

Jamal Khashoggi's fiancée and pro-democracy group he founded sue Saudi crown prince in his slaying.

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The fiancée of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi and a human rights organization he founded shortly before his death have accused Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of ordering Khashoggi's killing to "permanently silence" his advocacy for democratic reform in the Arab world.

In a federal lawsuit filed Tuesday in Washington, D.C., Hatice Cengiz and Democracy for the Arab World Now (DAWN) alleged that Khashoggi was **tortured**, murdered and dismembered "pursuant to a directive of Defendant Mohammed bin Salman."

The crown prince and two dozen named co-defendants "saw Khashoggi's actions in the United States as an existential threat to their pecuniary and other interests and, accordingly, conspired to commit the heinous acts that are the subject of this suit," it said.

Attorneys Keith M. Harper and Faisal Gill, who are representing Cengiz and DAWN, said in a videoconference Tuesday with reporters that the focus of the lawsuit is to have a court of law in the United States hold Mohammed liable for Khashoggi's killing and to obtain documents in both Saudi Arabia and the United States that reveal the truth.

Cengiz, who also spoke during the videoconference, said that because Khashoggi advocated for democracy in the Middle East and human rights for all, "and especially because he advocated them in the United States, Mohammed bin Salman murdered him."

"Certainly, no one behind this most gruesome murder should have any role in becoming monarch," she said. "I ask the United States government — a nation that has stood for justice, accountability and human rights — I ask that you stand with me and all those who loved Jamal and say, 'We will support your efforts to fully uncover the truth and ensure that those responsible are found liable in a court of law.' "

A spokesman for the Saudi Embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The crown prince has previously denied ordering Khashoggi's killing. Saudi officials have asserted that the death was a tragic accident, carried out by rogue agents who disobeyed orders to persuade Khashoggi to return to the kingdom.

[Read the lawsuit here](#)

The CIA concluded in 2018 that Mohammed had ordered Khashoggi's killing, contradicting Saudi Arabia's insistence that the crown prince had no advance knowledge of the plot.

In a 61-page complaint, the plaintiffs recount how Khashoggi was killed by his government's agents two years ago, after becoming one of the Arabian Peninsula's most visible exiles and dissidents. His supporters recently remobilized DAWN, a project they said was dear to him, to expose abuses by governments in the Middle East, and in particular U.S.-allied nations such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt — three of the Trump administration's closest Arab partners.

Khashoggi was killed Oct. 2, 2018, after visiting Saudi Arabia's consulate in Istanbul to obtain documents that would allow him to marry. He walked into the mission despite the risk. In the months that preceded that visit, he had been writing columns for The Washington Post that were sharply critical of the crown prince, who effectively rules Saudi Arabia and has carried out a harsh crackdown on rivals and dissidents.

The journalist's death and dismemberment was first revealed by Turkey's government. The killing set off a wave of international revulsion and calls to ostracize Saudi leadership.

The kingdom prosecuted people it said were Khashoggi's killers in a trial broadly criticized by human rights groups, which noted that court sessions were closed to the public and that no senior officials were held to account.

President Trump has remained one of Mohammed's most steadfast defenders.

"I was able to get Congress to leave him alone," Trump said of Mohammed, according to a new book by journalist Bob Woodward.

In the lawsuit, DAWN and Cengiz's attorneys with the Jenner & Block and Gill law firms allege that Saudi officials banned Khashoggi from speaking and writing publicly after he criticized then president-elect Trump at a Washington think tank on Nov. 10, 2016.

"Furthermore, after Mr. Khashoggi warned on Twitter that Saudis should be wary of Trump, Defendant al-Qahtani informed him that he was 'not allowed to tweet, not allowed to write, not allowed to talk' and added 'You can't do anything anymore — you're done,' " the suit alleged, referring to Saud al-Qahtani, an influential media adviser to the crown prince.

Khashoggi's work in the United States is critical to the success or failure of the lawsuit, which must establish that events in any conspiracy leading to his death occurred in this country and that a U.S. judge has jurisdiction.

Foreign leaders are typically immune from civil suits in U.S. courts while in office. However, the plaintiffs sued under the Alien Tort Statute and a 1991 law called the Torture Victim Protection Act, which provides recourse in U.S. courts for violations of international law and for victims of "flagrant human rights violations," including torture and summary execution abroad.

In the news conference, Gill and Harper also said the crown prince is neither the head of state nor the head of the Saudi government, limiting any immunity claim.

Saudi Arabia's ambassador to the United States, at the crown prince's direction, assured Khashoggi that it would be safe for him to retrieve the document he needed at the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul, setting in motion events that led to his killing, the lawsuit asserts.

“Defendants’ actions were also purposefully aimed at the United States, as Mr. Khashoggi was a U.S.-resident journalist and human rights advocate,” the suit alleged. “Defendants acted with the intent to lure Mr. Khashoggi outside of the United States and murder him.”

The lawsuit is similar to a pending complaint filed two months ago in Washington [by Saad Aljabri](#), a former top Saudi intelligence officer and close U.S. intelligence ally. Aljabri has accused Mohammed of orchestrating a conspiracy that targeted him for assassination and took his children hostage because he has knowledge of damaging secrets about the prince's rise to power.