

## Saudi Crown Prince MBS Stripped of Some Powers?

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

Global Research, March 20, 2019

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

Theme: [History](#)

*Reports by London's [Guardian](#), Press TV, and other media suggesting it are unverified, the Guardian saying the following:*

**Mohammad bin Salman** (MBS) “has not attended a series of high-profile ministerial and diplomatic meetings in Saudi Arabia over the last fortnight and is alleged to have been stripped of some of his financial and economic authority,” adding:

“The move to restrict, if only temporarily...understood to have been revealed to a group of senior ministers earlier last week by his father, King Salman.”

Press TV reported that MBS was “stripped of some of his powers and has not attended...recent weekly cabinet meetings and...high-profile talks with visiting dignitaries,” including **Sergey Lavrov**, confirmed by Russia’s Foreign Ministry, adding:

**King Salman** appointed **Musaed al-Aiban** to oversee kingdom financial and investment decision-making.

On July 14, 2018, months before **Jamal Khashoggi**’s October 2 murder by an MBS hit squad in the kingdom’s Istanbul consulate, [Middle East Eye](#) reported the following:

“Twenty-four Saudi princes, including Deputy Crown Prince Muqrin Bin Abdulaziz, (met) with king Salman...in Mecca...in the absence of” MBS.

Separately, king Salman met with presidents and other officials of various nations in July last year. It’s unclear if MBS attended the meeting.

His absence from various high-level meetings may or may not be significant, no information from the kingdom either way.

He’s king Salman’s favorite son. There’s been no official word on whether he fell out of favor with his father over Khashoggi’s murder causing international furor and/or other activities he overseas.

Separately according to the NYT, Al Jazeera, and other media, MBS approved a secret initiative to eliminate Saudi dissidents at home and abroad, saying actions involve surveillance, kidnapping, detention, torture, and murder.

Citing unnamed US officials, [the Times](#) called the initiative launched in 2017 the Saudi Rapid Intervention Group, Khashoggi one of its many victims, unknown numbers more on its target

list.

According to the [Middle East Eye](#) (MEE), it broke the story last October, calling the Saudi hit squad the Firqat el-Nemr, or Tiger Squad, saying at the time:

“Jamal Khashoggi fell victim to its assassins. He wasn’t the first,” adding:

The Saudi hit squad “is well-known to the US intelligence services,” comprised of dozens of highly-skilled “intelligence and military operatives...(i)ts members...unflinchingly loyal to” MBS.

Citing what it called “a very well-placed (kingdom) source,” MEE said “(t)he tiger squad’s mission is to covertly assassinate Saudi dissidents, inside the kingdom and on foreign soil, in a way that goes unnoticed by the media, the international community and politicians.”

Assassinations are messy like Khashoggi’s elimination or disguised to appear accidental, deaths arranged by car crashes, house fires, deadly virus injections during routine medical visits, and other tactics.

The tiger squad reportedly eliminated at least a dozen Saudi dissidents since 2017. MEE called close MBS aide **Maher Abdulaziz Mutrib** “the spinal cord of the tiger squad...chosen by (the crown prince) who depends on him and is close to him.”

The Saudi Rapid Intervention Group tiger squad was named after deputy kingdom intelligence chief **Ahmed al-Assiri**, nicknamed “the Tiger of the South” – also called “the Beast” for involvement in the Yemen war.

Relieved of his duties for involvement in Khashoggi’s murder, the incident making world headlines for weeks, it’s not believed he was among the convenient kingdom patsies charged with the crime.

Last week, the Saudis claimed Khashoggi’s killers were punished, no names or details revealed – rejecting calls for an independent probe into his murder, adding the kingdom resolved the issue, according to high-level Saudi minister Bandar bin Mohammed al-Aiban.

Turning truth on its head, he called Khashoggi’s assassination an “unfortunate accident,” adding 11 Saudis were indicted.

So-called Saudi justice (sic) “operates pursuant to international law and it does so in all transparency (sic)...foreign interference (in the kingdom’s) domestic affairs or judicial system” rejected.

Saudi-style “justice” assures none at all. The same applies to the US, other NATO countries, Israel, and their imperial partners time and again.

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