

**MURDER OF SAUDI JOURNALIST DAMAGES RIYADH'S  
REPUTATION AND THREATENS M.E. "FAULT LINES"**

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Isranet Daily Briefing, October 25, 2018

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---

**[Khashoggi Disliked Israel, But His Brutal Murder Puts Jerusalem in Tough Spot:](#) Raphael Ahren, *Times of Israel*, Oct. 23, 2018— Jamal Khashoggi, the Saudi journalist who was brutally murdered in Istanbul earlier this month, was not fond of Israel, to say the least.**

**[What the Khashoggi Murder Means for the Middle East:](#) James M. Dorsey, *Algemeiner*, Oct. 24, 2018— The death of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi on the premises of the Saudi consulate in Istanbul threatens to upend the fault lines across the Middle East, and severely disrupt the US-Saudi alliance that holds together many of those fault lines.**

**[Egypt's War on the Muslim Brotherhood:](#) Dima Abumaria, *The Media Line*, October 18, 2018— Egyptian police released the 25-year-old son of former president Mohammed Morsi Wednesday after he spent less than 24 hours in detention on charges of joining an outlawed organization and publishing "fake news."**

**[Rumors Stoke Islamist Attacks on Egyptian Copts:](#) Hany Ghoraba, *IPT News*, Oct. 9, 2018— Islamists and jihadists in Egypt have targeted the Egyptian Coptic minorities for decades with bombings and mob attacks on Coptic churches, businesses and homes.**

***On Topic Links***

**[Canada Can't Just Avoid the Regimes it Doesn't Agree With, like Saudi Arabia:](#) Dennis Horak, *National Post*, Oct. 24, 2018**

**[The Ugly Terror Truth About Jamal Khashoggi:](#) Daniel Greenfield, *Breaking Israel News*, Oct. 17, 2018**

**[The Kingdom and the Power:](#) Elliott Abrams, *Weekly Standard*, Oct. 20, 2018**

**[Egyptian Christians, at Home and Abroad:](#) Lofty Basta, *Jerusalem Post*, Sept. 26, 2018**

**KHASHOGGI DISLIKED ISRAEL,**

**BUT HIS BRUTAL MURDER PUTS JERUSALEM IN TOUGH SPOT**

***Raphael Ahren***

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---

[\*Times of Israel\*](#), Oct. 23, 2018

Jamal Khashoggi, the Saudi journalist who was brutally murdered in Istanbul earlier this month, was not fond of Israel, to say the least. "The Jews are without history in Palestine. Therefore, they invented the Wailing Wall, which is a Mamluk structure," he tweeted in 2015. Khashoggi also opposed Saudi Arabia's covert cooperation with Israel, arguing that Riyadh did not need it and that any ties with the Jewish state would unnecessarily tarnish his country's reputation in the wider Arab world, according to Professor Joshua Teitelbaum, an expert on Saudi Arabia at Bar-Ilan University who knew Khashoggi well.

"He wasn't a friend of Israel, but he had no problems meeting with and speaking to Israelis," recalled Teitelbaum, who last saw the slain writer last year, when they had coffee on the sidelines of a conference on the Middle East in Washington.

In one of his last public appearances, Khashoggi, who had ties with the Muslim Brotherhood, confirmed that Riyadh had grown closer to Jerusalem. But he added that the kingdom had "backtracked on some of the more recent pro-Israeli positions it has taken," according to Middle East Monitor, which hosted him at a conference in London less than a week before he entered the Saudi consulate in Istanbul where he met his death.

Khashoggi's cruel murder, and the regime's amateurish attempts to cover it up, have caused immeasurable damage to the international prestige of Saudi Arabia and its de facto ruler Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. The fact that the US and other Western countries are considering punishing Riyadh — Germany has already frozen scheduled deliveries of arms to the kingdom — casts a deep shadow not only over Israel's clandestine relationship with the kingdom but also over international efforts to keep Iran in check.

For one thing, American and Israeli leaders hoped that MBS — as the crown prince is known — and his ostensible pro-Israel disposition could help force the Palestinians into concessions necessary for peace. Furthermore, the erosion of Riyadh's international standing may negatively affect its role as one of the main regional powers standing up to Iran's quest for nuclear weapons and other belligerent behavior. Mutual enmity toward Tehran, it is worth noting, brought Israel and Saudi Arabia closer in the first place.

"Israel is in a very difficult situation," said Dan Shapiro, a former US ambassador

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---

to Israel. "It wants and needs Saudi Arabia to be a reliable anchor of this regional coalition to confront Iranian aggression, and it's faced with a reality that the current Saudi leadership has been proven unable to fulfill that role." No other Arab country could replace Saudi Arabia in the region's anti-Iran coalition, but MBS has proven to be "extremely reckless, impulsive and untrustworthy," added Shapiro, who today is a fellow at the Institute for National Security in Tel Aviv.

Khashoggi's gruesome murder and the ongoing lies about it are only the last in series of bad decisions made by the crown prince, Shapiro said, which include bombing Yemen without concern for civilian casualties, imposing a siege on Qatar, detaining Lebanese prime minister Saad Hariri, picking a fight with Canada over a Tweet about human rights, and rounding up dissidents. MBS "frequently acts on limited knowledge and poor judgment," and the various scandals he has dragged his country into weaken the kingdom and undermine its relationship with its allies, Shapiro charged.

The US should not sever its relationship with the kingdom, as it plays a vital role in America's efforts to rein in Iran, he said. However, "until there is a change of Saudi leadership, or at least a change in the style of Saudi leadership, the country's ability to play that role is significantly weakened." It remains to be seen how US President Donald Trump reacts as more and more details about Khashoggi's killing come to light, though he seems determined not let the affair get in the way of what he said was \$450 billion worth of Saudi investments. "But we're going to get to the bottom of it," he vowed Monday.

For Israel, the situation is somewhat trickier. On the one hand, it does not want to see Riyadh's position in the region diminished in favor of Tehran, or Ankara. (Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is believed by some to be seeing the Khashoggi murder as an opportunity to replace Saudi Arabia as the leader of the Sunni Islamic world.) On the other hand, Israel should be careful not be regarded as Riyadh's mouthpiece in the US and Europe, several analysts interviewed for this article warned.

"It would have significant negative reputational impact on Israel to be seen as the defender and as the explainer and as the advocate on of MBS after this brutal performance, which was followed by several weeks of lying — which actually still continues — about what happened in Istanbul," Shapiro said. Rather, all that's left for Jerusalem to do is quiet diplomacy in a bid to try sustain "whatever can be sustained" regarding security cooperation with Saudi Arabia, he added. But there

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isranet-publications

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<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/murder-of-saudi-journalist-damages-riyadhs-reputation-and-threatens-m-e-fault-lines/>

---

can be no doubt that the Khashoggi affair “has weakened a central pillar of Israel’s strategic concept in the Middle East in a way that Israel can’t do very much to repair it. That’s the damage in having such an unreliable Saudi leadership as we currently unfortunately have.”...

*[To Read the Full Article Click the Following [Link](#)—Ed.]*

[Contents](#)

**WHAT THE KHASHOGGI MURDER MEANS FOR THE MIDDLE EAST**

*James M. Dorsey*

[Algemeiner](#), Oct. 24, 2018

The death of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi on the premises of the Saudi consulate in Istanbul threatens to upend the fault lines across the Middle East, and severely disrupt the US-Saudi alliance that holds together many of those fault lines.

An investigation into Khashoggi’s fate mandated by members of the US Congress and a possible meeting between President Donald Trump and the journalist’s Turkish fiancée, Hatice Cengiz, could result in a US and European embargo on arms sales to Saudi Arabia, which would also impact the kingdom’s brutal proxy war with Iran in Yemen, portray Saudi Arabia as a rogue state, and call into question US and Saudi allegations that Iran is the Middle East’s main state supporter of terrorism.

Those allegations were a key reason for the US withdrawal — with the backing of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Israel — from the 2015 international agreement that curbed Iran’s nuclear program, and for the re-imposition of crippling economic sanctions on Tehran. An investigation into the role of the Saudi leadership in the death of Khashoggi would also undermine the 15-month-old economic and diplomatic boycott of Qatar, a country that Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt, and Bahrain accuse of supporting terrorism.

Furthermore, a condemnation and sanctioning of Saudi Arabia by the international community would complicate China’s and Russia’s efforts to avoid being sucked into the Saudi-Iranian rivalry. Those two countries will be at a crossroads if the

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REPUTATION AND THREATENS M.E. "FAULT LINES"**

isranet-publications

Isranet Daily Briefing, October 25, 2018

<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/murder-of-saudi-journalist-damages-riyadh-reputation-and-threatens-m-e-fault-lines/>

---

**Saudi government is proven to be responsible for Khashoggi's death and the issue of sanctions is subsequently brought before the UN Security Council.**

**So far, both Russia and China have managed to maintain close ties to Riyadh despite their efforts to defeat US sanctions against Iran, and Russia's alliance with Iran on behalf of Syrian president Bashar al-Assad. A significantly weakened Saudi Arabia would also undermine Arab cover provided by the kingdom for Trump's efforts to impose a settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that would favor Israel at the expense of the Palestinians. Finally, a conclusive determination that Saudi Arabia was responsible for Khashoggi's death would likely spark renewed debate about the wisdom of the international community's support for Arab autocracy, which has proven unashamedly brutal in its violation of human rights and disregard for international law and conventions.**

**Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman has suffered significant damage to his reputation, raising the question of his viability if Saudi Arabia is condemned internationally. This raises the follow-up question of the stability of the kingdom, which is a key tenant of US, Chinese, and Russian Middle East policy. The damage suffered by Prince Muhammad embarrasses UAE Crown Prince Muhammad bin Zayed, who, together with his aides and representatives in world capitals, has worked hard to project his Saudi counterpart as the kingdom's future.**

**Saudi Arabia did itself few favors by initially flatly rejecting any responsibility for Khashoggi's disappearance; asserting that claims that it was involved were fabrications by Turkey, Qatar, and the Muslim Brotherhood; seeking to defame Khashoggi's fiancée and supporters; and refusing to fully cooperate with Turkish investigators. Saudi reluctance to cooperate, as well as the US investigation and Ms. Cengiz's possible meeting with Trump, complicate apparent Turkish efforts to find a resolution of the escalating crisis that would allow Saudi Arabia to save face and salvage Turkey's economic relationship with the kingdom.**

**Turkey, despite deep policy differences with Saudi Arabia over Qatar, Iran, and the Muslim Brotherhood, has so far refrained from releasing the evidence it claims it has proving that Khashoggi was killed by Saudi agents inside the consulate. The release of gruesome details of the killing by anonymous Turkish officials appears designed to pressure Saudi Arabia into complying with Turkey's demands and efforts at managing the crisis. The death of Jamal Khashoggi is reshaping the political map of the Middle East. He paid a horrendous price for sparking the earthquake that is now rumbling across the region.**

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isranet-publications

Isranet Daily Briefing, October 25, 2018

<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/murder-of-saudi-journalist-damages-riyadhs-reputation-and-threatens-m-e-fault-lines/>

---

### **[Contents](#)**

#### **EGYPT'S WAR ON THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD**

*Dima Abumaria*

**[The Media Line](#), October 18, 2018**

Egyptian police released the 25-year-old son of former president Mohammed Morsi Wednesday after he spent less than 24 hours in detention on charges of joining an outlawed organization and publishing "fake news." Abdullah Morsi Mohammed Morsi, a graduate business student, posted a bail of 5,000 Egyptian pounds [about \$280] according to a statement by Attorney General Nabil Sadek. "The Attorney General decided to release Abdullah until further investigations take place into the charges against him," said Abdel-Moneim Abdel-Maqsoud, a member of Morsi's defense team.

Abdullah frequently posts updates on social media about his father's condition at the Tora maximum security prison, about eight miles south of downtown Cairo, as the family seeks more visitation rights and better health care for the jailed Brotherhood leader. The London-based Arabi21 website published an interview with Abdullah just days before his arrest detailing the conditions of the family's September visit at the prison.

Morsi is challenging a death sentence and 48 years in jail for five separate cases including espionage for Hamas, Hezbollah and Qatar as well as insulting Egypt's judiciary. The charge of joining a terrorist group refers to the Muslim Brotherhood, which was outlawed in 2013. Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, an Egyptian general who then became president, led a coalition to remove the elder Morsi from the presidential palace.

Egypt has been plagued by a violent insurgency since Sisi replaced Morsi. Egyptian officials have viewed the terrorist wave as part of a revenge campaign for the Brotherhood's ousting. Since 2013, the Egyptian army has also waged a fierce counter-terrorism operation against a Sinai-based Islamic State-affiliated group. It has seen an upsurge in attacks on the Coptic Christian community, as well as security personnel and senior officials in the Nile Valley. Last month, Sisi emphasized the need for a "global war" against terrorism during his address at

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isranet-publications

Isranet Daily Briefing, October 25, 2018

<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/murder-of-saudi-journalist-damages-riyadhs-reputation-and-threatens-m-e-fault-lines/>

---

the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

**"There is no doubt that the Arab region is one of the most vulnerable to the dangers of nation-state disintegration, and the ensuing creation of a fertile environment for terrorism and exacerbation of sectarian conflicts," Sisi declared at the UN. Cairo has been working to contain Islamists throughout Egypt, making no distinction between their political and armed wings. "Anyone who has anything to do with the Islamic movement can expect to be questioned and other times detained based on their activity within the movement," an Egyptian political observer close to the Sisi administration told The Media Line.**

**"Mohammed Morsi supported and promoted the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and beyond—especially in Syria by urging Muslims join a jihad against the government of Syrian President Bashar Assad. Sisi ended that and is cleaning up the mess caused by Islamist political groups in Egypt," the analyst added.**

**Ibrahim Haj Ibrahim, who heads the Political Science department at Birzeit University in Ramallah, believes the anti-terror rhetoric in Cairo is a core component of a Saudi-led effort, which includes Egypt and the UAE, to gain support for the ongoing boycott of Qatar, the Muslim Brotherhood's chief state backer in the region. "Saudi Arabia doesn't want any other regional power, but itself," Ibrahim told The Media Line. "Riyadh is doing the best it can to put the Muslim Brotherhood in the category of terrorism."**

### **[Contents](#)**

## **RUMORS STOKE ISLAMIST ATTACKS ON EGYPTIAN COPTS**

***Hany Ghoraba***

**[IPT News](#), Oct. 9, 2018**

**Islamists and jihadists in Egypt have targeted the Egyptian Coptic minorities for decades with bombings and mob attacks on Coptic churches, businesses and homes. Many are sanctioned by fatwas from radical clerics, Salafist preachers and Muslim Brotherhood muftis.**

**The latest attack took place Sept. 1 in Dimshaw, a village in southern Egypt's**

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REPUTATION AND THREATENS M.E. "FAULT LINES"**

isranet-publications

Isranet Daily Briefing, October 25, 2018

<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/murder-of-saudi-journalist-damages-riyadhs-reputation-and-threatens-m-e-fault-lines/>

---

Minya governorate. A mob of nearly 1,000 Islamists and Muslim radicals attacked Christians who gathered in a home to pray. Several homes reportedly were looted and set on fire. The mob claimed that the Christians didn't have a license, and a rumor spread that they are on the verge of building a new church. A Minya court released 21 of the 25 people arrested in the attack. Copts often take a passive approach to such crises. "Copts, by nature and by belief, are by far more accepting of death, fate, and all tragedies that befall them," said Egyptian writer and political analyst Azza Sedky. "When one of them dies, they believe he or she has gone to a 'better place.' Acceptance is key."

The 1956 Suez crisis generated xenophobia toward foreigners, driving many out of Egypt. The Muslim Brotherhood stepped up activities around that time and "began to play [its] tricks and the antagonism [against religious minorities] intensified, especially in rural areas," she said. Spreading rumors is a long-standing tactic for the Muslim Brotherhood. In 1947, for example, a Cairo police officer tried to stop an unlicensed Brotherhood political march. The protesters then spread a rumor that the officer tore a copy of the Quran, which triggered a riot in which he was killed. Brotherhood founder Hassan al-Banna blamed the slain police officer for not acting prudently.

A rumor spread by the Muslim Brotherhood in 1952 claimed that Copts in Suez were colluding with British occupation forces to kill Muslims. As a result, a mob stormed the city and burned several Copts alive, later throwing their bodies into a church which was then burned down. The "Suez Massacre" marked the beginning of a long series of assaults and killings of Copts based on rumors spread by Brotherhood and other Islamists. Rumors spread by Islamists claimed that Copts were importing arms from Israel and storing them in churches.

Since the June 2013 Revolution, Egypt's Christians have been blamed for Brotherhood President Mohamed Morsi's ouster, with Islamists leaders vowing that Christians will pay the price. They carried through on those threats in August 2013, immediately after the Egyptian army wiped out the Brotherhood's Rabaa armed encampment. Islamists torched 66 Coptic owned buildings, including 49 churches.

Major attacks against Copts continued. A December 2016 bombing at Cairo's St. Mark Church during Sunday Mass killed 29 people and injured 48 others. A twin bombing four months later targeted a Palm Sunday service the St. Mark Church in Alexandria and St. George Church in the Nile Delta City of Tanta north of Cairo. At



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REPUTATION AND THREATENS M.E. "FAULT LINES"**

isranet-publications

Isranet Daily Briefing, October 25, 2018

<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/murder-of-saudi-journalist-damages-riyadhs-reputation-and-threatens-m-e-fault-lines/>

---

least 45 people were killed and 126 injured. President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi immediately ordered that the targeted churches be rebuilt or repaired, sending a message that the government will protect its citizens. Nevertheless, that message has not yet led to stricter enforcement of laws on assailants and radicals who incite violence.

A new church building law aimed at helping Copts may actually create harm, said Mohamed Abu Hamed, the deputy head of the Egyptian Parliament's "Solidarity Committee," which is designated to introduce laws and recommendations for social justice. The law should have applied to all places of worship, he said, but covers only church construction.

Attacks on Copts have decreased in recent years after efforts to round up Islamist leaders, and Egyptian police raids on terrorist cells. Copts, however, still represent a top target for Islamists who don't believe that this minority should have the same rights and freedom to worship. The latest attack on Christians in Minya may indicate a return to a pattern of attacking Copts during prayers services. In July 2015, radicals attacked a house designated to the Copts as a church. Salafi radicals stoned those gathered, but fled when security forces arrived. They came back and threw Molotov cocktails at the gathered Copts.

For decades, local authorities approved "customary reconciliations" to resolve disputes, including those between Muslims and Christians. Community leaders, heads of families, tribe leaders and local authority figures meet to try to resolve conflicts without going to court. But they don't always produce just outcomes, Abu Hamed said.

"Despite the existence of an old judicial system that dates back to the times of the pharaohs, authorities still utilize the so called 'customary reconciliations' instead of applying the laws which is a blatant breach of the constitution and rule of law. What makes it worse is that these meetings are attended by security authorities, political leaders and governors among others," he said. "Some authority figures believe these meetings create a sort of equilibrium, or it provides them with political and social leverage. The second reason is they believe it is the easier way to contain matters in face of the Salafist groups and radicals." On a similar note, Coptic Bishop Macarius rejected all forms of unofficial reconciliation.

Conditions for Copts are improving despite these troubles, Sedky said, noting that "Sisi was the first president to attend mass on Christmas Eve in Egypt," a

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REPUTATION AND THREATENS M.E. "FAULT LINES"**

isranet-publications

Isranet Daily Briefing, October 25, 2018

<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/murder-of-saudi-journalist-damages-riyadhs-reputation-and-threatens-m-e-fault-lines/>

---

groundbreaking action countering Salafists who tell Egyptians not to shake hands with Copts. "However, as [with] everything else," she said, "it will take generations to overcome an ingrained hatred that was left to flourish for years."

The current atmosphere is still ripe for the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafists to spew their poisonous ideologies, lies and rumors, Abu Hamed said. He blames a tepid effort from Al Azhar - Sunni Islam's most prestigious institution - to reform religious curriculum; a significant Muslim Brotherhood and Salafi presence in key positions within state religious institutions; and Muslim Brotherhood control of mosques which spread hateful ideology despite a state ban...

[To Read the Full Article Click the Following [Link](#)—Ed.]

[Contents](#)

**On Topic Links**

**[Canada Can't Just Avoid the Regimes it Doesn't Agree With, like Saudi Arabia: Dennis Horak, \*National Post\*, Oct. 24, 2018](#)**—As the Trudeau government undertakes its announced review of Saudi-Canada relations, it needs to look past the recent horrific news and find an approach that aims to be truly effective by advancing legitimate Canadian interests along with its values.

**[The Ugly Terror Truth About Jamal Khashoggi: Daniel Greenfield, \*Breaking Israel News\*, Oct. 17, 2018](#)**—In high school, Jamal Khashoggi had a good friend. His name was Osama bin Laden. "We were hoping to establish an Islamic state anywhere," Khashoggi reminisced about their time together in the Muslim Brotherhood. "We believed that the first one would lead to another, and that would have a domino effect which could reverse the history of mankind."

**[The Kingdom and the Power: Elliott Abrams, \*Weekly Standard\*, Oct. 20, 2018](#)**—While the details of Jamal Khashoggi's death have not fully emerged, we know the essentials. He died at the hands of Saudi agents in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, and the decision to kidnap or kill him must have been taken at the top of the Saudi political structure. Whether crown prince Mohammed bin Salman asked "will no one rid me of this meddlesome journalist" or specified the methods to be used, he is responsible for Khashoggi's death.

**MURDER OF SAUDI JOURNALIST DAMAGES RIYADH'S  
REPUTATION AND THREATENS M.E. "FAULT LINES"**

isranet-publications

Isranet Daily Briefing, October 25, 2018

<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/murder-of-saudi-journalist-damages-riyadhs-reputation-and-threatens-m-e-fault-lines/>

---

**[Egyptian Christians, at Home and Abroad](#): Lofty Basta, *Jerusalem Post*, Sept. 26, 2018—Copts (Egyptian Christians) living in Egypt or in adoptive countries have common attributes - they are peace-loving, belong to strong large families with low divorce rates, have a lower mean age than the rest of civilized world, respect their elderly, value education and work, are always willing to help those in need, are courteous and use respectful non-obscene language.**