

Re: “Real Housewives of Dubai” and UAE Misogyny, Homophobia, and Violence Against Women

May 25, 2022

Andy Cohen, Executive Producer
Real Housewives of Dubai
Bravo

Steve Burke, Chairman
Jeff Shell, Chief Executive Officer
Ellen Stone, Executive Vice President
NBCUniversal

Glenda Hersh, Steven Weinstock, Lauren Eskelin, and Chelsey Stephens, Brenda Hurley, Nikki Borrelli, Chachi Senior
Executive Team
Truly Original

Dear Andy Cohen, Steve Burke, Jeff Shell, Ellen Stone, Glenda Hersh, Steven Weinstock, Lauren Eskelin, Chelsey Stephens, Brenda Hurley, Nikki Borrelli, and Chachi Senior,

We are deeply concerned by your decision to produce and launch the latest edition of the Real Housewives series in Dubai. Dubai is an absolute monarchy that is part of the dictatorship of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). By setting the Real Housewives franchise inside Dubai, you are helping the UAE dictatorship hide its male rulers’ misogyny, legalized homophobia, and mass violence against women.

We urge you to take the following immediate steps to clearly demonstrate your opposition to the women’s rights violations, homophobia, and horrifying violence in Yemen that have been perpetrated by the rulers of Dubai and the United Arab Emirates (UAE):

- 1. Reveal** whether the rulers of Dubai and the UAE funded or financed the Real Housewives of Dubai in any way.
- 2. Run a disclaimer:** Announce at the start of each Real Housewives of Dubai episode that you oppose the UAE and Dubai dictatorship’s misogyny, homophobia, women’s rights violations, and war in Yemen.
- 3. Publicly donate** a portion of your profits from the Real Housewives of Dubai series to independent human rights organizations that are working to stop the UAE and Dubai dictatorship’s human rights violations, including its war in Yemen.

4. **Teach Real Housewives fans** about the UAE and Dubai's dismal human rights record and how they can help stand up for women's rights and LGBTQ equality. Publish online resources for fans and hold a Dubai human rights session at [BravoCon](#), the Bravo convention for fans that is this October 14-16 in New York City.

As has been widely documented, the rulers of Dubai and the UAE have a dreadful human rights record that includes many examples of women's rights violations and homophobic policies:

Dubai ruler's kidnapping of his own adult daughters:

A British court [has ruled \(see paragraph 62\)](#) that Dubai's ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum has been personally involved in the [international kidnapping and detention of his own adult daughters](#), Sheikha Shamsa and Sheikha Latifa, both of whom had attempted to escape Dubai.

Sheikha Shamsa has not been seen since 2000, when she was kidnapped to Dubai after attempting to escape from the ruling family's UK estate. Her current condition is unknown. Sheikha Latifa [was kidnapped](#) back to Dubai after attempting to escape in 2018. After the [UN demanded proof](#) that she was still alive, Sheikha Latifa was finally able to [meet with a UN official in Paris](#).

Dubai ruler's abuse of his ex-wife:

A British court found that Dubai's ruler Sheikh Maktoum [was guilty of intimidating and harassing his former wife](#), Jordanian Princess Haya bint al-Hussein, who was granted sole authority over their children after seeking refuge with them in the UK. A British court ordered Dubai's ruler [to pay his ex-wife and their children over \\$700 million](#), in part to cover the cost of protecting them from him.

No investigation of UAE minister accused of rape:

UAE ruling family member and government minister Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan [has been accused of rape](#) by British national Caitlin McNamara. The UAE dictatorship has not investigated or prosecuted Nahyan, thus allowing an accused rapist to remain in a senior government role despite a well-documented accusation of sexual assault.

UAE's homophobic laws and criminalization of LGBTQ people:

The new UAE criminal code continues to [criminalize consensual sexual acts](#) such as "sin or indecency," all of which can be easily used to target gay or lesbian couples and target LGBTQ communities.

UAE's contribution to the deaths of thousands of women in Yemen:

The UAE dictatorship has [contributed to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Yemeni civilians, including many women](#), through its participation in Saudi Arabia's bombing and blockades of the neighboring country of Yemen. Millions more Yemeni women have faced malnourishment and lack of basic reproductive health care as a result of the Yemen war, in which UAE and Saudi Arabian attacks are a major factor. A UN report ([paragraphs 639-640](#)) documented multiple cases of rape and sexual violence by a UAE-backed militia in Yemen.

Conclusion:

As these examples reveal, the dictatorship of the United Arab Emirates and Dubai is a deeply flawed choice for the Real Housewives series. By producing and launching the Real Housewives of Dubai, you risk providing the rulers of the UAE and Dubai with the soft propaganda they need to hide their human rights crimes from the world. We urge you to immediately take the above steps to demonstrate your rejection of the human rights violations, homophobia, and predatory male behavior of the rulers of the United Arab Emirates and Dubai.

Sincerely,

Freedom Forward
Action Corps
Clearinghouse on Women's Issues
CODEPINK
European Centre For Democracy and Human Rights
FairSquare
Health Advocacy International
Human Rights Sentinel
Just Foreign Policy
Last Mile4D
Peace Action
ReThinking Foreign Policy