

Khashoggi's body parts transported in suitcases: Report

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Corpse of Saudi journalist was dismembered and put into five suitcases after he was strangled, Turkish daily reports.

Maher Abdulaziz Mutreb, right, entered Turkey through Ataturk Airport in Istanbul on October 2 [Sabah via AP]

Jamal Khashoggi's body was dismembered and put into five suitcases after he was strangled upon entering Saudi Arabia's consulate in Istanbul last month, according to a report by a Turkish pro-government newspaper.

Citing unnamed officials, Sabah reported on Sunday that the suitcases were then taken to the Saudi consul-general's residence near the consulate the day the journalist - a critic of Saudi Crown Prince [Mohammed bin Salman](#), also known as MBS - was killed on October 2.

The officials said that Maher Mutreb, Salah Tubeigy and Thaar al-Harbi were the three key figures from a 15-member hit squad reportedly involved in dismembering Khashoggi's body and removing it from the premises.

Mutreb was a direct aide to MBS, while Tubeigy was the head of the Saudi Scientific Council of Forensics and a colonel in the kingdom's army.

Al-Harbi was reportedly promoted to lieutenant in the Saudi royal guard last year for bravery in the defence of the crown prince's palace in Jeddah.

Sabah's report came 48 hours after Turkish President [Recep Tayyip Erdogan](#) said he believed that the order to kill the journalist came from the "highest levels" of the Saudi state.

Al Jazeera's Andrew Simmons, reporting from Istanbul, said on Sunday the latest information added detail to the picture being formulated by Turkish prosecutors who say Khashoggi was [strangled and dismembered](#) soon after entering the building.

Simmons said that Mutreb, a senior intelligence official, appeared to be leading the operation, while Tubeigy has experience in forensic pathology.

CCTV footage shows the three individuals travelled in a number of vehicles from the consulate to the consul-general's residence 200 metres away after Khashoggi's murder at about 3pm.

Less than two hours later, Mutreb is seen leaving the residence, according to the footage.

It is at the residence that they reportedly disposed of the body parts, although it is unknown how this was done.

"This is a looming question. No one knows where the body went," Simmons said. "One Turkish official is reported saying that there was acid used to dissolve the bodies; there's another report that the well shaft was used in the garden of the consul-general's residence - it is unclear," he added.

"There is a real concern now that the Saudis aren't being open enough with the Turkish investigators. Furthermore, on a political level, [there is] a big concern that world attention is beginning to wane somewhat on this whole case and whether or not the US is prepared to take firm action against the Saudis that Turkey wants to see."

With a joint Turkish and Saudi probe into Khashoggi's fate making [little progress so far](#), Erdogan on Friday called on Saudi Arabia to answer outstanding questions concerning the 59-year-old's killing.

"We must reveal the identities of the puppet masters behind Khashoggi's killing," Erdogan wrote in an opinion piece published by US newspaper The Washington Post.

'Dismembered and dissolved'

Also on Friday, Yasin Aktay, an adviser to Erdogan and a friend of Khashoggi's, said the team that killed the journalist cut up his body in order to dissolve for easier disposal.

"According to the latest information we have, the reason they dismembered his body is to dissolve it easier," he told Hurriyet newspaper.

"They aimed to ensure no sign of the body was left."

A senior Turkish official has told Al Jazeera the journalist's body was dismembered and dissolved in acid, without offering evidence.

Riyadh initially denied Khashoggi was killed inside its consulate but, following intense international pressure and after changing its narrative numerous times, the Saudi prosecutor admitted that Khashoggi was killed in a "premeditated" manner.

Still, Turkish officials have accused the Saudis of failing to answer questions regarding the case.

Two of them relate to the identity of a "local collaborator" to whom Saudi officials claimed to have handed over Khashoggi's remains, as well as the identity of the person who ordered the killing.

On Wednesday, a senior Turkish official said the Saudi side appeared unwilling to "genuinely cooperate" with Turkey's investigation.

"The Saudi officials seemed primarily interested in finding out what evidence the Turkish authorities had against the perpetrators," the official told AFP news agency on the condition of anonymity.

"We did not get the impression that they were keen on genuinely cooperating with the investigation."

The Saudis have also launched their own investigation, vowing to "uncover every stone" and "punish" those who are responsible.

A spokesperson for Erdogan's Justice and Development Party said on Wednesday Khashoggi's killing could not have been made possible without orders from someone in a senior position.

Omar Celik told reporters in Ankara that Turkey would not let anyone cover up Khashoggi's killing, adding that it was not possible for Saudi officials to still not know the body's whereabouts.