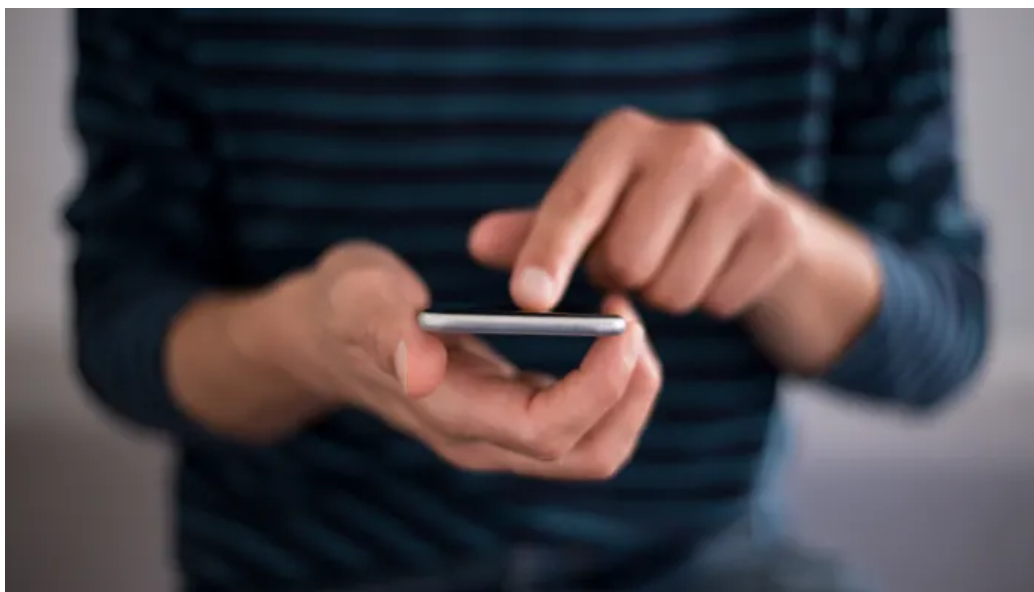


Cyber Security**US businessman accuses UAE wealth fund of hacking emails**

Allegations part of a civil lawsuit involving Ras al Khaimah Investment Authority



RAKIA denies hacking Farhad Azima's emails and is suing him for £3.7m © Piero Cruciatti/Alamy

Jane Croft in London 15 MINUTES AGO

A US businessman believes that the sovereign wealth fund of one of the seven [United Arab Emirates](#) was responsible for hacking his emails, the High Court in London was told on Wednesday.

Farhad Azima's allegation forms part of a civil lawsuit involving him and the Ras al Khaimah Investment Authority (RAKIA), the sovereign wealth fund of Ras al Khaminah.

RAKIA denies hacking Mr Azima's emails and is suing Mr Azima for £3.7m, alleging fraudulent misrepresentation and breach of contract relating to joint business ventures and commission allegedly paid over a hotel sale. It also alleges that Mr Azima orchestrated a media "campaign of denigration" against the ruler of RAK.

Mr Azima denies any wrongdoing and is defending the case. He has launched a counterclaim against RAKIA, claiming it was responsible for hacking a large cache of his emails, which were published online in 2016.

The London trial began on Monday as it emerged that experts hired by Amazon founder Jeff Bezos concluded that a [WhatsApp account](#) used by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman was involved in a 2018 hack of Mr Bezos's phone. Saudi Arabia has denied the claim.

Mr Azima claimed that he was "targeted" by the wealth fund "because of his refusal to take RAKIA's side in a bitter fight with a former senior government official", according to written arguments submitted to the trial by his barrister, Tim Lord QC.

“At the heart of these proceedings is a prolonged illegal computer hacking on Mr Azima’s emails and data,” Mr Azima’s submissions claimed. “There is no dispute that in bringing this case RAKIA seeks to rely on a huge quantity of confidential . . . documents and data that was stolen from Mr Azima. Mr Azima contends it was stolen by RAKIA,” the written arguments claimed, adding that by 2015 RAKIA “began investigating and monitoring Mr Azima using various shadowy agents”.

“RAKIA then unleashed a campaign against Mr Azima through the issuing of this claim, accompanied by the hacking attack and a storm of critical publicity,” Mr Azima’s written arguments said.

Hugh Tomlinson QC, acting for RAKIA, told the High Court on Wednesday that RAK and its sovereign wealth fund were not responsible for the hacking of Mr Azima’s emails. “RAKIA does not know who hacked Mr Azima’s emails . . . this is not a situation where RAKIA was the only suspect — he [Mr Azima] had more than one enemy,” Mr Tomlinson told the court.

He claimed to the court that Mr Azima “had been engaged in serial wrongdoing over a prolonged period”.

“RAKIA’s case is that Mr Azima is a serial fraudster who, over a number of years, obtained millions of dollars from it by a series of elaborate frauds,” Mr Tomlinson claimed in written arguments submitted to the trial. He added: “There is no documentary, witness or IT evidence that provides any support for Mr Azima’s allegation that RAKIA was responsible for the hacking.”

The case continues.

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