



Society of Environmental Journalists

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March 24, 2021

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President Joseph R. Biden Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

The Society of Environmental Journalists (SEJ) calls on you to speak forcefully and publicly assigning culpability and responsibility for the murder of the Saudi Arabian journalist and Washington Post columnist, Jamal Khashoggi.

Khashoggi, a critic of the Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and his policies, was murdered for exercising his human right of freedom of speech—something that is guaranteed under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. A recent report by the U.S. Office of the Director of National Intelligence stated that the crown prince approved an operation in Istanbul, Turkey, to capture or kill Khashoggi.

SEJ appeals to you to consider the wide-ranging consequences of remaining silent on this issue – not only for journalists at home and abroad but also for the integrity of democratic principles. SEJ is the world's largest professional organization dedicated to supporting environmental journalism, with 1,500 members in 46 countries. We previously signed on to a joint statement of 35 journalism groups that called for the government of Saudi Arabia to [investigate the disappearance of Khashoggi](#) from the Saudi Arabian consulate in Istanbul in October 2018.

SEJ now joins the Society of Professional Journalists, the Committee to Protect Journalists and others in calling for the Biden administration to hold the Saudi government accountable for this atrocity. For the sake of civilized society everywhere, press freedom must be upheld worldwide, not just in the U.S. No person or nation should be allowed to get away with committing or ordering violence against journalists, who perform an essential role in informing the public.

On the campaign trail, you clearly stated you intended to take action against those responsible for killing Khashoggi. When asked in a 2019 presidential debate about punishing senior Saudi officials, you replied, "[They have to be held accountable.](#)" You recently spoke out forcefully to condemn hate crimes against Asian-Americans. "Our silence is complicity," you said. "We cannot be complicit. We have to speak out. We have to act."

For the same reason, we call on you to fulfill your campaign pledges and hold accountable all those responsible for the murder of Jamal Khashoggi — including the one who gave the order.

Sincerely,

Sadie Babits, President, Society of Environmental Journalists