

## Newly Released Documents Show Saudi Ruling Family Support for Al-Qaeda

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Noel Brinkerhoff



Even if a lawsuit by families of those who died during the September 11, 2001, attacks is not successful in court, the effort may result in shedding light on long-alleged connections between al-Qaeda and the Saudi royal family.

Lawyers representing more than 7,000 Americans have obtained internal Treasury Department documents showing that the International Islamic Relief Organization, a prominent charity heavily backed by Saudi royalty, had supported terrorist organizations until 2007.

The plaintiffs' legal team also obtained testimony from a self-described al-Qaeda operative in Bosnia who said another charity, the Saudi High Commission for Aid to Bosnia, provided money and supplies to al-Qaeda in the 1990s.

Still another witness, in Afghanistan, has sworn that he witnessed an emissary for a leading Saudi prince, Turki al-Faisal, hand a check for one billion Saudi riyals (about \$267 million) to a top Taliban leader in 1998. Al-Faisal later served as ambassador to the United States.

And there is a confidential German intelligence report that purportedly shows tens of millions of dollars in bank transfers made in the early 1990s by Prince Salman bin Abdul Aziz and other Saudi royalty to another charity that was suspected of financing militants in Pakistan and Bosnia.

Only a small portion of this evidence has been entered into the court record for the 9/11 lawsuit, which twice has been rejected by federal courts and is now waiting for the U.S. Supreme Court to decide whether to hear the case. Legal observers don't expect that to happen, following the Obama administration's decision to side with the lower court rulings that said the Saudis were immune from U.S. civil litigation.

Other, potentially more powerful evidence linking the Saudi royal family to terrorist organizations may be contained in classified American intelligence documents that were given to the plaintiffs' attorneys. Upon learning of this disclosure, the Justice Department had these papers destroyed, and it is seeking to keep them from surfacing before a federal judge. There is also a 28-page, classified section of the 2003 joint congressional inquiry into the Sept. 11 attacks that supposedly discusses intelligence on Saudi financial links to two of the 9/11 hijackers.

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