

# UK documentary exposes Saudi role in global terror operations

By Jean Shaoul  
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ITV's *Exposure: Saudi Arabia Uncovered* portrays the horrific brutality with which the House of Saud maintains its rule and has been the subject of intense media commentary.

Much of this focuses on the documentary's depiction of how dissent is suppressed in collaboration with the Wahhabi religious police, including public beheadings, crucifixions, stoning, amputations and 1,000 lashings, as well as gratuitous police violence on the street.

In contrast, the media has been almost silent about the exposure of the Saudis' export of religious hatred and funding of terrorism that took up about one quarter of the film's airtime. This omission is politically motivated.

The programme explained that the Saudi ruling family had spent \$70 billion exporting its particularly repressive form of Islamism through books, the media, Islamic welfare institutions and charities.

It reiterated that there was evidence of Saudi involvement in the terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon in 2001, noting that 15 of the 19 suspects were Saudi citizens, while Al Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden was a member of a prominent Saudi family.

It then referred to the Saudi High Commission for Relief of Bosnia and Herzegovina (SHC), ostensibly a charity for the relief of Bosnian Muslims during the Balkan wars in the 1990s, which had collected £375 (\$600) million by 2001. The largest fundraising effort undertaken in Muslim and Arab countries, it was a front organisation for Al Qaeda in the Balkans and was used to facilitate arms shipments to break a United Nations embargo on the former Yugoslav states from 1991 to 1996. Jihadists attached to the SHC carried out a car bomb attack in 2001 after the war had ended, in an effort to reignite the war.

The SHC was set up by prince, now king, Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, who was the Saudis' chief fundraiser

for the mujahedeen in Afghanistan in the 1980s and later the Bosnian Muslims in the 1990s, at the direction of his brother, King Fahd. His role was to fund the Islamic mercenaries used in the US and its regional allies' proxy wars in the Middle East and Asia. Salman helped to recruit fighters for Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, an Afghan fighter who trained Osama bin Laden and the self-confessed mastermind of the 9/11 attacks, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, providing them with generous funding.

In 1996, a CIA report identified the SHC as one of several Saudi "charities" that "employ members or otherwise facilitate the activities of terrorist groups operating in Bosnia."

A Defense Intelligence Agency report concluded that the Al Qaeda-affiliated Somali warlord responsible for the massacre of US military forces during the battle of Mogadishu—the subject of the movie *Black Hawk Down*—received "weapon shipments from the Saudi Arabian High Commission for Relief."

Although it was well known that the SHC employed and covered for Jihadi terrorists in Bosnia, Afghanistan, Somalia and elsewhere, US forces did nothing until after the 9/11 attacks, when NATO forces raided the office in Sarajevo. There it discovered a horde of terrorist materials, including maps highlighting government buildings in Washington, notes about meetings with bin Laden, and plans for an attack using crop duster planes.

Relatives of the 9/11 victims have filed claims for billions of dollars in damages from companies, countries and organisations, accusing them of aiding Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups in the hijacking of the planes. So close were the SHC's links to the Saudi government that they have cited Saudi Arabia, Prince Salman and other members of the ruling family, as defendants in their suits.

They charge that one of the defendants, Abdul Rahman Hussayen, had said he was a Saudi government official. He had entered the U.S. five days before the 9/11 attack

and moved from his hotel to another where three of the hijackers were staying.

Ali Ahmad Ali Hamad, a confessed former Al Qaeda member and employee of the SHC, testified for the 9/11 families that “the Saudi High Commission was extensively involved in supporting Al Qaeda’s operations in Bosnia.”

The lawsuit argued that there were repeated warnings from US and European officials that SHC and similar charities were serving as fronts for terrorist organisations, but the Saudi authorities did nothing.

Between 1992 and 1995, Western intelligence officials discovered that the Third World Relief Agency (TWRA) spent most of its funds arming fighters aligned with the Bosnian government. At least \$120 million came from Prince Salman’s personal bank accounts and the SHC.

In 1994, French interior minister Charles Pasqua, who had oversight of French intelligence operations, told his Saudi counterpart, Prince Naif, that he had evidence that the Muslim World League, a Saudi government-funded charity to promote Islam, was funding terror cells in France.

In 1998, US intelligence told the Saudis that employees of a Saudi government-affiliated charity, al-Haramain Foundation, may have been involved in the bombings of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

In 1999, following these attacks, then-vice president Al Gore appealed to Saudi crown prince Abdullah to help the Clinton administration stem Al Qaeda’s flow of money. US officials flew to Riyadh on two occasions to give their Saudi counterparts lists of suspect Saudi charities, money exchanges, banks and suspected terrorism financiers.

US Treasury documents show that another terrorist-front organisation with close links to the Saudi government, the International Islamic Relief Organisation (IIRO), set up branches in the Philippines in the 1990s. One of its directors there was Mohammad Jamal Khalifa, Osama bin Laden’s brother-in-law and a senior Al Qaeda member.

The US Treasury designated both the Philippine and Indonesian IIRO branches as conduits for channelling money to Al Qaeda and other radical groups. A 1996 CIA report said the IIRO had financed six militant training camps in Afghanistan in the 1990s.

Despite this and other evidence, the US government has consistently covered up the involvement of the Saudi ruling clique, which is one of its key allies in the Middle East. Senator Robert Graham of Florida, chairman of the congressional joint inquiry into 9/11, said that during the

inquiry the FBI repeatedly stonewalled efforts to subpoena a Muslim academic and FBI informant who had housed the hijackers. He said, “That is one of the major unanswered questions of 9/11: Why the administration tried to disguise the role of the Saudis.”

The authorities also intervened to block the lawsuit and prevent the evidence against King Salman and the Saudi ruling family seeing the light of day. In September 2015, the US courts dismissed the families’ claims against the Kingdom, citing “sovereign immunity.” In 2008, a US court ruled that even if the Saudis retained their immunity, there was enough evidence to proceed against several Islamist charities, banks and alleged terrorism financiers named in the lawsuit.

These revelations provide a devastating exposure of the fraudulent nature of the “war on terror,” which has provided the axis for the last 15 years of US and British foreign and domestic policy. In particular, they point once again to the degree to which the CIA, MI5 and other intelligence agencies must have had foreknowledge of terror attacks that were then used to legitimise and then step up repressive measures directed against the working class, most recently in Belgium.

The 9/11 attacks were used by the Bush administration and the British government as the pretext for war against Afghanistan, whose government had provided shelter to Osama bin Laden, but had no involvement in 9/11, and against Iraq, which had no connection to either 9/11 or Al Qaeda.

Saudi Arabia, on the other hand, remains a key ally. Britain has supplied the Saudis, who spend more on arms in proportion to its GDP than any other state, with £5 billion in weaponry since 2010, and trains its police force. With consummate cynicism, Colonel Richard Kemp, former Head of International Terrorism, told ITV, “We don’t approve of what Saudi Arabia does, we don’t like what they do, but they are a necessary evil in combating other regimes. And of course, ultimately they have a lot of oil.”

*View the ITV documentary here: [Exposure: Saudi Arabia Uncovered](#)*

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