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Myanmar rejects claims Indian forces cross border in pursuit of rebels



YANGON (Reuters) - Myanmar has rejected assertions that Indian armed forces entered the country earlier this week in pursuit of separatists, saying foreign fighters would never be allowed to use Myanmar territory to stage attacks.

Indian army soldiers carry a coffin containing the body of their colleague Sat Pal Bhasin, who was killed in an attack by tribal separatist guerrillas in Manipur, during his funeral on the outskirts of Jammu June 7, 2015. REUTERS/Mukesh Gupta

India's junior minister for information and broadcasting, Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore, said the army attacked rebels just over the border with Myanmar on Tuesday, underlining New Delhi's resolve to fight terrorism beyond the country's borders.

However a statement from the presidential office in Myanmar, citing information from troops in the northwest border region, said fighting had only broken out on the Indian side.

The strike was carried out in response to the killing of 20 Indian soldiers in an ambush in Manipur last week.

The Indian army said in a statement that it received intelligence that rebel forces were plotting more attacks.

The statement from the Myanmar presidential office denied that any outside forces were using Myanmar as a staging ground for attacks.

"Myanmar will never accept any foreign rebels using its territory and border area as a base," it said. "Myanmar is willing to negotiate and cooperate with the Indian government to handle the problem."

The statement said that India's Ambassador to Myanmar had met with the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs on Tuesday to "explain the situation," but gave no further details.

Reporting by Hnin Yadana Zaw in Yangon and Sanjeev Miglani in New Delhi; Writing by Timothy McLaughlin; Editing by Jeremy Laurence

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MONEY NEWS

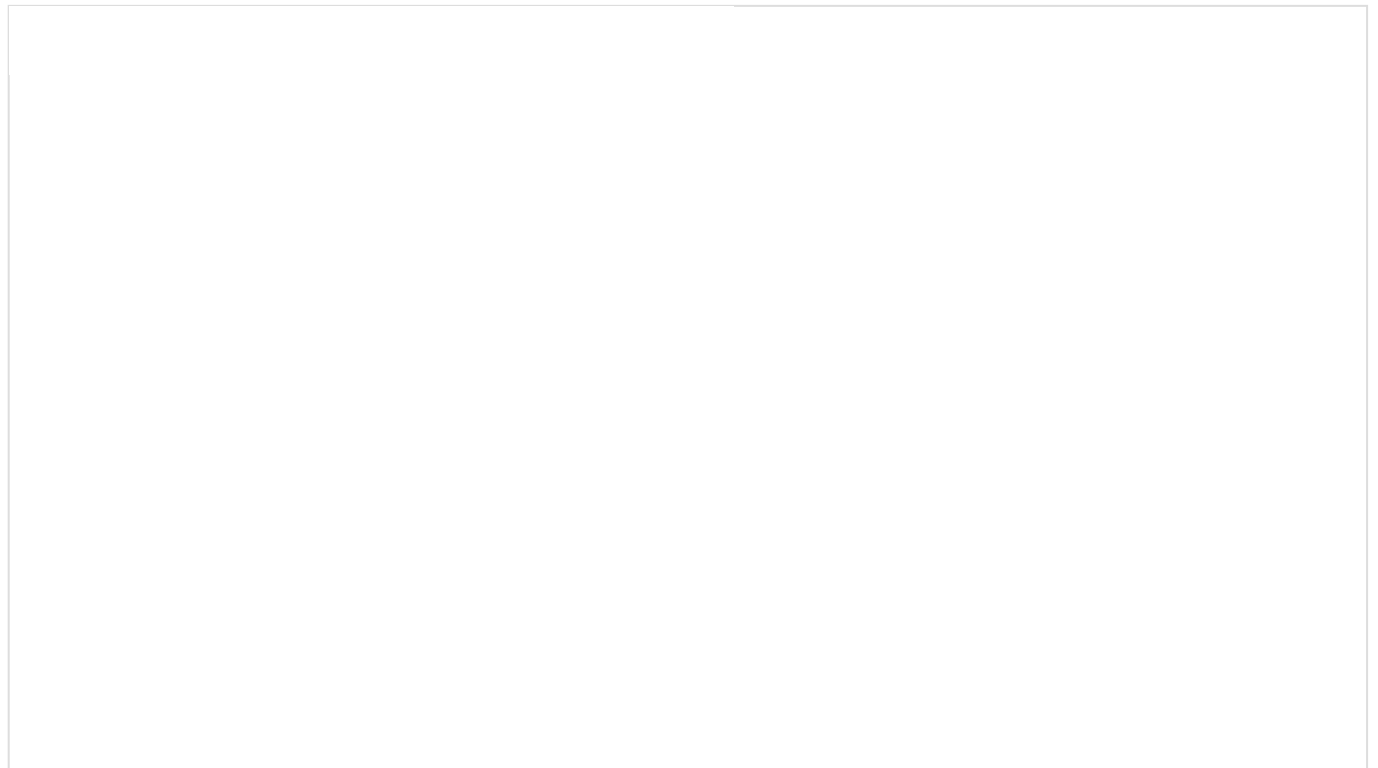
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Pompeo meets Saudi king on Khashoggi case, Turks study 'toxic materials'

Leah Millis, Osman Orsal



RIYADH/ISTANBUL (Reuters) - U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo met Saudi Arabia's king and crown prince to discuss the disappearance of journalist Jamal Khashoggi on Tuesday and Turkey's foreign minister said the envoy would bring information about the case to Ankara.



Khashoggi, a U.S. resident and leading critic of the Saudi crown prince, vanished after entering the Saudi consulate in Istanbul on Oct. 2. Turkish officials say they believe the Saudi journalist was murdered there and his body removed, which the Saudis strongly deny.

President Donald Trump, who dispatched Pompeo to Riyadh amid strained ties with the key ally, has speculated that "rogue killers" may be responsible after speaking with King Salman.

After talks with the king, Pompeo met Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir and will see Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman for a second time at a dinner. He is then expected to go to Turkey.

RELATED COVERAGE

[Pompeo meets Saudi king over Khashoggi case, Turks to search consul's residence](#)

Overnight, Turkish crime scene investigators entered the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, the last place Khashoggi was seen before vanishing, for the first time and searched the premises for over nine hours, Reuters witnesses said.

They will continue on Tuesday, expanding their search to include the residence of the Saudi consul as well as consulate vehicles, Turkey's Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said.

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan, speaking to reporters in parliament, raised the possibility that parts of the consulate had been repainted since Khashoggi disappeared. "The investigation is looking into many things such as toxic materials and those materials being removed by painting them over," he said.

The case has provoked an international outcry against the world's top oil exporter, with media and business executives pulling out of an investment conference next week.

HSBC CEO John Flint backed out on Tuesday, as did the CEOs of Standard Chartered and Credit Suisse.

During the initial consulate search, CNN reported on Monday that Saudi Arabia was preparing to acknowledge Khashoggi's death in a botched interrogation, after denying for two weeks any role in his disappearance.

The New York Times, citing a person familiar with the Saudi plans, reported the crown prince had approved an interrogation or abduction of Khashoggi. It said the Saudi government, which could not be reached immediately for comment on the reports, would shield the prince by blaming an intelligence official for the bungled operation.

Cavusoglu said Turkey had “not received a confession” yet from Saudi Arabia over Khashoggi’s disappearance, but added that he expected Pompeo to bring fresh information from Riyadh when he arrives in Turkey.

Turkish authorities have an audio recording indicating that Khashoggi was killed in the consulate, a Turkish official and a security source have told Reuters, and have shared evidence with countries including Saudi Arabia and the United States.

Human rights activists hold pictures of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi during a protest outside the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul, Turkey October 9, 2018. REUTERS/Osman Orsal/Files

CONSULATE SEARCH

Some 10 Turkish investigators left the consulate before 5 am (0200 GMT) after searching the premises overnight, and a Turkish prosecutor departed around 1-1/2 hours later, followed shortly after by a Saudi team.

Forensic vehicles took away soil samples as well as a metal door from the garden, a Reuters witness said. A police dog was part of the search team.

“The Turkish crime scene investigators carried out searches in the consulate and took the things deemed necessary,” a senior Turkish official said, after acknowledging the difficulty of collecting evidence 13 days after the alleged incident.

The U.N. human rights chief on Tuesday said immunity on diplomatic premises and officials should be lifted for the Khashoggi investigation.

Trump has threatened “severe punishment” if it turns out Khashoggi was killed in the consulate, but ruled out cancelling arms deals worth tens of billions of dollars. European allies have urged accountability for those responsible.

Many members of the U.S. Congress, which has long had a testy relationship with Saudi Arabia, have issued strong criticism of the kingdom.

Saudi Arabia has said it would retaliate against any pressure or economic sanctions “with greater action,” and Arab allies rallied to support it.

The Saudi riyal, rebounded early after falling to its lowest in two years over fears that foreign investment could shrink. Saudi stock index was down 3 percent in early Tuesday trade before it recouped some losses for a decline of 0.5 percent by 0949 GMT.

The chief executive of Clariant, which has Saudi Basic Industries Corp (SABIC) as its anchor shareholder, said rising tensions about Khashoggi could hit the Swiss speciality chemicals maker.

A TV journalist reports outside the Saudi Arabia's consulate in Istanbul, Turkey October 13, 2018. REUTERS/Murad Sezer

FAMILY STATEMENT

Khashoggi, a familiar face on Arab talk shows, moved to Washington last year fearing retribution for his criticism of Prince Mohammed, who has cracked down on dissent with arrests.

The insider never shied away from criticising Saudi policies but gained prominence in many circles, including as an adviser to former Saudi intelligence chief Prince Turki al-Faisal.

Members of Khashoggi's family have called for "an independent and impartial international" investigation.

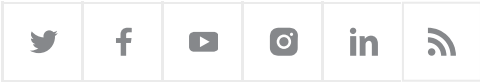
Khashoggi's fiancée Hatice Cengiz, who was waiting outside the consulate the day he disappeared, tweeted a Koranic verse warning those who kill on purpose, with the hashtag "Jamal is the Martyr of the Word".

A pro-government Turkish daily published preliminary evidence last week from investigators who it said had identified a 15-member Saudi intelligence team that arrived in Istanbul on diplomatic passports hours before Khashoggi disappeared. One of the names matches a LinkedIn profile for a forensic expert who has worked at the Saudi Interior Ministry for 20 years.

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