing. They say they believe the operation was ordered by the highest levels of the Saudi court in part because of its scale and complexity.



A still from security-camera footage is thought to show the Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi entering the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul last week. Hurriyet, via Associated Press

The leak of the list of 15 Saudis appears to be part of a Turkish government campaign intended to put pressure on the Saudi government to admit that Mr. Khashoggi was killed, and to spur wider international outrage.

The Times found corroborating information about two of the men — the lieutenant and the autopsy expert — by comparing the names and photographs in Sabah, the newspaper, with social media profiles and Saudi media reports.

By leaking the names of the individual Saudis, Turkish officials added to an increasingly detailed, if still incomplete, account of what happened to Mr. Khashoggi.

Earlier leaks included information about the flights that carried the 15 men in and out of Istanbul. There were also reports about an unexpected day off granted to consulate employees the day that Mr. Khashoggi went to the consulate. And there was security camera footage of Mr. Khashoggi entering the consulate.

The Saudis have yet to produce video footage or other evidence supporting their contention that Mr. Khashoggi left the building.

Turkish officials have said, without offering evidence, that Mr. Khashoggi was killed within two hours of entering the consulate and dismembered with a bone saw brought for that purpose.

Although the Turkish allegations about Mr. Khashoggi's killing have so far relied largely on confidential intelligence, Western intelligence agencies have generally regarded their Turkish counterparts as reliable on domestic matters.

"The Turkish services are extremely capable, especially with regards to internal threats or incidents," said Thad Troy, a senior executive of the business intelligence firm the Crumpton Group and a former senior C.I.A. officer with experience in Turkey.

"The Saudis would have been extremely naïve to believe they could get away with this," he said, noting that the intelligence services of both countries had previously had "close relations."



Mr. Khashoggi, a political dissident, has not been seen since he entered the consulate. Yasin Akgul/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

On Tuesday, Saudi officials began to contact their Turkish counterparts for secret talks about resolving the matter. The Saudis have told Washington that they believe they can smooth over the issue, according to both Turkish and American officials briefed on the discussions.

Turkish officials have said that they, too, hope to avoid a confrontation with Saudi Arabia, another major regional power.

But the leaks of the names and other information might make it harder for both sides to save face — for example, through a compromise in which the Saudis would acknowledge the killing of Mr. Khashoggi but blame it on rogue actors.

If the 15 men indeed killed Mr. Khashoggi on the orders of the Saudi royal court, as Turkish officials have charged, the ease with which they appear to have been identified suggests that they did little to cover their tracks. And that suggests that either they were careless or they wanted their actions to be discovered — perhaps to intimidate others.

Sabah published photographs of all 15 Saudis. One appears to be Salah Muhammad al-Tubaigy, the chief of forensic evidence and an autopsy expert in the public security directorate of the Interior Ministry. A photograph of a man entering Ataturk Airport shown in Sabah appears to match photos shared online of Mr. Tubaigy.

Another Saudi identified in Sabah, Meshal Saad al-Bostani, appears to be a Saudi Air Force lieutenant who was born in 1987. A photograph of a man at the airport appears to match photos on the Facebook profile of a man with the same name who says he studied at the University of Louisville.

It was unclear what immediate impact the disclosures might have on the unfolding discussions between Saudi Arabia, Turkey and possibly Washington over resolutions to the dispute.

Saudi officials have said that they are willing to open the consulate in Istanbul to police inspection. The Turkish authorities were reportedly prepared to bring in forensic teams to scour for clues.

More than a week after Mr. Khashoggi's disappearance, however, Turkish officials say they have little hope of obtaining significant new evidence. There were also conflicting reports on Wednesday about when the promised inspection might actually take place.