

*for immediate release*

## **US Government urged to take action against Saudi Arabia as coalition of sports & entertainment bodies demand end of beoutQ**

***Major US sports leagues, studios and international broadcasters make detailed public submissions to US Trade Representative as theft of world sport & entertainment spreads***

**WASHINGTON DC, LONDON, PARIS, DOHA – 15 February 2019** – In a major show of force against the continued daily theft of world sport and entertainment by the Saudi Arabia-backed pirate operation “beoutQ”, a host of leading US sports & entertainment bodies, trade associations, and international broadcasters have made submissions to the Office of the United States Trade Representative (“USTR”) demanding that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia be identified as a Priority Foreign Country or be placed on the Priority Watch List, as a result of the country’s continued support of the boldest and most sophisticated pattern of broadcast piracy that the world has ever seen.

The USTR, part of the Executive Office of the US President, is the agency responsible for advancing United States trade policy and resolving disputes with countries that do not follow the rules of international trade agreements.

beIN MEDIA GROUP and MIRAMAX film studio made the most detailed submission to the USTR on the issue of the unabated Saudi piracy, filing 138 pages of detailed description and evidence. Separate submissions were made by the Audiovisual Anti-Piracy Alliance (representing 26 leading audiovisual organisations); the Sports Coalition (on behalf of six major US sports leagues); the NBA and US Tennis Association; and international broadcasters Sky and Canal+.

Each submission to the US Government specifically, directly and publicly highlighted that beoutQ has continued to operate its pirate operation in Saudi Arabia with the full knowledge of the Saudi Government, with several submissions asserting that the Saudi Government offers a “safe haven” for piracy that has now spread across Europe and the US.

In addition, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, which is the world’s largest business federation, and the International Intellectual Property Alliance (a coalition of seven trade associations representing U.S. companies that produce copyright-protected material) filed submissions in which they too noted the tremendous threat posed by beoutQ piracy. All submissions were made pursuant to USTR’s 2019 Special 301 Review, and are publicly available on the USTR’s website “Public Hearings: 2019 Special 301 Review” (<https://www.regulations.gov/>).

This latest development in the global fight against beoutQ is significant, as it represents a critically important public call for the US Government to intervene with the Saudi Government to stop the continued daily theft of the commercial rights of the most famous and valuable brands in US sports and entertainment. European rights holders have previously informed the European Commission and EU Member States of the rampant piracy, requesting action; for example, the English Premier League stated last month that it has made the UK Government aware of the theft of its content. The World Trade Organisation has also established a dispute settlement panel to investigate the matter. Last month, beIN MEDIA GROUP published a ‘reveal all’ website <https://beoutq.tv> that placed out in the open the mountain of evidence against beoutQ and its backers.

beoutQ was launched in Saudi Arabia in August 2017 and, since its inception, it has illegally broadcast premium sports and entertainment content worth billions of dollars. While the pirate operation began as a website that was geo-blocked to Saudi Arabia, it has developed into an unprecedented piracy operation: inserting its own logos and branding; selling subscriptions; carrying separate advertising; and even adding its own commentary. Through 10 encrypted channels, beoutQ illegally broadcasts live sports every day, stealing content from every major sports rights holder in the world including FIFA, UEFA, the Premier League, LaLiga and other football leagues as well as the NFL, the NBA, world tennis, Formula 1 and the Olympics.

In addition, beoutQ gives access to a treasure trove of entertainment content through embedded IPTV apps, through which its set-top boxes stream pirated live television and on-demand movie content from all over the world, including over 10,000 major international movies and up to 35,000 TV show episodes in different languages. Of particular concern, beoutQ is now being pirated by other pirates around the world, with reported accessibility of beoutQ in places as far afield as London, Paris, Geneva and Florida USA.

Overall, considering all of the Special 301 submissions to the USTR, Saudi Arabia has equalled China as the country receiving the highest number of specific recommendations for Priority Foreign Country, Priority Watch List, or Watch List designations for 2019, with nine such recommendations for each country.

**In its submission to the US Government, beIN MEDIA GROUP and MIRAMAX said:** *“Saudi Arabia has permitted, and indeed facilitated, the operation within its territory of the boldest, most sophisticated pattern of broadcast piracy that the world has ever seen – piracy that continues to spread around the globe. While such piracy was initially focused on sports content (including US sports content), it has since expanded to cover the most popular movies and television programming in the world, much of which is produced in the United States.*

*While the Saudi Government could easily put an end to the widespread piracy emanating from within its borders, it has chosen not to do so. As a result, the economic damage to beIN, its rights holders, and the international sports and entertainment industries continues to grow each day. If allowed to continue unchecked, beoutQ will serve as a model for other pirates to imitate in markets around the world, with dire consequences for the media and entertainment industry that will persist long after beoutQ has disappeared.”*

\*\*\*\*\*

-Ends-

#### **ABOUT beIN MEDIA GROUP**

beIN MEDIA GROUP, chaired by Nasser Al-Khelaifi, is an independent company established in 2014 with a vision to become the leading global sport and entertainment network. Today, beIN distributes an unrivalled array of entertainment, live sport action, and major international events across 5 continents, in 43 countries, and in 7 different languages spanning Europe, North America, Asia, Australia and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

beIN MEDIA GROUP's sports network, **beIN SPORTS**, holds the single largest portfolio of sports rights of any global broadcaster. It covers the best and most exciting sports in the world including football (all top global leagues and competitions), basketball (NBA and Euroleague), motor sports (Moto GP), American football (NFL), cricket, rugby, tennis, cycling, badminton, volleyball, college sports and more. beIN MEDIA GROUP also provides subscribers in the MENA region and Turkey with a vast portfolio of proprietary and third-party entertainment channels through beIN and Digiturk platforms. Through its iconic **MIRAMAX** film studio, beIN also holds an extensive library of legendary Hollywood blockbusters and a growing presence in series and movies production.

beIN MEDIA GROUP uses the latest technology to ensure that its viewers receive thrilling entertainment in high definition, on a platform that suits them best. beIN recently launched the first 24-hour 4K channel in the MENA region – beIN 4K – that broadcasts the biggest sports matches and events exclusively in breathtaking 4K quality. It also offers over-the-top live (OTT) broadcasting and catch-up services across all devices through beIN CONNECT.

For more information on beIN MEDIA GROUP, please contact: [mediaoffice@bein.net](mailto:mediaoffice@bein.net)