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Israel's attack on Qatar:
The Coup de Grace for Traditional Mediation with
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On the 9th of September 2025, at 3.46 pm Doha time, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), launched an unprecedented airstrike on the West Bay area in the capital of Doha, attempting to assassinate Hamas's negotiation team while they were studying a US ceasefire proposal. The IDF launched 10 rockets using 15 Israeli fighter jets and drones to conduct what they called a precision attack on Hamas's negotiations team. However, the operation failed². While Qatari state officials were not warned about the criminal strike from Israel, they received a call from the US 10 minutes after the attack, warning them of what Israel called "Operation Summit of Fire"³.

The attack took place in the city of Doha, in a highly populated residential district, surrounded by 6 active schools⁴, embassies and commercial blocks. While this reckless attack did not achieve its target, it resulted in the deaths of one Qatari security personnel, as well as 5 members of Hamas⁵, one of whom is the son of Khalil Al-Haya, a senior official in Hamas's political bureau.

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated that his country is "engaged in a battle of civilizations against barbarism"⁶. To demonstrate his claim, Israel had launched attacks on six different countries in the region, namely Gaza, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, Tunisia and Qatar. A day

¹ All articles published under "Gulf Insights" series have been discussed internally but they reflect the opinion and views of the authors, and do not reflect the views of the Center, the College of Arts and Sciences or Qatar University, including the terms and terminology used in this publication.

² Justin Salhani, "How Long Had Israel Been Planning Its Attack in Qatar?," *Al Jazeera*, September 10, 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/9/10/how-long-did-it-take-israel-to-plan-attack-in-qatar>.

³ David Gritten, (2025, September 10). *Qatar says search continues at site of Israeli strike targeting Hamas leaders*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/crme74p9gn2o>

⁴ Qatar News Agency. "Qatar Reaffirms Commitment to Protecting Education in Conflict Zones at Geneva PeaceTalks 2025," September 10, 2025. <https://qna.org.qa/en/news/news-details?id=qatar-reaffirms-commitment-to-protecting-education-in-conflict-zones-at-geneva-peacetalks-2025&date=10/09/2025>.

⁵ David Gritten and Paul Adams, "Hamas Claims Leaders Survived Israeli Attack in Doha, but Confirms Six Deaths," BBC News, September 9, 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ced58zywdwno>.

⁶ Al Jazeera English. "Israel takes 'full responsibility' for attack on Hamas in Qatar, Netanyahu says." *Al Jazeera English*, YouTube, September 15, 2025. <https://youtu.be/tRAay8S2dqA?si=bhEI2kDuFwMK65FX>.

after the criminal attacks in Qatar, several leaders, such as those of the UAE and Jordan, visited Doha to extend support to Qatar's leadership. The Foreign Minister of Qatar, Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, characterized the attacks as an act of terrorism on a sovereign state, and noted that, his country, alongside its allies, reserve its right to retaliate against Israel's actions. Al Thani called for the international community to collaborate in putting an end to Israel's continuous and extended crimes in the region⁷.

"If you don't, we will..."⁸ was the statement made by Netanyahu, in response to the international condemnation Israel received after striking Doha. He accused Qatar of harboring terrorist groups, and it became clear that the attacks go beyond targeting Hamas's Headquarters. Instead, they were a direct threat to Qatar, and other sovereign nations in the region, as Netanyahu stated that his country is committed to fight any other country that hosts and protects political groups it considers to be terrorist⁹.

Reassessing Qatar's Mediation Strategy in the Hamas–Israel Conflict

Qatar has been a trusted mediator by both regional and international players. It has served as a reliable mediator in multiple high-profile cases such as those in Sudan, Afghanistan, Russia-Ukraine and more¹⁰. Its role in mediation went further than brokering peace agreements and hosting diplomatic talks. It also invested its political and financial capital into distinguishing itself as a trusted state in conflict prevention. In 2012, US officials requested that Qatar host Hamas's

⁷ Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Says Qatar Will Not Tolerate Infringement on Its Sovereignty, Describes Attack as State Terrorism," September 10, 2025. <https://mofa.gov.qa/en/qatar/latest-articles/latest-news/details/2025/09/10/prime-minister-and-minister-of-foreign-affairs-says-qatar-will-not-tolerate-infringement-on-its-sovereignty--describes-attack-as-state-terrorism>.

⁸ Al Jazeera English. "Israel takes 'full responsibility' for attack on Hamas in Qatar, Netanyahu says." *Al Jazeera English*, YouTube, September 15, 2025. <https://youtu.be/tRAay8S2dqA?si=bhEI2kDuFwMK65FX>

⁹ Al Jazeera. "Netanyahu Pledges to Target Opponents Abroad after Strike in Qatar." *Al Jazeera*, September 10, 2025. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/9/10/netanyahu-vows-to-target-opponents-abroad-after-strike-in-qatar>.

¹⁰ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "QATAR'S MEDIATION EFFORTS," accessed September 21, 2025, <https://mofa.gov.qa/en/foreign-policy/mediation/mediation>.

political bureau to help facilitate peace talks between Hamas, the US and Israel¹¹. Qatar took a substantial risk despite knowing Israel's long history of assassinating political figures residing in foreign countries, threatening foreign domestic stability and incurring collateral damage and casualties. Nevertheless, it agreed to take this risk, and was fully committed to fulfilling its mediation role in this conflict.

In November 2024, Qatar announced the suspension of its mediation efforts on the Palestine-Israel file. Majid Al Ansari, the official spokesperson to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stated that they will suspend mediation services due to the lack of progress and commitment towards the proposed ceasefire agreements¹², and instead will focus on facilitating the delivery of aid to Gaza. Although Qatar announced the suspension of its mediation role, it continued to facilitate diplomatic negotiations between all parties involved in the October 7 War since Hamas's political bureau continued to exist in Qatar.

During Shaikh Tamim bin Hamad al Thani's speech at the emergency Arab-Islamic Summit, hosted in Doha on the 15th of September, which was held in response to the Israeli attack on Qatar, he stated that Doha's mediation efforts, alongside Egypt and the US, have been successful in liberating prisoners and hostages¹³. Temporary ceasefire agreements facilitated 5 prisoner swaps between Hamas and Israel, resulting in the release of hundreds of Palestinian prisoners, in exchange for a number of Israeli hostages in Gaza¹⁴. However, Israel was not fully committed to all aspects of the previously proposed ceasefire agreements.

Israel's lack of commitment towards proposed ceasefire agreements since October 7, has been enabled by the unconditional support it receives from major western nations such as the US,

¹¹ Al Jazeera Staff, "Why Does Qatar Host Hamas's Political Office?," *Al Jazeera*, September 9, 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/9/9/why-does-qatar-host-hamass-political-office>.

¹² "Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Participating Parties' Lack of Serious Negotiations Pushed Qatar to Suspend Mediation in Gaza," Ministry of Foreign Affairs, accessed September 21, 2025, <https://mofa.gov.qa/en/qatar/latest-articles/latest-news/details/2024/11/20/spokesperson-for-the-ministry-of-foreign-affairs--participating-parties'-lack-of-serious-negotiations-pushed-qatar-to-suspend-mediation-in-gaza>.

¹³ Al Jazeera English, "Arab-Islamic Summit: Leaders Gather after Israeli Attacks on Hamas in Doha," *YouTube*, September 15, 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AAbxfVa8sSs>.

¹⁴ Al Jazeera, "Hamas and Israel Carry out Fifth Prisoner Swap under Gaza Ceasefire Deal," *Al Jazeera*, February 8, 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/2/8/gaza-prepares-for-release-of-three-israeli-captives>.

Britain, and Germany, as well as influential political groups like AIPAC. The current structure of mediation unraveled the power vacuum that Qatar cannot fill solely through its neutral mediation role. This power vacuum resulted in the absence of enforcement of international law. Consequently, Qatar called for regional and international support to enhance the effectiveness of mediation through collective diplomatic strategies, without resorting to military force. This approach aims to balance the scale of influence and strengthen diplomatic efforts in the region.

Mediation Amid Turmoil: Qatar's Commitment to Peace Talks and Stability

The future of Qatar's role as a mediator between Hamas and Israel remains uncertain. No absolute conclusions can be drawn at this stage, considering the lack of official statements from Doha, as it continues to engage in numerous diplomatic visits, to discuss the course of action required at this stage of the conflict. Nevertheless, there are two key factors that can be analyzed to draw potential assumptions, which are the obstacles undermining the mediation process, represented by Israel's growing aggression in the region, as well as the continued presence of Hamas's political headquarters in Qatar.

First, Israel has become a danger to global stability, a liability to its allies, and the main obstacle for any form of mediation or diplomatic resolution. Through its growing attacks on countries in the region, including Qatar, Israel has demonstrated complete disregard to the international law, diplomatic norms, and most importantly, the course of mediation. By striking both the negotiation team of Hamas, and Qatar - the main facilitator of dialogue between the opposing parties- Israel destroyed the mediation process. Thus, Israel's actions play the single greatest obstacle to mediation and to any future forms of diplomatic resolution.

For any future mediation to be successful, the international community must take a firm stance on Israel's continuous aggression in the region, and its serious consequences on global politics and security. International leaders cannot stand as silent bystanders while Israel continues to attack state sovereignties, commit war crimes against innocent civilians and openly declares its intention to reshape the map of the Middle East region in its disgraceful pursuit of the "Greater Israel" project.

Furthermore, no mediation will be possible so long as Israel is not being prosecuted for its crimes like any other country would. Current institutions like the United Nations failed to hold Israel accountable, due to its limited power in enforcing security measures, as well as the misuse of the veto power by the United States. The US had vetoed resolutions regarding Israel over 50 times in the past five years¹⁵. This includes its most recent veto on the 18th of September 2025, against a Security Council resolution, making this the 6th time the USA vetoes an immediate permanent ceasefire in Gaza¹⁶ since October 7. This unconditional support that Israel is receiving from international superpowers will continue to allow it to cross all red lines.

Second, if Hamas's political bureau continues to exist on Qatari soil, Qatar has both the political and moral obligation towards facilitating dialogue with them, as well as ensuring their safety and security. However, expelling Hamas's leadership would clearly eliminate the risk of another attack by Israel on Qatari territory. Thus far, no official statements have been made on the future presence of Hamas's headquarter in Qatar.

Qatar appears to be assessing two critical factors that will determine their future role as a mediator between Hamas and Israel. The first factor is seen through Qatar's well-established portfolio as a mediator on regional and international high-profile conflicts. Qatar has long invested in its role as a mediator, and this role shaped aspects of its foreign policy and diplomatic strategies. Stepping away from its mediation role in this precise conflict could have unsolicited impacts on its diplomatic and mediation portfolio. The second critical factor in this equation is Qatar's duty towards safeguarding its local citizens and its domestic interests, considering Israel's direct threats to strike Qatar again if it continues to harbor Hamas's political bureau. The two factors place Qatar at a dangerous crossroads, one that will most likely force Qatar to reevaluate core elements of its current diplomatic strategies and foreign policies.

¹⁵ Creede Newton, "A History of the US Blocking UN Resolutions against Israel," *Al Jazeera*, May 19, 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/19/a-history-of-the-us-blocking-un-resolutions-against-israel>.

¹⁶ Yolande Knell, "Israel-Gaza: US Vetoes UN Call for Ceasefire for Sixth Time," *BBC News*, September 19, 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ce3yj41083no>.

Until Qatari leadership conclude their diplomatic visits and present the outcomes of reassessing their foreign strategic policies- no one can be certain of the role that Qatar will serve as a mediator between Hamas and Israel.

About the author

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About the Gulf Insights series

The "Gulf Insights" series is published by the Gulf Studies Center on a weekly base with the aim to promote informed debate with academic depth. The Gulf Insights are commentaries on pressing regional issues written by the GSC/GSP faculty, staff PhD and MA students, as well as guest scholars, and they can be between 1,200 to 1,500 words.

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