

Re: NBA Abu Dhabi Games and UAE Dictatorship's Human Rights Crimes

Freedom Forward • Pax Christi USA • Clearinghouse on Women's Issues • Peace Action
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Last Mile4D

October 3, 2022

National Basketball Association Commissioner Adam Silver
Atlanta Hawks Principal Owner Tony Ressler and Head Coach Nate McMillan
Milwaukee Bucks Principal Owners Marc Lasry, Wes Edens, Jamie Dinan; and
Head Coach Mike Budenholzer

Dear NBA Commissioner Adam Silver; Atlanta Hawks Principal Owner Tony Ressler; Milwaukee Bucks Principal Owners Marc Lasry, Wes Edens and Jamie Dinan; Atlanta Hawks Head Coach Nate McMillan; and Milwaukee Bucks Head Coach Mike Budenholzer,

We are deeply concerned by your decision to hold and participate in the [NBA Abu Dhabi Games](#) on October 6th and 8th between the Atlanta Hawks and Milwaukee Bucks.

Abu Dhabi is an absolute monarchy that is part of the dictatorship of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Indeed, Abu Dhabi's ruler, Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, is also the head of the UAE. By holding these pre-season NBA games in Abu Dhabi, you are helping the male rulers of the UAE hide their violence against women, their homophobic laws, and their brutal war in Yemen.

We urge you to take the following immediate steps to clarify your opposition to the UAE rulers' record of rape, kidnapping, spousal abuse, homophobia, and war:

1. Condemn the UAE dictatorship's brutal war in Yemen, which has killed hundreds of thousands of civilians.
2. Denounce the UAE rulers' kidnapping of their own adult daughters, including Dubai's Princess Shamsa, who has not been seen in 22 years.
3. Call for an investigation of Sheikh Nahyan, the UAE minister accused of rape.
4. Condemn UAE Dubai ruler Sheikh Maktoum's record of spousal abuse.
5. Reveal whether the rulers of Abu Dhabi and the UAE funded or financed the NBA Abu Dhabi Games in any way.

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

UAE 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.

UAE 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 in Yemen:

Under the rule of Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the UAE has [contributed to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Yemeni civilians](#) 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 is a deeply flawed choice for the NBA's pre-season games between the Atlanta Hawks and Milwaukee Bucks. By holding these games in Abu Dhabi, you risk providing the rulers of the UAE, Abu Dhabi, and Dubai with the soft propaganda they need to hide their human rights crimes from the world. We urge you to immediately condemn the human rights violations, homophobia, and predatory male behavior of the rulers of the United Arab Emirates.

Sincerely,

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