

While President Continues to Play Dumb on Murder, 2016 Reporting Shows Saudis Only Blacklisted Khashoggi After Journalist Criticized... Trump

"So the Saudis murdered a journalist they previously banned for speaking badly about Trump, and now Trump refuses to condemn them for it."

By [Julia Conley](#)

Global Research, October 19, 2018

[Common Dreams](#) 18 October 2018

Region: [Middle East & North Africa, USA](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#), [Media Disinformation](#)

As a columnist for the Washington Post, Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi frequently criticized his home country's government—denouncing the country's [treatment of women](#) and most recently, in his final column published Wednesday, calling on Saudi officials to [embrace press freedom](#).

But as critics accuse President Donald Trump of conspiring with the Saudis to cover up Khashoggi's suspected murder, one journalist on Wednesday highlighted an article published in the *Independent*, weeks after Trump was elected in November of 2016—noting that Khashoggi's criticism of the Saudis wasn't the only thing that led the government to ban his work from appearing in his home country.

While the move was likely fueled by his outspoken criticism of the monarchy and its policies, the journalist was only blacklisted from working in the kingdom after criticizing Trump.

Los Angeles Times columnist Virginia Heffernan posted about her realization late Wednesday after coming across the [Independent article](#).

Just now realizing: Khashoggi was banned in KSA was not because he was critical of Mohammad bin Salman, the devastation of Yemen, Wahhabism, or the Salafi movement. It was because, ON NOVEMBER 10, 2016, in DC, Khashoggi mildly criticized...Donald Trump. <https://t.co/GeFh0nlJ0I>

— Virginia Heffernan (@page88) [October 17, 2018](#)

Citing the *Middle East Eye's* [reporting](#), the *Independent* published a story saying that Khashoggi spoke at the Washington Institute on November 10, 2016—the day after Trump won the presidential election—remarking that Trump's Middle East stances were "contradictory."

Soon after, a Saudi government source was quoted by the *Middle East Eye* as saying,

"The author Jamal Khashoggi does not represent the government of Saudi

Arabia or its positions at any level, and...his opinions only represent his personal views, not that of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.”

By early December, Saudi authorities had banned Khashoggi “from writing in newspapers, appearing on TV, and attending conferences” in the kingdom, leading the author to a self-imposed exile.

To several political observers on Twitter, the revelation that the Saudis had so directly come to the defense of Trump gave new meaning to the fact that the president is now attempting to shield Saudi Arabia from the international outrage that’s exploded in the 16 days since Khashoggi disappeared after entering the Saudi consulate in Istanbul—especially following [reports](#) that U.S. intelligence agencies had known of a Saudi plan to detain Khashoggi.

Mounting evidence has pointed to a murder by a “hit team” with links to MBS, but the Trump administration has criticized those accusing the Saudis of involvement, with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo [telling reporters](#).

“We ought to give them a few more days” to complete their own investigation and issuing a reminder that the Saudis “are an important strategic alliance of the U.S. and we need to be mindful of that as well.”

Here’s an unsettling historical footnote that now seems rather significant: Saudi Arabia banned Jamal Khashoggi for criticizing... Donald Trump. <https://t.co/wfdbL4IzM0>

— John Nichols (@NicholsUprising) [October 18, 2018](#)

Major element of this to remember: [#Khashoggi](#) was banned in 2016 from working in media in Saudi Arabia... because he criticized Trump. So the Saudis murdered a journalist they previously banned for speaking badly about Trump, & now Trump refuses to condemn them for it.

— Mark Hughes (@markhughesfilms) [October 12, 2018](#)

This may end up being more relevant than you think. <https://t.co/uGuJlEoEnL>

— Josh Marshall (@joshtpm) [October 18, 2018](#)

Khashoggi was banned from Saudi media **after being critical of Trump,** not the Crown.

US intelligence knew of the Saudis' plan to arrest Khashoggi and did not share that information with him.

This administration is criminally liable.

— Ally Maynard (@missmayn) [October 17, 2018](#)

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