**BLAST ends a partnership with Neom, a Saudi Arabian city, that was getting controversial!**

BLAST, a Danish organizer of tournaments ended a partnership with Saudi Arabian state NEAOM that was controversial. The same steps were under some pressure from partnering teams of BLAST and some talents like Jason “Moses” O’Toole who all got furious with RFRSH Entertainment, the BLAST owner for entering into the partnership as ESPN reported.

There was a meeting on Monday between BLAST’s executives and leaders of their partner teams where BLAST announced ending the deal. Due to the outcry caused by the public, BLAST is the second major company for ESports breaking the deal with NEOM. The first one is League of Legends European Championship from Riot Games who broke the deal for partnership on 29th July, within 16 hours of the announcement of the partnership due to the rage of its employees, fans, and broadcast teams.

NEOM claims featuring robotic dinosaurs, flying cars, and artificial moon, and the city covers a larger area than Belgium and estimates costing 500 billion USD for its development.

Social media was flooded with criticisms over the handlings of LGBTQ+ rights by Saudi Arabia and the homeland of the Huwaitat tribe on which the city of NEOM got built in the Tabuk province. The criticism was there during the times of BLAST and Riot partnering with NEOM at the end of July 2020. Saudi Arabia does follow the Islamic Sharia laws that state that being gay or transgender is illegal and is a punishable act that may include fines, humiliations, castrations, and even imprisonment.

Riot received the threats from the broadcast team of League European Championship for boycotting the broadcast for July 31st to August 2nd if the partnership continues as several members of the team identify with the LGBTQ+ community.

BLAST, on the other hand, received criticisms from the top talents of Counter-Strike. Criticism was drawn from analyst Duncan “Thorin” Shields, Frankie Ward, a host, Richard Lewis, a journalist, and many others. Several partners also raised their concerns, and Jason Lake, the CEO of Complexity Gaming stated on his twitter account that the matter must be dealt privately first before the starting of public discouragement.