

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

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March 15, 2022

H.E. Yasir Othman Al-Rumayyan
Governor of the Public Investment Fund
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Your Excellency,

We write again to request your response to allegations of serious human rights violations associated with the Saudi Public Investment Fund (PIF) that came to light in 2021. Human Rights Watch is an independent nongovernmental organization concerned with human rights issues in over 100 countries around the world. We regularly reach out to government and business leaders to share our human rights concerns so that we may reflect their views in our reports. We would appreciate your response to the below questions in writing by **March 21, 2022**.

Human Rights Watch has reviewed internal Saudi government documents submitted to a Canadian court as part of an ongoing legal claim filed in early 2021 by a group of Saudi companies against a former intelligence official. The documents showed that in 2017, one of Mohammed bin Salman's advisors ordered the "supervisor" of the PIF, which we understand was your position at the time, to transfer 20 companies into the PIF as part of the country's "anti-corruption campaign."

Human Rights Watch reported extensively on the November 2017 [corruption crackdown](#), which included the detention of dozens of prominent businessmen, royal family members, and current and former government officials for three months at the Ritz Carlton Hotel in Riyadh. While the people were in detention, the authorities pressured them to hand over assets to the state in exchange for their release outside of any recognizable legal process. Some of those detained in November 2017 remain in [detention without](#)

[charge](#) to this day.

The Saudi documents also [indicated](#) that one of the 20 companies transferred into the PIF, apparently by yourself, on the orders of Mohammed bin Salman was Sky Prime Aviation, a charter jet company, which owned the two planes later used by Saudi agents to travel to Istanbul, murder prominent journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the country's consulate, and return to Saudi Arabia. In February 2021, the [CIA released a report](#) assessing that Mohammed bin Salman had approved the operation.

In late January 2022, following the sale of Newcastle United Football Club (Newcastle F.C.) to the PIF, the [New York Times reported](#) that a Saudi plane transported Newcastle players and staff to Saudi Arabia for winter workouts. The plane was operated by a Saudi company, Alpha Star, which court documents show that you were also ordered to transfer into the PIF alongside Sky Prime in December 2017. Both companies have been subsidiaries of Tahakom Investments Company before and after the parent company was acquired by the PIF. A photo of the plane posted by the [Newcastle F.C. Twitter account](#) on January 24 clearly shows the [Alpha Star aircraft livery](#).

Given the seriousness of the abuses described above, which have already been reported publicly by international media outlets, we ask your response to the following questions:

1. Did you transfer Sky Prime Aviation, Alpha Star and associated entities into the PIF following the launch of the anti-corruption crackdown in 2017?
2. Court documents reveal that you transferred companies to PIF ownership on the basis of a royal directive. Could you share a copy of that royal directive with us? If not, please describe on what terms and according to what procedures the transfers were conducted.
3. Did you play any role in the running of the Sky Prime Aviation in 2018? If not, who oversaw the company at the time?
4. Was the PIF leadership aware that Saudi agents used Sky Prime Aviation assets to carry out the mission targeting Jamal Khashoggi in October 2021?

5. Did the PIF conduct an investigation into Sky Prime Aviation's role in the murder of Jamal Khashoggi? If so, please describe the findings of the investigation.

We would welcome any comments or information you wish to provide about these matters. I may receive any response or request for clarity to this letter by **March 21, 2022**, via email at xxx@hrw.org and xxx@hrw.org.

Michael Page
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Middle East and North Africa Division
Human Rights Watch