

Tony Blair Confirms Receiving Millions in Donation From Saudi

By [Middle East Monitor](#)

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Tony Blair's relationship with Saudi Arabia has come under scrutiny following the revelation that the non-government organisation set up under his name has received millions of pounds from Riyadh.

Accounts published yesterday by the Tony Blair Institute confirmed earlier reports that Blair had received donations of up to \$12 million from the Kingdom.

The Saudi donation, according to the *Financial Times*, comes from an organisation called Media Investment Limited (MIL), which is a subsidiary of Saudi Research & Marketing Group, registered in Guernsey.

Publication of the accounts confirmed July reports that Tony Blair Institute had made an agreement with Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman, effective ruler of Saudi Arabia, earlier this year to help with a programme of modernisation for the Kingdom.

The agreement was said to be the first major deal to have emerged involving the Tony Blair Institute, which Blair established in 2016 after winding down his commercial operations.

The report in the *Telegraph* prompted the institute to defend its dealing with the Saudi Kingdom saying that the former prime minister did not receive any payment from Riyadh and profits are not generated from its consultancy work. They insisted that their mission was to promote stability and reform in the Middle East – with staff based in the UAE, a key ally of Saudi Arabia.

Following the revelation, questions were raised over some of the institute's decision, including Blair himself, who supported UK intervention in Syria; a policy that would have primarily benefited the Saudi-backed opposition groups.

Blair's institute also wrote flattering articles about Bin Salman during the crown prince's [visit to the UK](#) early year.

“Britain should learn from Saudi Arabia and how it has demonstrated a clear commitment to tackling the politicisation of Islam to inform policymaking,” one article read.

It also endorsed Bin Salman's vision.

“As part of his broad, sweeping and ambitious plans to revolutionise Saudi Arabia, economically, socially and religiously, the crown prince has demonstrated a level of conviction, clarity and coherence in identifying and understanding the nature of Islamist extremism that Western policymakers should seek to learn from.”

Despite the glowing endorsement, a key plank of Bin Salman’s vision has come off the rail. In August [King Salman](#) stepped in and shelved his son’s plans to float a five per cent stake in the country’s national oil company. Furthermore Riyadh has seen some of the worst repression in the country under the current ruler, as [progressive imams](#) and [female campaigners](#) face capital punishment for their criticism of the ruling monarchy.

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