

Trump family signs \$1.6 billion branding deal with Saudi real estate developer

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The Trump family members: (from left) Eric, Don Jr., former President Donald Trump and Ivanka Trump are photographed at a groundbreaking ceremony for the Trump International Hotel

Washington, D.C. in July 2014, 11 months before Trump announced his presidential bid.

Palm Beach, November 18 (RHC)-- The family business of former U.S. President Donald Trump has signed a licensing deal worth \$1.6 billion with a real estate developer based in Saudi Arabia to build a resort in Oman, as the 76-year-old businessman-turned-politician prepares his return to presidential politics.

The Trump Organization, a group of about 500 business entities of which Donald Trump is the sole or principal owner, inked the deal with Dar Al Arkan, a Saudi real estate giant, to license its name to a housing and golf complex, the New York Times reported early this week.

The huge project - dubbed "Aida" - will be launched and completed near the capital Muscat, on a hillside adjacent to the Gulf of Oman, and will reportedly include 3,500 new homes and two hotels comprising 450 rooms, luxury retail destinations, as well as a golf course. The financial details of the agreement are not yet disclosed and designs for the development are not yet released.

"It is an honor to work with Dar Al Arkan, who share our vision for superior quality and excellence," the Trump Organization said in a statement. "This will be a truly magnificent project that integrates luxury living and world-class hospitality at the highest levels."

The news of Aida project, expected to be built over the coming decade, emerged as the former U.S. president already faces a string of investigations into his business, and according to the report, the deal is "renewing a swirl of questions about former President Donald J. Trump's mixing of politics and business."

The deal is the first such international marketing agreement the Trump Organization has negotiated since Trump left the White House and comes after he has forged close ties to Saudi government and the royal family during his presidential term.

The ex-president managed to sign off on billions of dollars of weapons sales to the kingdom, and also made Riyadh his first destination for a foreign visit as president. He also defended Saudi Arabia after the gruesome killing of Washington Post and Middle East Eye columnist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul in 2018.

Furthermore, Trump's son-in-law and former White House senior adviser Jared Kushner developed a close relationship with Saudi Crown Prince and de facto ruler Mohammed bin Salman, commonly known as MbS. Some six months after leaving the Trump administration, Kushner secured a \$2-billion investment from Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund, led by MbS.

The agreement also comes amid a tense point in bilateral ties between Riyadh and Washington, as a decision earlier this year by Saudi-led Opec+ to cut oil production was met with fury in the White House, prompting President Joe Biden's administration to call for a "reevaluation" of US-Saudi ties.

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