

Osama bin Laden corpse photo is fake

Image of bloodied man picked up by British newspapers has been circulating online for two years

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An image purporting to show Osama bin Laden's bloody corpse, right, is a composite of two separate images, left and centre. Photograph: twitpic

An image apparently showing a dead Osama bin Laden broadcast on Pakistani television and picked up by British newspaper websites is a fake.

The bloodied image of a man with matted hair and a blank, half-opened eye has been circulating on the internet for the past two years. It was used on the front pages of the Mail, Times, Telegraph, Sun and Mirror websites, though swiftly removed after the fake was exposed on Twitter.

It appears the fake picture was initially published by the Middle East online newspaper themedialine.org on 29 April 2009, with a warning from the editor that it was "unable to ascertain whether the photo is genuine or not".



The Daily Mail was one of the newspaper websites to publish the fake picture of Osama bin Laden's body. Since then, however, the image has been claimed as genuine on a number of conspiracy forums and used to substantiate claims that the terrorist responsible for the 9/11 bombings had been killed.

The Guardian was one of the few sites to hold back from using the manipulated image on its front page, reporting the picture's existence in its [live blog](#) but [questioning its legitimacy](#).

The image is based on a genuine photograph of Bin Laden taken in 1998 and used by the Reuters news agency.

On Twitter, a [composite including the other photograph used to make the image](#) was posted by [@HannahMarbina](#) and other users showed how easy it was to find the image already [online with a simple search](#).