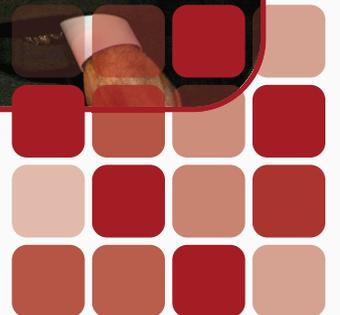


# KHASHOGGI'S DEATH AND ITS REPERCUSSIONS ON THE SAUDI POSITION WITH TURKEY



IHAB OMAR





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Ihab Omar is an Egyptian journalist and researcher specializing in Arab affairs. He holds a Bachelor of Media degree and General Diploma in Education. He covered the Arab events of many Arab newspapers and international sites. He covered closely the events of the Arab Spring in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen.

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## Introduction

The Saudi-Turkish relations have fluctuated between durability and deterioration, partnership and competition. As there are good relations in economic and strategic partnerships and agreements on political issues, such as the common positions of the Syrian conflict, there are also controversial issues about competing for the leadership of the Muslim world and the position of Qatar and Egypt, where Turkey has supported Qatar in its dispute with Saudi Arabia. Also, Qatar and Turkey are sympathetic to the Muslim Brotherhood, which Riyadh regards and fights as a terrorist organization. In general, relations between Riyadh and Ankara have been tense during the previous period, yet the economic relations have endured this tension and have not declined.

The case of Khashoggi's death has set a clear course for the relationship between the two Islamist forces, especially after the clear Turkish stance on the issue and its role in escalating the issue and bringing it into the focus of the world attention, which reflected the deterioration of the reputation of the kingdom, especially Bin Salman Leading the scene.

In this report, we try to analyze the contents of the press coverage of three major newspapers in the Kingdom, Okaz and Alwatan as two of the most widely distributed and widespread Saudi newspapers, and the electronic newspaper Sabq.org, the largest electronic newspaper in the Kingdom, as well as the positions of some journalists close to The Saudi regime and administrators through their Twitter accounts.

We will address the topic in several axes: the curriculum vitae of the late Jamal Khashoggi, then how the crisis was originated, the Turkish position on the crisis, then the Saudi media treatment of the issues about Turkey before the Khashoggi case. We also review to address the Saudi media crisis, in addition to the positions of some media professionals on the Saudi regime before the crisis and response from Turkey, and

finally analyze the content of the Saudi media handling of the crisis and conclusion.

## Who was Jamal Khashoggi?

Jamal Ahmed Khashoggi, a Saudi writer and journalist, was born in Medina on 13 October 1958. His grandfather, Muhammad Khashoggi, was of Turkish origin. He began his career in journalism, as a reporter for the English-speaking newspaper "Saudi Gazette", and then a correspondent for the newspaper "Middle East " and "Arab News", and in the journal " Alhayat", then deputy editor of the newspaper "Arab News " in the late 1990s, and he remained in that position for four years. In 2003, he was appointed as the editor-in-chief of Saudi Al-Watan, before being dismissed two months later without disclosing the reasons, and then returned to the office between 2007 and 2010.

During his career, he covered the first Gulf War, the war in Afghanistan, the events in Algeria, Lebanon, Sudan, and others, he conducted several interviews, like the one with the late Taliban leader Osama bin Laden. Khashoggi wrote several books, including the "Arab Spring, the Time of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Occupation of the Saudi market."

Because he was close to the royal family, with the conservative independence of his opinion, he was a media advisor to Prince Turki al-Faisal, the former Saudi ambassador to London and then Washington. He also provided media consultations to the Saudi emir, Alwaleed bin Talal, and he was chosen to serve as the general manager of the television channel "Al Arab", which began to be aired and ended on the same day.

When the Gulf crisis began, Khashoggi criticized the Saudi Arabia-led blockade against Qatar, then authorities closed his account on "Twitter ", asking him to stop publishing, which prompted him to opt for voluntary exile, about a year ago, in the United States of America. During the last period, Khashoggi has been renowned



due to his criticisms of the policies of the Saudi crown prince and he has published several articles, particularly in the “Washington Post”.

### **The emergence of the crisis**

The crisis emerged on 2<sup>nd</sup> of October 2018 when the renowned Saudi writer and journalist Jamal Khashoggi entered in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, Turkey. After the Saudi Embassy in Washington asked him to go to Turkey, he entered the consulate intending to complete documents to marry his Turkish fiancée, but he did not go out. After more than three hours, the writer’s fiancée declared his disappearance and she informed the Turkish government that her fiancée entered the Saudi consulate in Istanbul at 1 pm and did not come out.

One day later, a Saudi official said that the reports of Jamal Khashoggi’s disappearance at the Saudi consulate were erroneous, adding that Khashoggi visited the consulate to complete some papers and came out shortly afterward<sup>1</sup>. In

return, Turkish authorities denied the claim that Khashoggi had left the kingdom’s consulate.<sup>2</sup> Turkish presidential spokesman Ibrahim Kalın said in a press conference that “The Turkish Interior Ministry is following the case of journalist Jamal Khashoggi with the staff of the Saudi consulate in Istanbul and our information is that he is still inside the consulate’s premises.” Three days later, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman told Bloomberg that Khashoggi was not in the consulate, expressing his willingness to allow the Turks to inspect the consulate.<sup>3</sup>

The crisis remained nowhere between Saudi Arabia’s refusal to disclose the whereabouts and the fate of Khashoggi and leaks by Turkey in a certain format to keep the issue at the forefront of international news, including information on the dismemberment and the dissolution of the body.

In the face of the intensity of Turkish leaks, Saudi Arabia had to change its narrative several times, until officially announced through the

Attorney General that the preliminary investigations conducted by the Public Prosecutor showed that the discussions between Khashoggi and the people who met him during His presence at the consulate of the kingdom in Istanbul led to a scuffle and fist fight with Jamal Khashoggi, which led to his death, and the public prosecution arrested 18 persons, all are Saudi nationals, on the case<sup>4</sup>.

On the background of the investigation, King Salman ordered the dismissing of Saud al-Qahtani as advisor to the Royal court, who is the principal assistant to Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, and Ahmed al-Asiri, the deputy head of the intelligence service.

Some of the Saudi media platforms were working on the issue at the beginning of the crisis; we even find a report that has been published by the Saudi newspaper Sabq titled: "Turkey is the Theatre of International Assassinations!"<sup>5</sup> The newspaper links the disappearance of Khashoggi, assassination of the Russian Ambassador, and the assassination of the Syrian dissident Aruba Barakat and her daughter Hala Barakat in their apartment in Istanbul. In addition, the report lists a series of incidents suggesting that Turkey has become the scene of international assassinations.

Third, Turkey deals with the issue from a purely ethical perspective, as a purely judicial and criminal matter, as announced by Turkish

“ The highest ranks in the Turkish State were concerned with monitoring the case and trying to uncover all the details of the incident without paying attention to the political weight of the personalities involved in the case or the economic repercussions. ”

### Turkish position towards the crisis

The Turkish position towards the Khashoggi case has been clear since the early hours of his disappearance. The highest ranks in the Turkish State were concerned with monitoring the case and trying to uncover all the details of the incident without paying attention to the political weight of the personalities involved in the case or the economic repercussions. This may be for the following reasons: First, because the incident, an appalling and a heinous crime, has been committed in Turkey and on its territory, and as a serious and irresponsible violation of its sovereignty. Second, because the crime represents a reckless disregard from the Kingdom to Turkey and its regional and international standing and an attempt to implicate it and distort its image.

Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu<sup>6</sup>. This crime is a crime of depriving an innocent life of a human being and the perpetrators must be punished even if they are in high positions in their state, and so, Turkey has dealt with the case, coordinating through its security agencies with other international parties such as France, Britain and the United States. So the US Senate unanimously endorsed the draft resolution submitted by the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, Bob Corker, to hold Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman responsible for the killing of Khashoggi and to hold accountable all those found guilty of the killing.<sup>7</sup>

Fourth, there may have been political goals for president Erdogan and his party about the ongoing escalation of the issue, considering internal political gains on the one hand, and

relieving pressure on the Turkish regime on the other, especially after the Turkish lira crisis and the release of the American pastor.

### **How Saudi media handled Turkey issues before Khashoggi 's death**

The press coverage of Saudi newspapers for Turkish events was similar in the period before the crisis of the death of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi. Most of the Turkish coverage in the Saudi media was about the crisis of the Turkish lira against the dollar, and then the Turkish position of the events in Syria, especially regarding the attitude towards the military operations in Idlib, as well as the reports of the ongoing arrests in Turkey. Most of these coverages were characterized by a negative view of Turkey.

The Okaz newspaper focused its coverage just before the crisis on detention cases in Turkey, such as arresting managers of a closed-TV station<sup>8</sup>, the news of “24 Istanbul airport workers being held in prison”<sup>9</sup>, and “the arresting of hundreds of other protesters from the same airport”<sup>10</sup>, “arresting of 61 soldiers on suspicion of connection with Gulen”<sup>11</sup> and “arresting of 88 on suspicion of links to Kurdish militants”<sup>12</sup>. The newspaper did not overlook the Idlib crisis and Turkey’s position, as it reported that the Minister for National Defence of Turkey rejected any military operation in Idlib<sup>13</sup> and news of Turkish reinforcements in the Syrian Idlib after the failure of the cease-fire<sup>14</sup>.

The newspaper also reported a number of reports and news about the crisis of the lira in the coverage described as biased or fragmented like news: the Turkish lira continued its decline<sup>15</sup>, also the newspaper coverage of the American pastor detained in Turkey biased coverage through non-neutral terms. Descriptions as a report of the newspaper headlines titled: a New blow .. Washington rejects a Turkish deal<sup>16</sup>, a report on the rejection of an offer by Turkey to release US pastor Andrew Bronson in exchange for stopping the prosecution of Halk Bank of Turkey which

threatened with fines in billions of dollars. The newspaper also published a report after the release of the American pastor titled “What’s Behind the American pastor’s release recipe?”<sup>17</sup>. The report doubted the integrity of the Turkish judiciary.

Al-Watan newspaper’s coverage of Turkey’s news ahead of the crisis was completely biased and even questioned in all its positions, as evidenced by a report published by the newspaper on Turkey’s classification of the Tahrir al-Sham (Jabhat al-Nusra), a branch of al-Qaeda, as a terrorist organization<sup>18</sup>. The report cites particular statements in a political analyst that Turkey had to classify so as not to be labelled as supporting terrorist groups, suggesting that the allegation was proven.

The newspaper published another report titled: “The New Mission of modern Turkey”<sup>19</sup>, accusing Turkey of being an employee for the West and NATO, and that all the political and economic roles of Turkey in the region are only reflections of its NATO membership and most of its interventions in the region in favor of the file joining to the European Union, which is closely linked to the effectiveness of Turkey’s regional role in the Middle East. The report had claimed that Turkish policy did not provide any service to Muslims and their issues. These reports show the clear bias of the newspaper against Turkey and its issues and the attempt to demonize its external role in the Middle East.

The electronic newspaper Sapq was not better off than the general media of Saudi Arabia. The newspaper tweeted in the same direction as the Saudi press regarding the Turkish affairs where it published a report on the economic conditions in Turkey ahead of the Khashoggi crisis under the title of “new Hitler” leads Turkey to a financial and security collapse<sup>20</sup> describing Erdogan’s conduct with the countries of the region is hostile, and it alleged that Erdogan fails in his first post-election test: the devaluation of the Turkish lira.

At the same time, the newspaper published another report titled: Turkey threatened by economic catastrophe due to the depreciation of its currency<sup>21</sup>, and published a report entitled “Turkey-Qatar... A crisis-making and conflict-related partnership”<sup>22</sup> that criticized the country’s support for Turkey in its plight, describing the Turkish-Qatari partnership as a hostile alignment against Arabs.

### **Saudi media handling of the crisis**

Daily Saudi Arabia’s Okaz began to deal with the crisis as it published an article titled: “The Disappearance of Khashoggi. Dozens of false accounts and one Truth “. <sup>23</sup> The newspaper accused what it described as the “enemy media”,

to spark further questions about the timing the fiancée’s claims, which, according to the paper, seem to have former links with the Qatari regime.

In an attempt to attack the Turkish regime, the newspaper warned of a security deterioration in Turkey, titled “Is Istanbul safe for Saudis? “<sup>25</sup> It said “the unstable security situation and the explosive events in Istanbul during the past two years appeared to be a bullet of mercy on the city which is divided by the Bosphorus, falls from the list of favorite tourist destinations to many Gulf tourists, which the Saudis are on the outset. “ It added that the controversial mystery of the disappearance of the citizen Jamal Khashoggi increased the fears of Saudi citizens, about

“ The newspaper quoted at length the meeting with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman with the Bloomberg and “refuted the claims of the bag dealers and bidders over the Kingdom” in the words of the newspaper. ”

which saw that it “bears the features of Muslim Brotherhood and Qatari” in pumping lies, and it criticized the Turkish official comments about the disappearance of Khashoggi which describe it as unprofessional and far from diplomatic norms.

The newspaper quoted at length the meeting with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman with the Bloomberg and “refuted the claims of the bag dealers and bidders over the Kingdom” in the words of the newspaper.

Under the heading “Qatari insistence on the killing of Khashoggi. Widen the circle of suspicion!”<sup>24</sup>,” Okaz offered what it called “the loss of allegations and false news that are trying to discredit the kingdom”, questioned the novel of the fiancée of Khashoggi, and spoke of a “media campaign by the Qatar media and Brotherhood media, which seemed organized and not innocent,

the level of Turkish security in maintaining the safety of visitors in the country’s most important tourist cities.

The electronic newspaper “Sabq” published early a number of reports and articles questioning Turkey’s accounts and defending all those involved in the case where it published a report titled “The Lie of the murder of Khashoggi.. A fictional scenario is ready and the Crows were waiting for the start signal”<sup>26</sup>, wrote Muhammad al-Mawassi: “The dark bats have simulated a fantasy of fiction with lies and fabrications that are not alien to their sources.” Al-Mawassi accused what he called the “country Twitter crows” to promote the killing scenario of Khashoggi.

The newspaper continued to cast doubt on the credibility of Turkish statements and positions and published a story under the title of the

“Head of Security Studies in Washington doubts on the Turkish reports about the disappearance of Khashoggi”<sup>27</sup> and quoted in the news from Jim Hanson, head of Security Studies Group in Washington, in an interview with the U.S. “Fox News” network.

The newspaper published another report titled: The paid media implements the framing theory to achieve the agenda of the dark bats.<sup>28</sup> The report refers the whole case to the attempts of “Aljazeera and its sisters” to link all possibilities in Saudi Arabia before the investigations in the case end, claiming that what it described as the paid media applies a theory framing the agenda of the dark bats, which, according to the report, is pitting world opinion against Saudi Arabia, targeting trust in the kingdom and changing the positive global outlook.

In another report entitled “A Jordanian Lawyer: what is going on in the crisis “Khashoggi”: plot to divide Saudi Arabia”<sup>29</sup> the reports quote a Jordanian lawyer, Bashir Al-Momini who alleges that the Khashoggi crisis is a cosmic conspiracy to miscarry the state of the covenant, make fundamental changes in the structure of the Saudi state, change the order, reforming the regime, and creating a Saudi opposition, leading to chaos and unrest, fragmentation and the stirring of internal conflicts within Saudi Arabia.

Al-Watan newspaper had taken the same approach of doubting the credibility of Turkish news, reports and leaks about the killing of Khashoggi and published an article by Abdul Aziz al-Jabr titled “Khashoggi and the scenes of the play”<sup>30</sup>, confirming that the publication of hundreds of press materials from fabricated videos and pictures, and distributing during the first hours in a coordinated and fast manner among the countries of the world, in addition to the manufacturing of content injected into social media, all these attempts are also to influence the politicians in the world to take positions against Saudi Arabia.

The newspaper also published a report titled “Orders to kill Khashoggi are lies”<sup>31</sup>, confirming that suspicious media campaigns were adopted and funded by Qatar to mislead and attack the kingdom, and that prosecutions are waiting for actors and individuals involved in accusations and spreading lies.

But once the official announcement of the killing of Khashoggi in the consulate following a scuffle during the interrogation as the Saudi public prosecutor said was made<sup>32</sup>, the media coverage and the tone of the speech were different in the Saudi press.

The campaign of doubting his death, and justifying his disappearance turned out to be a major tribute to the Saudi investigation decisions and the king’s decisions that excluded a number of influential personalities<sup>33</sup>, the decisions that the Saudi senior ulema authority said it achieves “justice and equality in accordance with Islamic sharia.”

The newspaper Sabq published a report titled: “Directives and Decisions of the king following the unfortunate event of “Khashoggi” considered as a continuation of the state approach in establishing the foundations of justice<sup>34</sup>, and another news titled: “al-Qahtani “: the organized campaign that targeted the state to the purpose of undermining its reputation Should stop.<sup>35</sup> The President of the Assembly National human Rights, Mufleh Rabian al-Qahtani said that results of the investigation and the king’s decisions confirm that the kingdom does not tolerate outlaws or those believed to be responsible from them or conceal their actions, and he demanded for the cessation of what he called the organized campaign that targeted the Saudi state as an entity with the aim of damaging its reputation politically, economically and judicially.

The newspaper also published another report titled “The sword of justice amputates the involved in the case of “Khashoggi “, here is a fair king”<sup>36</sup>. The writer Mohammed Haded praises

what he described the undertakings of the Saudi leadership as transparent in search of the truth, and emphasizes its keenness on its permanent position in maintaining the security and safety of its citizens and preserving their rights, even if that citizen is an opponent outside the kingdom.

The writer is knitting the Saudi humanitarian dealings with the issue, which was unlike the political dealings of the states, which always refuses to recognize any story that could lead to any harm.

The newspaper then published a lengthy report by Mohamed Atif, titled “How is Saudi Arabia targeted? How it responds?”<sup>37</sup> The writer said that Saudi Arabia is subjected to the biggest media and political campaign that is biased, targeted and politicized. The author attributed the goal of the campaign to the great presence that Saudi Arabia had achieved since its launch of its vision for 2030 and described the crown prince as an architect to its vision. The author accused Turkey of taking the case as an oppor-

tunity to draw the allegations of justice and to discredit Saudi Arabia.

As a continuation of the previous approach in doubting the attitude and the accounts of Turkey to distort its image, the newspaper published a number of negative reports against Turkey, such as the piece titled “BBC “: Turkey is a country of rumors and occupies the first place in the false news”.<sup>38</sup> Another report is titled “Political Analyst: Turkey and Qatar want to stop the political and economic momentum led by the crown prince”.<sup>39</sup> The report cast doubts on Turkey’s aims, alleging that it is concerning with the killing of Khashoggi, which is due solely to the targeting of the Saudi crown prince.

The culmination of the attack on Turkey was through a report published by a Sabq newspaper in its lengthy editorial, which was titled “Turkey and the case of “Khashoggi”. Virtual claims and hidden truths.”<sup>40</sup> The report said that the Saudis have the task of addressing what Turkey is working on, which is the removal of Mohammed



bin Salman from his position. The newspaper number the reasons for Turkey's stand, which are Turkish illusion to be the Islamic heart, its aim to handle the Saudi role as fighting Islamic political and terrorist movements supported by Turkey and Qatar, to get economic gains by blackmailing the Saudi position, and that the Turkish presidency is looking for a strong cover on its internal failures and the country's economic deterioration.

The newspaper Okaz had reported beside articles aired in defense of the Saudi position and casting doubt on the Turkish leaks, and the international positions against the crime, broadcasting a series of negative news and reports about Turkey, such as focusing on news of arrests and protests in Turkey and any negative international reports about Turkey. It published a story entitled "European Court: Turkey violated pro-Kurdish political right in a speedy trial"<sup>41</sup>, another entitled "The European Court: the Erdogan regime stifles pluralism"<sup>42</sup>, and a third entitled "Amnesty International": Erdogan must stop the horrific violations of the human rights under the pretext of security"<sup>43</sup>, a fourth titled "Amnesty International: The Erdogan government undermines human rights".<sup>44</sup> Thus, the newspaper had aired everything, which undermines confidence in the Turkish regime and distorts its image.

### **The position of some Saudi media professionals and Officials from the crisis**

#### **Abdulrahman al-Rashed (former Editor-in-Chief of the Middle East Newspaper)**

He is one of the media professionals who worked on polishing the image of the Saudi crown prince and his current regime, and although he is a journalist known for his liberal orientations, he tried throughout the crisis to deny any relationship between the Saudi authorities and the killing of Khashoggi, saying in an article<sup>45</sup> that the crisis is basically an extension of a series of media and political battles directed against Saudi

Arabia to depict it as evil, or describe it as new North Korea or Russia.

He said also that the targeting of Saudi Arabia is expected because it is the locomotive state which leads the process of change, which will affect the vast geographical and human area from Indonesia to California.

#### **Turki al-Dakheel (General Manager of Al Arabiya)**

Al-Dakheel is also defending the position of the king and the crown prince about the crisis, saying Saudi Arabia took a clear position on the issue of the killing of Khashoggi as expressed by King Salman bin Abdulaziz and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman that the perpetrators will be punished and that the judiciary will take its course. Al-Dakheel said the media escalation of the crisis was aimed at undermining the kingdom and delaying its renaissance march and aborting the Vision 2030 set by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.<sup>46</sup> He added that there are many countries that do not want to see Saudi Arabia as a strong developed country, with a productive economy, a generous open society. Through his Twitter account, we find that he retweets every news or video that would shine the image of the crown prince and doing away with everything that can have negative impact on his image internationally by the killing.

#### **Ghassan Charbel (Editor of the Middle East)**

Ghassan Charbel, naturally, defended the Saudi position on the issue, arguing that the aim behind the interest in the case of Khashoggi was to create incongruity between Saudi Arabia and major countries with which it has relations of alliance or cooperation. In an article titled "the Painful incident... and the option of justice"<sup>47</sup> Charbel praised the Saudi position on the issue which directed the painful incident to its legal and judicial context through the option of justice and accountability. In another article, he consid-

ered that someone deliberately uses the accident to weaken Saudi Arabia<sup>48</sup>.

### **Matar al-Ahmadi (former Editor of Alarabiya.net)**

Matar al-Ahmadi has taken an offensive stance against Turkey and its president since the beginning of the crisis through a series of tweets on his official Twitter account<sup>49</sup>, for example, a tweet saying, “No love for Khashoggi, but those who promoted by Al-Jazeera, Qatar, Turkey, etc. were trying to make his death a commodity in the political bidding market and restore the Arab spring days” another “only in the Arabic Twitter account and not in Turkish Erdogan thanks Tamim for the politicizing the case of Khashoggi.” And a third claimed that “The Al-Hamads regime in Qatar put a huge budget to finance a Hollywood film, about the death of Jamal Khashoggi, representees receive the largest wage in Hollywood history. The scenario is overseen by the advisers of Erdogan, Hamad bin Khalifa and his son Tamim.” And a tweet accusing President Erdogan that he is a partner in the crime saying, “He wants to judge them in Istanbul because he is a partner in crime, who prepared its theater and attended the recordings. The accusers will explain his role. Instead of watching, why did not he stop the crime? “

### **Mohamed Tunisi (Director General of MBC Channels in Saudi Arabia)**

Mohamed Tunisi has taken the polishing of Saudi Crown Prince and published his tours and statements to enrich the content of his official account on Twitter<sup>50</sup>, as well as tweeting to answer any tweet, attacking Turkey and Qatar and casting doubt on all the Turkish news about the disappearance of Khashoggi and his death. From his account, he wrote, “because we are honored, we have never been involved in physical liquidation or kidnapping, even with those who have been harmed us.” What the evil people of

debauchery do. Another says, “The value of protesters in front of the Saudi Embassy in Washington is 400 dollars for half an hour and 800 dollars for full hour. We must notice how the enemies of Saudi Arabia exploit mercenaries.” The third says, “Our kingdom: transparency .. Facts .. Justice”, and other tweets that do not depart from political propaganda and polishing the face of the Saudi regime.

### **Badr al-Asaker (Director of Saudi Crown Prince Office)**

Badr Al-Asaker’s official account<sup>51</sup> was based on his position as director of bin Salman Office. The account was a record of all the meetings, travels, conversations and activities of Mohammed bin Salman. He went out a little bit more than once about the Khashoggi case, all of which was retweet to tell or republish the crown prince’s statements on the case. We find, for example, a tweet saying, “HH the Crown prince made a phone call with Salah Jamal Khashoggi, in which he expressed his condolences and sympathy to him and to all his family in the death of Jamal Khashoggi.” And another quoting the statements of the crown prince in the investment forum, “The incident of Khashoggi was exploited to create a rift between the kingdom and Turkey, and this is a message from this rostrum: they will not be able to do this as long as there is a king named Salman bin Abdulaziz, a crown prince Mohammed bin Salman and a president of Turkey named Erdogan.” Also Al-Asaker retweet “the US secretary of state says in a clear statement that there is no evidence linking Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to the killing of journalist Khashoggi “ This makes us consider that Al-Asaker were keen not to interfere himself in the case, especially since his name was firmly on the table as one of the accused in the incident from his position as director of the Saudi Crown Prince Office.

### **Analyzing the content of Saudi media handling of the crisis**

By analyzing the content of the Saudi Press’s

handling the crisis, we find that Saudi media processors, as we have previously stated, all agree that the one who fuels the issue, seeks to internationalize it and benefit from it is, according to the Saudi media vocabulary, related to Qatari media machine, Brotherhood media, Iran, regional and international media outlets which are sympathetic to these parties.

**The Saudi press has almost agreed to present several objectives for the international handling of the Khashoggi case we can summarize as:**

1. To achieve the agenda of Islamic groups.
2. Pitting international public opinion on Saudi Arabia.
3. Targeting trust in the kingdom.
4. Changing the world's positive outlook toward the kingdom.
5. Aborting Saudi Arabia's vision 2030
6. Undermining the file of succession, creating fundamental changes in the structure of the Saudi state and attempts to fragment it, and provoke internal conflicts.
7. Obtaining gains from under the table (in the words of a Saudi newspaper).
8. Influencing politicians in the world, to take positions against Saudi Arabia.

**After the kingdom acknowledged the killing of Khashoggi inside its consulate in Istanbul, the newspapers launched a campaign to defend the kingdom and the Crown Prince, which was based on the publication of media content as:**

1. In the case of Khashoggi, enemies of the kingdom found a chance to delay Saudi Arabia, which is improving at the speed of light to get a major international position.
2. Some of the parties seek to blackmail and bargain to achieve political and economic gains from Saudi Arabia.
3. Turkey considered the case as an opportunity

to rant the claims of justice and to defamation of Saudi Arabia.

4. The Turkish regime is leading the campaign to achieve an internal political victory that strengthens the AKP's standing, provides it good electoral prospects, and covers its internal failures and the country's economic deterioration.
5. Turkey seeks to be the heart of the Muslim world by beating Saudi Arabia as the leader of the Islamic world.
6. Aborting the Saudi role in beating Islamist political and terrorist currents, supported by Turkey and Qatar.
7. The king's directives and decisions following the unfortunate event of "Khashoggi" are a continuation of the state's approach to establishing the foundations of justice.
8. The persistence of Saudi media to attempts to cast doubt on Turkish information and the objectives behind it.
9. Saudi media tries to distort Turkey's image by publishing every word in the global media that deals negatively with Turkey.
10. Politicians in Western countries have mounted the wave in search of money and political interests for their countries.

## Conclusion

The killing of Khashoggi inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul has had a very negative impact on the reality and future of Saudi-Turkish relations, as there is now a significant deterioration in the relations between the two countries, manifested by intense incitement against Turkey and defamation in the Saudi media, so that most of it now adopted invitations to boycott Turkish tourism<sup>52</sup>, and Turkish products as a measure against its position on the issue. They also use social networking sites, especially Twitter, as a central instrument of their campaigns. Moreover, it invites its supporters not to buy Turkish products from the markets of the kingdom, with

the dissemination of information and pictures about the logos of Turkish companies and factories and its goods.

On the other hand, the Turkish president pursuit to bring the true culprits to justice to judge them in Turkey, his constant escalation of and threat to internationalize the issue is an evidence of an incompatibility between Turkey and Saudi Arabia on the investigation of the case by the Saudi authorities. This means that there are sharp differences between them now. In fact, President Erdogan himself admitted in his remarks on the air directly that if Turkey did not follow the case of the murder of the Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, the world would ignore it. He added that thanks to these efforts, the US Congress has acknowledged that a certain person is responsible for it<sup>53</sup> in reference to Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

But the official stance of Erdogan and the Turkish state is to avoid any direct crisis with

Saudi Arabia, and the emphasis is on good relations with Saudi Arabia as a country and the Saudi monarch as a king, but not necessarily with the regime or all officials.

For his part, the Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has made to flirt with Erdogan when he said at the investment forum “The incident of Khashoggi was exploited to create a rift between the kingdom and Turkey. And, this was what the crown prince Muhammed bin Selman met President Erdoğan with statements trying to make an advance with a message from the rostrum: they will not do this as long as there is a king named Salman bin Abdulaziz, a crown prince named Mohammed bin Salman and a president of Turkey named Erdogan”. However, the reality of the Saudi press today does not indicate a close rapprochement between the two countries or a reduction of the tension between them, but shows that the situation is ready for more escalation.

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