

# Emmy-Winning Game of Thrones Director Alik Sakharov to Helm Saudi Arabia's Most Ambitious Film Production

*'The Unbroken Sword', the epic story of Khalid ibn Al-Walid, marks a defining moment in the Kingdom's emergence as a global force in cinema*

RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA, December 2, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- His Excellency Turki Al Sheikh, Chairman of the General Entertainment Authority (GEA), today confirmed that acclaimed director Alik Sakharov - whose credits include Game of Thrones, Rome, The Sopranos, and Marco Polo, will direct The Unbroken Sword, an English-language historical epic chronicling the life of the legendary Arab military commander Khalid ibn Al-Walid and the pivotal Battle of Yarmouk.

The announcement follows HE Al Sheikh's visit to Qiddiya Studios and Al-Hosn Studios, where production is actively underway. The film represents Saudi Arabia's largest and most technically ambitious cinematic undertaking to date, with a planned global theatrical release in 2027.



Speaking during the visit, HE Al Sheikh revealed the remarkable story of how Sakharov came to the project. When the two first met approximately eighteen months ago, the director - despite his distinguished career directing some of the most visually stunning sequences in television history, was unfamiliar with the extraordinary story of Khalid ibn Al-Walid. After reviewing historical materials provided by Al Sheikh, Sakharov contacted him three days later, deeply

affected, expressing that he had been unable to sleep due to his fascination with this figure and his urgent desire to bring the story to the screen.

Such is Sakharov's commitment that he has relocated from New York to live entirely on the production site for the past six months, a testament to the creative passion driving this production.

#### - Production of Unprecedented Scale

The production's scale reflects the ambition of the project. More than 1,000 swords have been manufactured specifically for the film, while over 3,000 trees have been planted to create authentic period settings. The project combines world-class international expertise with a specialized Saudi team, creating a knowledge transfer model designed to build a sustainable film industry within the Kingdom.

The Unbroken Sword is the flagship production of the Big Time Fund, an initiative encompassing 27 Saudi, Arab, and international films. Filming is taking place at Al-Hosn Big Time Studios, a state-of-the-art facility spanning 300,000 square metres with seven studio buildings, constructed in just 120 days, positioning Riyadh as a leading destination for international film production.

#### - A Story That Belongs to Every Saudi

HE Turki Al Sheikh emphasised the profound national significance of the production:

"This work does not represent GEA or Riyadh Season or any single entity, it represents every Saudi man and woman, and every person who loves this great hero. We carry the responsibility to ensure we are worthy of this story."

The Chairman credited the unprecedented support of the Kingdom's leadership in making a production of this magnitude possible, noting that such ambitious cultural initiatives reflect the transformative vision reshaping Saudi Arabia's entertainment and creative industries.

#### - About Khalid ibn Al-Walid

Khalid ibn Al-Walid (d. 642 CE), known as 'Sayf Allah' - the Sword of God - is regarded as one of history's greatest military commanders. Undefeated in battle throughout his military career, his tactical genius at the Battle of Yarmouk in 636 CE proved decisive in shaping the course of world history. His story has never been told at this scale for global audiences.

#### - About Alik Sakharov

Alik Sakharov is an Emmy Award-winning director and cinematographer whose work has defined the visual language of prestige television. His credits include Game of Thrones (8 episodes as director/cinematographer), The Sopranos (38 episodes), Rome (Emmy Award for Outstanding Cinematography), Ozark (Emmy nomination for Outstanding Directing), House of Cards, and Marco Polo.

#### - Notes to Editors

About the General Entertainment Authority (GEA):

The General Entertainment Authority is the Saudi government body responsible for developing and regulating the Kingdom's entertainment sector. Under the leadership of HE Turki Al Sheikh, GEA has transformed Saudi Arabia's cultural landscape, establishing world-class events, venues, and production infrastructure as part of Saudi Vision 2030.

- About Al-Hosn Big Time Studios:

Al-Hosn Big Time Studios is the largest and most advanced film and television production facility in the Middle East. Located west of Riyadh, the complex encompasses 300,000 square metres with seven studio buildings totalling 10,500 square metres of production space, alongside specialised workshops for props, costumes, and post-production.

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