

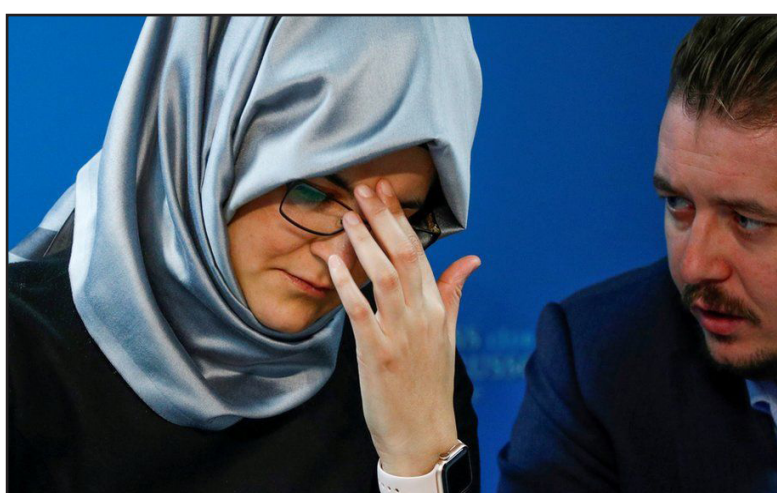
Khashoggi's Fiancée Criticizes Lack of Action Against Saudi Crown Prince

ISTANBUL (Dispatches) – The fiancée of brutally slain Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi said on Thursday that world leaders should not maintain relations with a “murderer”, after a U.S. intelligence report implicated Saudi Arabia’s de facto ruler in his killing.

Khashoggi, a critic of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, was last seen entering the Saudi consulate in Istanbul on Oct. 2, 2018. Turkish officials believe his body was dismembered and removed. His remains have not been found.

A U.S. intelligence report released last Friday said Prince Mohammed had approved the operation to kill or capture Khashoggi in Oct. 2018. The Saudi government has denied any involvement by the crown prince and rejected the report’s findings.

While Washington imposed sanctions on some of those involved, it spared the crown prince himself.



Hatice Cengiz, who was set to marry the murdered journalist, called on world leaders to take action against the Saudi crown prince.

Hatice Cengiz, Khashoggi’s Turkish fiancée who was waiting outside the consulate when he entered to retrieve documents for their upcoming marriage, said the report was “a very huge and important step” in the path to justice, but must be acted on.

“That it was said there would be no sanctions against the person who gave the order for the crime to be committed created a strange dilemma in everyone’s minds. But this could change in the coming days,” she told Reuters in an interview. “The process of seeking justice is

a long process, sometimes it is not easy.”

Khashoggi’s fiancée was speaking after the conclusion of a court session in Istanbul of the trial in absentia of 26 Saudi officials over the journalist’s assassination.

Khashoggi’s lawyer Ali Ceylan and Cengiz asked the judge to add the U.S. intelligence report to the case file.

However, the presiding judge rejected the request on the grounds that it would “bring nothing” to the trial, despite the fact that the U.S. report clearly concluded that MBS “approved” the operations since it fit a pattern of him “using violent measures to silence dissidents abroad.”

After the court hearing on Thursday, Cengiz told reporters that the U.S. report “directly attributes responsibility to the crown prince. Therefore, we want this to be taken into account by the court.”

The next hearing has been scheduled for July 8.

U.S.... (Continued From Page One)

a busy day scheduled for Thursday with votes into the evening. Police beefed up their presence in and around the Capitol. About 5,200 National Guard members remain in D.C., the remainder of the roughly 26,000 who were brought in for President Biden’s inauguration in January, which went off with no problems.

Rep. Michael McCaul, R-Texas, the former chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee and among those briefed about the new threat, said lawmakers were braced. “I think we’ll see some violence here,” he said in an interview.

But unlike on Jan. 6, the Capitol is now fortified against intrusions. “We have the razor wire, we have the National Guard. We didn’t have that January 6. So I feel very confident in the security,” he said.

Acting Capitol Police Chief Yogananda Pittman said during House testimony Wednesday that her investigators had collected “some concerning intelligence,” but declined to provide any details publicly, saying that it was “law enforcement sensitive” and that she would provide a private briefing for the subcommittee members.

The FBI and Department of Homeland Security also sent a joint intelligence bulletin to local law enforcement officials Tuesday that said a group of militia extremists had discussed trying to take control of the Capitol on March 4 and encouraging thousands of people to come to D.C. to try to remove Democrats from power.

So far, about 300 people have been charged with federal crimes for their roles in the riot. Five people, including a Capitol Police officer, died.

West... (Continued From Page One)

intelligence, and his son, Mahmoud, the deputy head of the General Intelligence Directorate (GID), place on mass surveillance of Egyptian citizens.

“The Egyptians are superbly placed to have access [to data on the cables], but are not considered a trustworthy or stable partner. It is not where you want to put slick high-end [surveillance] equipment,” said Campbell.

Despite its strategic importance, Egypt is not part of any wider SIGINT networks. The Five Eyes alliance has information-sharing arrangements in place with some European countries and Japan and South Korea, for example, to intercept data from Russia and China. The NSA also has a relationship with Sweden, because it is a landing point for all cable traffic from Russia’s Baltic region.

By contrast, the U.S. has less formal information-sharing relationships with the Middle East region including Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the UAE.

Secret Tapping

The Five Eyes could be tapping cables in Egypt or its territorial waters, however. Documents leaked by Edward Snowden in 2013 refer to a clandestine NSA base in the Middle East called DancingOasis, also referred to as DGO.

“It is extremely secret. Significantly it was built without [the host] government knowing, which is an immense risk to the Americans,” said Campbell. “Where it is located is pure guesswork. Candidate one is Jordan, then Saudi Arabia, and three, Egypt. Geographically the only other place would be Oman, from where Britain covers the Persian Gulf.”

The cables connecting Europe, Africa and Asia run across Egypt and then down the Red Sea to the Bab el-Mandeb strait between Yemen and Djibouti. The cables heading east veer off towards Oman. To the west of the capital Muscat is a GCHQ surveillance site in Seeb, with the code name Circuit.

“It is very close to where the submarine cables come in. Virtually all cables take a landfall between Seeb and Muscat. How convenient is that?” said Campbell.

Iran... (Continued From Page 2)

West Azerbaijan Province, was targeted by Saddam’s Iraq on June 28, 1987, when Iraqi bombers attacked four densely populated parts of Sardasht with fatal chemical gasses.

Sardasht was the third city after Japan’s Hiroshima and Nagasaki to become the target of weapons of mass destruction. At least 110 people were killed and 5,000 more were injured during the attack.

Iraq have launched over 350 large-scale gas attacks along the Iran-Iraq border between 1980 and 1988 on combatants and non-combatants, leaving behind over 107,000 victims.

As many as 2,600 of that total died at the time, and more than 45,000 others were left in permanent need of treatment.

Saddam possessed a huge arsenal of chemical weapons, which were reportedly produced using materials supplied by the U.S.

and other Western countries. Iranian officials have on numerous occasions urged the international community to bring the perpetrators to justice.

Al-Wefaq... (Continued From Page 2)

into the Israeli quagmire because joining such an alliance would bring catastrophic consequences upon them.”

Zionist prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu signed agreements with Emirati Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Bahrain’s Foreign Minister Abdulatif Al Zayani during an official ceremony hosted by former U.S. president Donald Trump at the White House on September 15 last year.

Palestinians, who seek an independent state in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip with East Jerusalem Al-Quds as its capital, view the deals as a betrayal of their cause.

The Zionist regime has significantly stepped up its much-criticized land grab projects since its normalization deals with the UAE and Bahrain — followed by Sudan and Morocco.

The UAE and Bahrain have also dramatically slashed their financial assistance to the UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) after the two Persian Gulf states agreed to normalize ties with Israel last August.

A member of Netanyahu’s cabinet and Likud party on November 23 last year confirmed reports that Netanyahu had flown to Saudi Arabia for a clandestine meeting with the kingdom’s Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman and then U.S. secretary of state Mike Pompeo.

Israel’s Kan public radio and Army Radio said Mossad chief Yossi Cohen also attended the meeting.

The Palestinian resistance movement Hamas denounced the meeting as an “insult” to the Palestinian cause. Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri described the Israeli premier’s meeting, which was reportedly held in Neom on Saudi Arabia’s Red Sea coast, as “dangerous”.

Envoy... (Continued From Page 2)

over Iran’s reduction of its nuclear commitments under Iran’s landmark nuclear agreement with world powers in response to the United States’ unilateral withdrawal from the deal, also known as the JCPOA.

The U.S.-backed draft resolution that voiced “serious concern” about Iran’s reduced cooperation with the IAEA was scrapped in a bid to make room for diplomacy. Britain, France and Germany had lobbied for the IAEA Board of Governors to adopt the resolution, but they were faced with a strong backlash from Iran.

“In this context, we welcome the prudence and vigilance shown by all members of the Agency, especially the members of the Board of Governors and the director general in their efforts to prevent the unnecessary tension and maintaining the already existing opportunity for diplomacy,” Gharibabadi said.

Former president Donald Trump withdrew the U.S. from the JCPOA on May 8, 2018 and imposed what he called the “maximum pressure” policy on Tehran. In response, Iran gradually reduced its nuclear obligations under the accord starting on May 8, 2019, but declared that its measures will be reversed as soon as the US honors its JCPOA commitments.

As part of its commitment reduction process, Iran halted last month its voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol that allowed the IAEA to carry out short-notice inspections at its nuclear facilities, prompting the agency director Raphael Grossi to visit Tehran to discuss the issue. During his visit, Tehran and the IAEA reached a technical understanding that was embraced by both sides.

Gharibabadi explained that under the technical understanding, Iran will keep the records of the data at some of its nuclear facilities for up to three months, so as to be able to provide the IAEA with the data if the U.S. sanctions are lifted by then. “Otherwise all collected data will be erased at the end of the third month,” he added.

Elsewhere in his statement, the Iranian envoy said while the previous U.S. administration failed in pursuing the maximum pressure policy, the new administration has yet to take practical measures to change course.

“As our Supreme Leader declared, we will look at the other participants’ deeds not words, and after corroboration of their actions we will also act accordingly and proportionally,” Gharibabadi said.

If the sanctions are all removed at once, the envoy reaffirmed, “we are ready to come back to full implementation at once.”

He also said it was not Iran that left the negotiating table of the Joint Commission of the JCPOA and it is upon those who want to rejoin the negotiating table to take proper practical steps to earn a seat at the table.

Lives of Youth ‘in Jeopardy’ in MENA: UNICEF

AMMAN (Al Jazeera) – A decade since Arab Spring protests rocked the Middle East and North Africa, many of its youth are in need and at risk, says the UN children’s agency’s regional director.

“After 2011, the lives and futures of children and young people have been put in jeopardy,” Ted Chaiban told the AFP news agency in an interview in the Jordanian capital Amman.

“This is a combined result of conflict and the fall of oil prices, which has narrowed opportunities for children and young people in the region.”

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region counts 124 million people aged 10-24 – just over a quarter of the whole population.

Chaiban said there were 38 million children and adolescents requiring assistance in the MENA region – “the highest number of children in need in the world”.

The region accounts for half of UNICEF’s worldwide humanitarian response appeals – “a significant increase since 2011” due to the political and economic developments, he said.

The region is also home to the world’s worst youth unemployment rates – 25 percent in the Middle East, and 29 percent in North Africa – according to Chaiban.

The jobless rates are higher for young females: 41 percent in the Middle East and 39 percent in North Africa.

The World Bank says the region will need to create 300 million new jobs by 2050, according to current demographic trends.

Countries “will need to begin

creating 800,000 jobs per month – starting right now – just to keep pace with new workers entering the market”, a World Bank official said in January.

From war-ravaged Libya to Syria and Yemen, the region has also been the scene of violence affecting thousands of young lives.

Of 28,000 “grave violations” the UN documented against young people worldwide in 2019, almost half took place in just seven countries or territories in the MENA region, Chaiban said.

Military Helicopter Crash in Southeast Turkey Kills 11

TATVAN (Dispatches) – An army helicopter crashed in southeast Turkey on Thursday, killing 11 military personnel and injuring two others, the defense ministry said.

The Cougar-type helicopter crashed near the village of Cekmece, close to the town of Tatvan, in the predominantly Kurdish-populated Bitlis province. It was on its way to Tatvan from the nearby province of Bingol when authorities lost contact with it at 2:25pm (11:25 GMT), the ministry said.

Nine of the victims died at the crash site, while two died of their injuries in hospital, officials said.

The victims included Lieutenant-General Osman Erbas, an army corps commander, said Devlet Bahceli, the leader of Turkey’s main nationalist party, on Twitter.

The defense ministry described the crash as accidental but did not elaborate.

Turkish media reports said Defense Minister Hulusi Akar, Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu, and senior military figures were travel-

ling to the site of the crash.

Television images from the site showed the ground blanketed with snow and visibility hampered by thick clouds hanging over the mountainous region.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan offered his condolences. “I pray for Allah’s mercy for our nine martyrs... Our pain is great,” Erdogan’s spokesman Ibrahim Kalin had tweeted earlier, when the death toll had been put at nine.

Iran’s Ambassador to Ankara, Mohammad Farazmand, also offered his condolences to the Turkish government and people, including the bereaved families, over the “painful” incident. Farazmand also wished swift recovery for those injured in the crash.

The area where the incident occurred is subject to regular Turkish military patrols and missions against Kurdish militants.

In 2017, a military helicopter crashed in the southeastern Sirnak Province near Turkey’s border with Syria and Iraq, killing 13 troops.

Criticism Over Law Change Limiting Egyptian Women’s Rights

CAIRO (Al Jazeera) – About 50 women’s organizations in Egypt have published a statement laying out basic principles regarding women’s legal rights amid growing controversy over a proposed bill to amend the country’s personal status law.

The statement, which was also signed by more than 100 individuals, came in response to local media reports that the Egyptian parliament will discuss a bill aimed at changing women’s rights and responsibilities around divorce and marriage.

The signatories agreed that five basic principles must be protected, including that any amendment must rely on the Egyptian constitution and human rights principles at its core.

It also called on lawmakers to ensure the law regarded women as having full legal capacity, thereby giving them equal rights and duties within family law as men.

Regarding marriage, the statement said the law should ensure that divorce is legalized only through a judge and that polygamy be

allowed only through a judge’s authorization following permission from a man’s first wife.

Finally, it called for ensuring the protection of children’s rights and interests as a legal obligation and priority in case of family conflicts.

The Egyptian Centre for Women’s Rights (ECWR), which signed the statement, said in a press release last month it rejected the articles of the draft law because they were unjust and regressive in their approach to personal status issues.

U.S. Denies Report of Potential Sanctions on Lebanese Central Bank Chief

BEIRUT (Reuters) – A U.S. State Department spokesperson denied on Friday that Washington was weighing sanctions against Lebanon’s long-serving Central Bank Governor Riad Salameh.

“We have seen reports about possible sanctions on Riad Salameh. They are untrue,” the spokesperson told Reuters.

A Bloomberg report on Thursday said the

United States was considering sanctions against Salameh amid a broader investigation into the alleged embezzlement of public funds, citing four people familiar with the matter.