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9/11 Families Take Groundbreaking Action to Expose Terrorist Financing Schemes, Cut Off Money Pipeline

First Major Action Against al Qaeda Bankrollers

Banks, "Charities," Sudan government, Members of Saudi Royal Family Named

WASHINGTON, D.C., August 15 — Seeking to expose the flow of money fueling terrorists and shut it off for good, more than 500 family members and survivors of the September 11th attacks today filed the first major legal action against seven international banks; eight Islamic foundations, "charities" and their subsidiaries; individual terrorist financiers; the Saudi bin Laden Group; three Saudi princes; and the government of Sudan for bankrolling al Qaeda, Osama bin Laden and the Taliban.

"We will move terrorist financing schemes out of the shadows and into the light of day," said Thomas E. Burnett, Sr., father of Thomas E. Burnett, Jr., 38, one of the heroes of United flight 93. "We will expose for the world the shady underbelly behind the atrocities of 9/11, leaving those with evil intentions nowhere to hide and no place to escape accountability.

"As my son Tom told his wife Deena from the cabin of flight 93, 'we're going to do something,'" Burnett said. "Today, we're going to do something."

"We will cut off the financial pipeline that fuels terrorism here and around the world," said William Doyle, father of Joseph Doyle, 25, who worked in the World Trade Center. "We will leave them high and dry, their bankrollers broke and bereft. We will demand accountability and uphold the rule of law. And, above all, we will make our nation and world safer and more secure."

April D. Gallop told the harrowing story of how she and her then 2½ month-old son, Elisha, survived the Pentagon attacks, in explaining why she had joined this action. "We will hold those who bankroll terrorism accountable, win justice for the families and survivors, and send a clear and unmistakable message around the world — that anyone who finances, supports

or enables terrorists will pay a fearsome price,” she said. “This action is a profoundly patriotic act because we are exercising uniquely American rights and because we will help protect Americans from future acts of terrorism. Proud as I was to receive the Purple Heart, I will be even prouder when we bankrupt the sponsors of terrorism and bring them to justice.”

The action, *Burnett et al v. Al Baraka Investment and Development Corporation et al*, charges the defendants with 15 counts under the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act, Torture Victim Protection Act and Alien Tort Claims Act; violations of the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act; and tort claims, including Wrongful Death and Conspiracy. The plaintiffs, 9/11 Families United to Bankrupt Terrorism, seek damages sufficient to punish the defendants and deter them from ever again funding terrorist activities.

“Plaintiffs invoke the rule of law to hold those who promoted, financed, sponsored, or otherwise materially supported the acts of the barbarism and terror inflicted on September 11, 2001, accountable for their deeds,” charges the complaint, filed today in United States Court for the District of Columbia. “By taking vigorous legal action against the financial sponsors of terror, the plaintiffs will force the sponsors of terror into the light and subject them to the rule of law.

“This civil action seeks to hold those responsible for a more subtle and insidious form of terrorism, that which attempts to hide behind the facade of legitimacy,” the complaint continues. “These entities, cloaked in a thin veil of legitimacy, were and are the true enablers of terrorism.”

“We have every reason to believe that the defendants in this action are still funneling, laundering and sending money to al Qaeda, whose spokesperson recently claimed ‘the right to kill four million Americans — two million of them children’ and to use ‘chemical and biological weapons,’” said Ron Motley, attorney for the plaintiffs. “This action is not only about justice and accountability — it is about protecting all Americans from the future atrocities these barbarians are planning.”

“Scott Turow said it best,” said Allan Gerson, quoting from Turow’s description of the struggle of the Pan Am 103 families in their quest for justice, as recounted in Gerson’s “The Price of Terror.” “‘The heroes and the families’ victims have persevered in using the law to fight back and their experiences hold an important example for us in how law and reason can triumph

over terror, and how unwavering resolve can lead to justice.’ The families of 9/11 are now joined in that same quest for justice through the rule of law. And they, too, will prevail.”

“I used to tell workers on my construction sites, when people would come around trying to sell stolen goods, ‘The man who stole it is a sinner, but the man who buys it is an even bigger sinner,’” said Matthew Sellitto, father of Matthew Carmen Sellitto, 23, who died in the World Trade Center. “The terrorists who killed my son are sinners, but the people who gave them the money are even bigger sinners. You don’t give them the money, they can’t do the wrong.”

Terry Strada, widow of Thomas Strada, 41, who died in the World Trade Center, said, “Terrorism must be seen for what it is, an act of cowardice against innocent people. An act of hatred toward each and every one of us. We must not just speak out against it, we must act out against it, and this is what we and our counsel, Ness Motley, are doing.”

Two members of the Saudi royal family named in the complaint are Prince Turki al Faisal al Saud and Prince Sultan bin Abdul Aziz al Saud. The complaint alleges that in 1998, Prince Turki agreed not to extradite Osama bin Laden and other al Qaeda members from Afghanistan and to provide generous assistance to the Taliban in exchange for bin Laden’s agreement not to use the Afghani infrastructure to undermine the Saudi government. It also alleges that Prince Sultan has donated at least \$6 million since 1994 to four “charities” that finance al Qaeda.

Members of 9/11 Families United to Bankrupt Terrorism are from the states of Arizona, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas and Virginia; the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico; and the nations of Argentina, Canada, France, Paraguay and South Africa.

The large, experienced legal and investigative team behind this action includes:

- Ron Motley and his firm, Ness Motley, which led the state attorneys general legal fight against Big Tobacco that resulted in the historic \$350 billion settlement with the states. Recipient of awards from the National Association of Attorneys General and the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, Motley and his firm are also pioneers in litigation against the asbestos industry and other mass tort claims.
- Allan Gerson, the nation's premier expert in bringing terrorists to justice through the courts, having broken new legal ground in helping the families of those who lost their lives on Pan Am Flight 103 pursue their claims against Libya.
- Jean-Charles Brisard, lead investigator, who recently authored the most exhaustive study ever completed on the financial network of the bin Laden organization. "The Economic Network of the bin Laden Family," commissioned by the French government, was used to crack down on fraudulent Islamic charities operating inside France. He is an expert on business, corporate and diplomatic intelligence.
- Attorneys Harry Huge, Jack Cordray, and the firms of Russo, Scarnardella & D'Amato; Ramey, Haley & Riley; Hanly & Confroy; Mellon, Webster & Shelly; and Howarth & Smith — all of whom are leaders in complex mass tort and international litigation.

The banking defendants in this case are Al Baraka Investment and Development Corporation, National Commercial Bank, Faisal Islamic Bank, Al Rajhi Banking and Investment, Al Barakaat Exchange LLC, Dar Al Maal Al Islami, and Al Shamal Islamic Bank.

The "charitable" and foundation defendants are the International Islamic Relief Organization, Sanabel Al Kheer, Inc., Muslim World League, Saar Foundation, Rabita Trust, Al-Haramain Islamic Foundation, Inc., Benevolence International Foundation, the World Assembly Of Muslim Youth, and a host of associated individuals, organizations and subsidiaries.

The individual defendants include Osama bin Laden, Tarik bin Laden, Khalid bin Salim bin Mahfouz, Abdulrahman bin Khalid bin Mahfouz, Saleh Abdullah Kamel, Mohammed al Faisal al Saud, Turki al Faisal al Saud, Sultan bin Abdul Aziz al Saud, Sulaiman bin Abdul Aziz al Rajhi, Saleh Abdul Aziz al Rajhi, Abdullah Sulaiman al-Rajhi, Khalid Sulaiman al-Rajhi, Yassin Abdullah al Kadi, Mohammad Jamal al Khalifa, Adel Abdul Jalil Batterjee, Aqueel al-

Aqueel, Abdullah bin Saleh al Obaid, Abdul Rahman al Swailem, Wa'el Hamza Jalaidan, and Abdullah Omar Naseef.

The other defendants are the Saudi Bin Laden Group and the Republic of Sudan.