

Qatar has enabled the terrorist organization Hamas politically and financially for decades. However, the tiny Gulf Arab state has successfully positioned itself as the lead [negotiator](#) in the Hamas-Israel war despite its lack of neutrality and ongoing support for terrorism. In fact, Doha hosts key members of Hamas’s senior leadership and has given an estimated [\\$1.8 billion](#) to Gaza’s Hamas-run government. As a designated major non-NATO ally of the United States, Qatar’s ongoing support for Hamas raises overdue questions as to whether Washington should press the Gulf country to close Hamas offices, expel Hamas officials, and turn off the financial spigot.

1. Qatar is a major Hamas financier

The former Emir of Qatar was the first world leader to visit Gaza after Hamas seized the territory by force in 2007. Sheikh Hamad, father of the current emir, visited the coastal enclave and pledged [\\$400 million](#) in support. Qatar has pumped an estimated [\\$1.8 billion](#) dollars into Hamas-run Gaza since then. Doha [pledged](#) \$360 million of annual support to the enclave in January 2021, in part to subsidize government salaries. About a third of Qatari support is in the form of [fuel](#) that Hamas authorities sell for cash. Hamas also [collects kickbacks](#) from salaries and other aid flowing into Gaza.

2. Qatar blames Israel for Hamas’s attack on October 7

Qatar’s foreign ministry released a [statement](#) on October 7 holding “Israel alone responsible” for Hamas’s bloody rampage. The ministry ignored Hamas’s [war crimes](#) and accused Israel of violating international law. After failing to condemn the 10/7 attack, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, the Qatari emir, [said](#) on October 24 that “it is untenable for Israel to be given an unconditional green light and free license to kill.”

3. Qatar harbors top Hamas leaders

[Ismail Haniyeh](#), the chief of Hamas’s political bureau, resides in Qatar, as do [Khalil al-Hayya](#), head of Hamas’s communications office, and [Khaled Mashal](#), Hamas’s former political chief and current head of the group’s diaspora office. On October 13, 2023, Mashal [called](#) for a global “Day of Jihad,” encouraging the Muslim world to “head to the squares and streets” in support of the Palestinian cause. In Doha, Hamas leaders live in five-star hotels; Haniyeh and Mashal are [reportedly](#) worth over \$4 billion each.

4. Qatar hosts Hamas’s political office in Doha

Hamas opened a political office in Doha in 2012. [Ismail Haniyeh](#) currently serves as chief of the bureau. Sheikh Meshal bin Hamad al-Thani, Qatar’s ambassador to the United States, [claims](#) that Hamas set up its Doha office following “a request from Washington to establish indirect lines of communication with Hamas.” An Obama White House official [said](#) there was no request from Washington, but the administration did not oppose the move either. A spokesperson for the Qatari Foreign Ministry [said](#) on November 5 that Doha has “no reason to close” the office if it can facilitate diplomacy. On Capitol Hill, Doha has tried to [block](#) U.S. [legislation](#) recognizing the Gulf country as a Hamas financier.

5. Qatar amplifies Hamas messaging on state-owned Al Jazeera

Al Jazeera is owned by the Qatari government and effectively functions as a media mouthpiece of the state. The network regularly lionizes the violent activities of Hamas, with particularly vitriolic coverage of the conflict during clashes with Israel. For years, Yusuf Qaradawi, the Muslim Brotherhood cleric who [endorsed the tactic of suicide bombings](#), hosted a program on the channel. After the October 7 attack, the network [broadcast](#) Hamas military chief Mohammad Deif’s call to arms. Al Jazeera also aired incendiary statements from Ismail Haniyeh and his deputy, [Saleh al-Aroui](#). Haniyeh [appeared](#) on Al Jazeera praising Hamas’s “great triumph” and calling on “the sons of this entire nation, in their various locations, to join this battle in any way they can.”

6. Qatar backed Hamas's political takeover of Gaza in 2007

Following Israel's unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in 2005, Hamas **prevailed** in the Palestinian elections in 2006. After a one-year stand-off with the ruling Fatah faction, Hamas fought a bloody civil war, **executing** some of its Fatah rivals by shoving them off buildings. Qatar **sided** with Hamas and endorsed its takeover of Gaza in 2007. It has provided political and financial assistance to the Islamist group in the years since while undermining the internationally recognized Palestinian Authority, which runs the West Bank.

7. Qatari patronage has not moderated Hamas

"We have built relations with Hamas in order to maintain peace and stability in the region," **said** Qatari Prime Minister Mohammed bin Abdelrahman al-Thani in November 2023. Yet contrary to the **belief** that Qatar could **moderate** Hamas and help stabilize the region, Doha's support for Hamas has facilitated relentless violence. Under Qatari patronage, Hamas has fought five separate wars against Israel (2008, 2012, 2014, 2021, and 2023). The group launched the deadliest assault on Jews since the Holocaust, killing 1,200 Israelis on October 7. Hamas leadership has remained in Doha, at the behest of the regime, throughout these terror campaigns.

8. Qatar was suspended by the Gulf Cooperation Council over its ties to terrorism

In June 2017, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, and Egypt **severed ties** with Qatar and imposed a blockade on the Gulf nation. Saudi Arabia **said** it cut ties to "protect national security from the dangers of terrorism and extremism," while the UAE noted Qatar's "ongoing policies that rattle the security and sovereignty of the region." Both countries accused Doha of backing the Muslim Brotherhood, the Islamist group that gave rise to Hamas. Riyadh and Abu Dhabi also **demand**ed that Qatar sever all ties to terrorist organizations, stop funding those organizations, curtail its close ties to Tehran, terminate the Turkish military presence in Qatar, and shut down Al Jazeera and other incendiary news outlets funded by Doha.

9. Qatar hosts large numbers of U.S. troops

Despite its support for terrorism, Qatar has been named by the United States as a major non-NATO ally, with the country serving as a strategic hub for U.S. military operations in the Persian Gulf region. Located 18 miles southwest of Doha, Al-Udeid Air Force Base hosts an estimated 10,000 U.S. troops as well as CENTCOM Forward Headquarters, from which the U.S. launches air operations against Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. In addition, the United Kingdom's Royal Air Force and other foreign forces are stationed at the base built by Qatar following the 1991 Operation Desert Storm.

10. Qatar is attempting to play all sides

Qatar played a key role in establishing **dialogue** between Israel and Hamas in November 2023, resulting in a ceasefire and the release of Israeli civilian hostages in return for the release of Palestinian prisoners held for committing terrorism and other crimes. In an interview with a German newspaper, Qatari Prime Minister al-Thani **said** "We have built relations with Hamas in order to maintain peace and stability in the region." Further, he did not rule out a future peace deal with Israel.