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中國日報 CHINA DAILY » CHINADAILY.COM.CN/WORLD

Erdogan: Murder of writer was planned

Saudi FM says Khashoggi-style killing must 'never happen again'

By CHINA DAILY

Saudi officials murdered journalist Jamal Khashoggi in their Istanbul consulate after plotting his death for days, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Tuesday, contradicting Saudi Arabia's explanation that the writer was accidentally killed. He demanded that the kingdom reveal the identities of all involved, regardless of rank.

Saudi Arabia's foreign minister, meanwhile, said on Tuesday that the investigation into the killing of Khashoggi would produce the truth about what happened and that his country was committed to ensuring "that the investigation is thorough and complete and that the truth is revealed and that those responsible will be held to account".

Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir, in Indonesia, also pledged that mechanisms will be put in place so that "something like this can never happen again".

On Tuesday, Erdogan also said he wants Saudi Arabia to allow 18 suspects that it detained for the Saudi's killing to be tried in Turkish courts, set-

ting up further complications with the Saudi government, which has said it is conducting its own investigation and will punish those involved.

"To blame such an incident on a handful of security and intelligence members would not satisfy us or the international community," Erdogan said in a speech to ruling party lawmakers in parliament.

"Saudi Arabia has taken an important step by admitting the murder. As of now we expect of them to openly bring to light those responsible from the highest ranked to the lowest and to bring them to justice," the Turkish president said.

Erdogan's speech was previously pitched as revealing the "naked truth" about Khashoggi's slaying. Instead, it served merely to put a named source to information already circulated by anonymous officials and the Turkish press in the days since the columnist for The Washington Post walked into the Saudi consulate in Istanbul.

However, he kept pressure on the kingdom with his demands for Turkish prosecution of the suspects as well as punishment for the plot's masterminds.

"All evidence gathered

shows that Jamal Khashoggi was the victim of a savage murder. To cover up such a savagery would hurt the human conscience," he said.

Intensified skepticism

International skepticism has intensified since Saudi Arabia said on Saturday that Khashoggi died in a brawl. The case has shocked the world and raised suspicions that a Saudi hit squad planned Khashoggi's killing after he walked into the consulate on Oct 2, and then attempted to cover it up.

Before the announcement by Erdogan, top Turkish officials promised clarity on exactly what happened to Khashoggi and a stream of leaks to national and international media has increased pressure on Saudi Arabia, which is hosting a glitzy investment conference this week that many dignitaries have decided to skip because of the scandal.

On Monday, leaked surveillance video showed a man strolling out of the diplomatic post hours after Khashoggi disappeared into the consulate, apparently wearing the writer's clothes as part of a macabre deception to sow confusion over his fate.

AP and AFP contributed to this story.



Nguyen Phu Trong, general secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Central Committee, takes his oath of office after being elected as president of Vietnam during a National Assembly session in Hanoi on Tuesday. PHOTO BY REUTERS

Xi greets new Vietnamese president

By MO JINGXI

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President Xi Jinping on Tuesday sent a congratulatory message to Nguyen Phu Trong, general secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Central Committee, on his election as new president of Vietnam.

Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, said China and Vietnam are friendly neighbors and important partners with a long history of friendship.

Xi and Trong have visited each other's countries regu-

larly in the past few years, and as recently as 2017.

Xi said they have reached a series of important agreements on promoting the relations between the two countries and parties since last year.

The bilateral relationship has been improving, he said, and the two governments and ruling parties have been close in the exchange of governance experience, with deepening cooperation in various areas which has brought concrete benefits to their people.

Xi said he highly values developing mutual ties and is willing to use the opportunity

of the 10th anniversary of the establishment of comprehensive strategic partnership of cooperation to strengthen the political guidance of bilateral ties and push forward the relationship to a new level.

After being elected president, Trong on Tuesday afternoon took the oath.

Trong is the first Vietnamese leader to hold the two positions since founding president Ho Chi Minh in the 1960s. Trong was the first general secretary to visit former foe the United States when he met with president Barack Obama at the White House in July 2015.

Trong, born in 1944, holds a PhD in politics with specific field of party construction.

He has been a member of the CPVCC's Political Bureau since 1997. He served as chairman of the National Assembly from 2006 to 2011. He was elected CPVCC general secretary in 2011, and re-elected general secretary in 2016.

On Sept 23, two days after Vietnamese former president Tran Dai Quang passed away, Vice-President Dang Thi Ngoc Thinh became acting president.

Xinhua and AP contributed to this story.

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