



Saudi charities' dirty hands

[Stephen Schwartz](#)

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NEARLY five years after 9/11, Saudi Arabia's government-run charities still finance terror.

On Aug. 3, the Treasury's Office of Foreign Asset Control added two new entities to its roster of Global Terrorist Designations - the branches of the main Saudi government charity, the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO), in Indonesia and the Philippines. These groups, directed on the ground by Saudis, are now on the same Treasury list as organizations like Hezbollah, Hamas and al Qaeda itself.

The IIRO, as a Saudi state institution, draws money from obligatory Muslim charity, or *zakat*, donated by ordinary Saudi believers. It sets up camps in theaters of war, where Muslim refugees are indoctrinated in the ultra-extremist Wahabi interpretation of Islam. The IIRO also builds new mosques around the

world, run as Saudi enclaves, with Saudi clerics, Saudi-style preaching - and full programs for recruitment of extremists.

Indonesia and the Philippines are major theaters for radical Islamist violence, each featuring gross atrocities by al Qaeda affiliates. Jemaah Islamiyah in Indonesia was responsible for 2002 and 2005 bombings in Bali as well as similar horrors in that country's capital, Jakarta, and even in the nearby Philippines.

The Muslim-majority southern Philippines is targeted by the Abu Sayyaf movement, which has murdered American Christians and others in a bloody swath spilling into Malaysia. Jemaah Islamiya and Abu Sayyaf have coordinated their homicidal campaign, and Treasury, by listing the IIRO as it has, says the Saudi government-run organization

stands behind the terror offensive with money and personnel.

Five years after 9/11, new Saudi ruler King Abdullah says he hoped to see the country reformed. The Saudis also aspire to a role in Lebanon peacemaking.

Yet Saudi Arabia continues stonewalling on the vital issue of reorganizing its charities to end their support for terror. The rich Saudis who created al Qaeda still walk free in the kingdom. Saudi Arabia has no 9/11 commission and has given no

sign that it will ever establish one. Its rulers seem to believe they can wait out the American need for a full accounting of that day's crimes.

America needs Saudi Arabia's partnership for many reasons aside from energy. But the kingdom still must be called to order. In the war on terror, allies and friends must be trustworthy. The Treasury Department's latest action against the IIRO shows that the Saudi state and its official agencies remain far from meriting such confidence.