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Qatar: Genuine peacemaker or covert partner of Israel?

Is Qatar a neutral mediator between the Palestinian resistance and the occupation state, or is it secretly leveraging its financial ties to sway Israeli politics in its favor?

As Israel continues to refuse to negotiate a reasonable end to its brutal aggression on Gaza, Tel Aviv has taken to launch sharp attacks on key mediator Qatar. The latest incident involves a scathing remark by Yair Netanyahu, son of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, accusing the Persian Gulf state of being “one of the biggest sponsors of state terrorism.”

Yair Netanyahu’s comments were aimed at diverting [criticism](#) away from his father’s government that “is to blame for leaving Israel unprepared for Hamas’s onslaught on October 7,” and that has since earned global pariah status for its massacre of tens of thousands of Palestinian civilians.

Since Operation Al-Aqsa Flood was launched last year, the occupation entity has been in a state of “political hysteria,” with accusations flying over responsibility for the Hamas-led resistance operation. Criticism of Netanyahu’s policies has come from various Israeli leaders, including cabinet members Benny Gantz and Gadi Eisenkot, who have [threatened](#) to bring down the government if the prime minister continues to make decisions unilaterally.

Qatari financial ties to Tel Aviv

Amid the chaos and blame-shifting, Netanyahu’s opponents have created a narrative that he is personally responsible for strengthening Hamas – whether as part of a policy to undermine the West Bank-based Palestinian Authority (PA) or to divide the Palestinian territories or to amplify an “Islamist threat.”

But now, details have emerged that the premier received financial compensation – allegedly from [Qatar](#) – for some of his Gaza policies, which were coordinated outside official channels and in exchange for bribes and grants from Doha.

[Classified documents](#) leaked by the pro-Israel Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI) have unveiled Qatar’s funding of Israeli officials as part of the “Raven Project,” which previously exposed suspicious financial ties between Qatar and prominent global figures.

The first [tranche of leaks](#) published in December included documents revealing at least two Qatari grants to Netanyahu – payments of \$15 million in 2012 and \$50 million in 2018.

The [second batch](#), leaked this month, featured a “top secret” letter from former Qatari Foreign Minister Hamad bin Jassim al-Thani to then-Israeli minister of economy and finance, Yusuf Hussein Kamal, authorizing a \$50 million payment to Netanyahu.

Another document confirms that cash was transferred to Netanyahu via Qatar’s state security apparatus. MEMRI’s right-wing director, retired general Yigal Carmon, [defended](#) these leaks, claiming that the bribes are part of Doha’s efforts to buy global influence, with Israel one of its main targets.

Israeli opposition leader Tzipi Livni [disclosed](#) in 2018 that Qatar funded Netanyahu’s Likud party campaign with \$3 million to ensure his success in the Knesset elections. The *Jerusalem Post* also previously revealed that Hamad bin Jassim provided \$1.5 million to the “Israel Beitenu” party, led by Avigdor Lieberman, one of Tel Aviv’s most prominent [anti-Egyptian](#) figures.

Among other Qatari funding scandals, extremist Rabbi Nir Ben-Artzi disclosed that Israeli left-wing associations and parties received an estimated \$300 million to challenge Netanyahu’s leadership.

Officials within the occupation state [acknowledged](#) these funds. In 2020, Mossad chief Yossi Cohen wrote to the emir of Qatar, thanking him for financial aid that “guarantees stability in the region.”

Additional letters from Ronen Levy, a member of the National Security Council, and Ghassan Alyan, Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories, have [acknowledged](#) financial support from Doha through various projects, including the Gaza Reconstruction Committee and the “Gas for Gaza” project.

Doha’s influence on Israeli and Palestinian politics

To understand Qatar’s political stance, one must trace the history of its relations with Israel. In 1996, Doha became the [first Arab–Persian Gulf state](#) to establish trade relations with

Israel, opening a [trade office](#) that operated until the Second Intifada in 2000. This [de-facto embassy](#) facilitated the signing of an agreement to sell Qatari gas to Israel, establish the Qatar Gas Exchange in Tel Aviv, and allow Israeli settlers to visit Qatar.

On the Palestinian side, the mutually beneficial relationship between Qatar and the Muslim Brotherhood secured close ties between Doha and Hamas at the expense of other Palestinian factions.

From the outset, these relations were strengthened after 2007 and were [in full view](#) of the Israeli side. Qatar opened its treasury [to fund](#) its political agendas with Israeli approval, and its envoy, businessman Mohammed al-Emadi, personally transported the money from Jordan, Jerusalem, and Gaza.

The flow of Qatari funds underwent a shift after the 2014 Israeli aggression on Gaza. Doha agreed on a new mechanism with the US, the UN, and Israel to monitor these funds. Israel supported this to prevent Gaza's situation from exploding.

However, Operation Al-Aqsa Flood cast a shadow on this system, with the US House Oversight Committee accusing Doha of paying \$30 million a month to Hamas since 2018. Qatar [countered](#) that these funds were for humanitarian purposes and had been coordinated with Tel Aviv.

This delicate balance enabled Qatar to benefit from its role as a mediator between Palestinian factions and Israel. By avoiding formal normalization agreements, Qatar has set the ground for its mediator role, leveraging active diplomacy and close financial ties with both Palestinian and Israeli actors.

The media has also played a role in this complex relationship. Qatar's *Al Jazeera* network has often hosted Israeli officials, while the Israeli Foreign Ministry facilitated services for *Al Jazeera's* team in Tel Aviv. *Al Jazeera* was also among the [first Arabic channels](#) to put the name "Israel" on the map. However, the network's Arabic and English channels often cover events in Gaza differently, leading to accusations of [double standards](#).

Qatar's strategy: Gas deals and strengthening ties with the US

The strong relationship between Israel and Qatar is evident in various areas, including substantial business deals. According to the UN COMTRADE database, [Israel's imports](#) from Qatar amounted to \$353,000 in 2013, while [exports to Qatar](#) reached \$146,000 in 2022. Cooperation spans several fields, most notably in the natural gas sector.

Qatar has arguably benefited from the genocide in Gaza, regaining its place under the spotlight with its role as a mediator between Palestinian factions and Israel. In 2010, Doha

hosted an international conference involving Palestinian, US, and Israeli parties, resulting in a deal to free 1,024 Palestinians in exchange for Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit.

Capitalizing on this success, Qatar offered to host Hamas' political bureau, maintaining negotiation channels and [leveraging these relationships](#) to connect with key figures in the resistance movement.

This strategy has allowed Qatar to strengthen its ties with Washington, something its Persian Gulf neighbors vie for.

Aside from facing a severe [Saudi-led blockade](#) over its “independent” regional policy, which included ties with Iran, Qatar's approach has essentially [paid off](#). It has made it an important energy supplier, a major buyer of US weapons, and the host of the largest US airbase abroad. In 2022, the White House declared Qatar a key non-NATO ally.

Qatar's choice to avoid formal normalization agreements has allowed it to prepare for its current mediator role, benefiting from active diplomacy and close financial ties with both Palestinian and Israeli actors.

The leaks and analyses published so far reveal the tip of the iceberg of Qatari money's influence in global politics, a strategy shared by other countries, including the UAE and Saudi Arabia. These revelations raise questions about the future of Qatar's relations with Israeli leaders, particularly Netanyahu, who seems ready to [deflect blame to protect himself](#).

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