
Iran Says US Court Order On 9/11 Compensation 'Ridiculous'

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A New York court last week ordered Tehran to pay \$7.5 billion to victims of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon -- and \$3 billion to insurers over related claims -- after ruling that Iran had failed to prove that it did not help the bombers.

"This judgement is so ridiculous... more than ever before, it damages the credibility of the US judicial system," state television quoted an Iranian foreign ministry spokesman as saying.

"Such judgements also send a very dangerous message to terrorists and to their supporters: Kill people... not only will we not prosecute, but we will even target your greatest enemies instead," Hossein Jaber Ansari said.

"We also see the US administration as a partner in such verdicts," Ansari said.

Mohammad Javad Larijani, secretary general of Iran's High Council for Human Rights, also criticised the ruling.

"If they (the United States) want to prosecute anyone over the September 11 incident, it should be their allies in the region who created Al Qaeda and funded it," he said.

Al Qaeda claimed responsibility for the 2001 attacks that killed nearly 3,000 people.

The group's leader at the time of the attacks, Osama Bin Laden, was born in Saudi Arabia but was stripped of his citizenship in 1994.

He was killed on May 2, 2011 by US special forces in his residence in Abbottabad, Pakistan.

Relations have been tense between regional rivals Iran and Saudi Arabia, who back opposing sides in the Syria and Yemen conflicts.

The Shiite republic and Sunni kingdom severed diplomatic ties in January after Riyadh executed a Saudi Shiite cleric and protesters ransacked the Saudi embassy in Tehran.

The only Al Qaeda plotter convicted over the 9/11 attacks told American lawyers that members of the Saudi royal family donated millions of dollars to the group in the 1990s.

The Saudi embassy denied the allegations, branding French citizen Zacarias Moussaoui "a deranged criminal whose own lawyers presented evidence that he was mentally incompetent".

In July last year, world powers including the US signed a landmark deal with Iran to lift crippling economic sanctions in exchange for Tehran curbing its nuclear programme.
