



SAUDI ARABIA

and

REGIONAL SECURITY

Qatar's History of Funding Terrorism and Extremism

Qatar has long shown negligence in combatting terrorism within its borders. Despite assurances from Qatari leadership that the country was fighting the flow of funds from within its country to extremist groups, the country has done little to show progress or proof of these efforts.

Turning a Blind Eye to Terrorism and Terror Financing

The U.S. has been critical of Qatar's lack of dedication and carelessness in stopping terror financing. Despite international efforts to impose sanctions on private terrorism supporters within the country, the Qatari government has made no progress in stopping the flow of finances to extremists.

Acting Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence Adam Szubin reiterated this lack of progress in October 2016. According to Szubin, Qatar "still lacks the necessary political will and capacity to effectively enforce their CFT [Counter the Financing of Terrorism] laws against all terrorist financing threats regardless of organization or affiliation."

Support for ISIS, Al-Qaeda and Al-Nusra

Dangerous groups such as AQAP, Daesh (ISIS) and the Taliban have targeted Qatar as a source for fundraising. Additionally, funds originating in Qatar are still being sent to groups that much of the world designates as terrorist organizations, including Al-Nusra, Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood.

In 2015, the U.S. State Department's Country Report on Terrorism for Qatar confirmed this, arguing that, "Entities and individuals within Qatar continue to serve as a source of financial support for terrorist and violent extremist groups, particularly regional al-Qa'ida (Al-Qaeda) affiliates such as the Nusrah Front."

According to David Andrew Weinberg of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, being able to secure illicit funding from Qatari financiers was an important factor in Al-Nusra's decision to rebrand itself. Weinberg writes:

"It is particularly vital to evaluate Qatar's record on terror finance in light of the Nusra Front's July 2016 decision to rebrand itself as Jabhat Fateh al-Sham (JFS), which purports to have 'no relationship with any foreign party.'"

Qatar's support for terrorist organizations has caused chaos in countries throughout the region. Elizabeth Dickinson of Foreign Policy wrote in September 2014 that Qatar, "played a major role in destabilizing nearly every trouble spot in the region and in accelerating the growth of radical and jihadi factions."

"The results have ranged from bad to catastrophic in the countries that are the beneficiaries of Qatari aid: Libya is mired in a war between proxy-funded militias, Syria's opposition has been overwhelmed by infighting and overtaken by extremists, and Hamas's intransigence has arguably helped prolong the Gaza

Strip's humanitarian plight," wrote Dickinson. "For years, U.S. officials have been willing to shrug off Doha's proxy network — or even take advantage of it from time to time. Qatar's neighbors, however, have not."

Support for Hamas

Qatar has established itself as an indispensable ally to Hamas, a U.S.-designated terrorist organization that has controlled the Gaza Strip since 2007. Despite the U.S. designation, Qatari Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani stated in June 2017 that Hamas is "a legitimate resistance movement."

According to the U.S. Treasury's Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, "Qatar, a longtime U.S. ally, has for many years openly financed Hamas."

In a June 2017 hearing for the Middle East and North Africa Subcommittee, Chairwoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) expressed support for Saudi Arabia's actions to hold Qatar responsible for its support of Hamas.

"Many of us on this subcommittee have been calling attention to Qatar's history of financing terror — including its support for Hamas and its unwillingness to support existing sanctions against individuals within its borders," Ros-Lehtinen said. "Qatar has long been a permissive terrorist financing environment, and if nothing else, this Saudi-led response will at least get the conversation started. This is the same Qatar which was entrusted to monitor the Taliban 5 - even though we knew it continued to fund ISIS, Hamas, the Taliban, the Muslim Brotherhood and countless other extremist groups. This is a conversation we need to be having."

Support for the Muslim Brotherhood

Qatar is a known ally and supporter of the Muslim Brotherhood. Qatar has been conducting a destabilizing campaign through its support of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain.

Qatar promotes the Muslim Brotherhood's agenda through its Al Jazeera Network. One of the major connections between the extremism organization and the news network has been the broadcast of Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who openly lives in Qatar.

Qatar has been accused of supporting a Muslim Brotherhood terrorist cell discovered in the UAE in 2012 and has financed Muslim Brother activities in Europe

Congressional Concern

Members of Congress have expressed concern over Qatari funding of terrorism. Examples include:

Letter to the Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, Department of the Treasury David S. Cohen from Rep. Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), Rep. Ted Deutch (D-FL), Rep. Ted Poe (R-TX) and Rep. Brad Sherman (D-CA) and cosigned by 20 additional Members of Congress, December 2016: *"Qatar's \$400 million donation for Gaza reconstruction in 2012 bolstered Hamas' credibility in Gaza and may have directly supported Hamas-backed entities. Qatar also allows Hamas'*

top leader, politburo chief Khalid Mishaal, to operate out of its territory knowingly and with impunity. It was even widely reported in the press that Qatar threatened to deport Mishaal if Hamas had accepted an Egypt-backed ceasefire agreement to end this summer's conflict in Gaza."

"We are concerned about the ties between Qatar and Hamas, and we commend you on your speech before the Center for a New American Security, where you stated that, 'Qatar, a longtime U.S. ally, has for many years openly financed Hamas,' and that press reports indicate that the Qatari government is also 'supporting extremist groups operating in Syria,' further adding to the instability of the region. As you noted in your speech, there are private fundraising networks in Qatar that solicit donations for terrorists. Qatar, in your words, is 'a permissive terrorist financing environment.'"

Letter to Secretary of the Treasury Jacob Lew from Sen. Mark Kirk (R-IL), May 2016: *"Amid recent news reports that blacklisted foreign terrorist financiers remain active on social media, I write to express grave concern about Qatar's permissive environment for terrorist financing. For over a decade, the Qatari government has displayed leniency and negligence toward individuals who support and finance ISIS, its predecessor Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), and other terrorist groups...To this day, terrorist financiers—including those designated by the United States and the United Nations—continue to enjoy such impunity in Qatar."*

Letter to Secretary of Defense Ash Carter from Rep. Doug Lamborn (R-CO), February 2015: *"The Qatari government turns a blind eye to terrorist fundraising for Al Qaeda and the Islamic State by U.S.-designated persons within its borders...Qatar is now known as the world's safe haven for terrorist groups and militia leaders...Qatar's efforts to curb terror finance are woefully inadequate."*

Letter to Secretary of the Treasury Jack Lew from Reps. Peter J. Roskam (R-IL) and Brad Sherman (D-CA), December 2014: *"Members of Qatar's ruling family, as well as its citizens and charity organizations, have long supported radical Islamist groups, including U.S.-designated terrorist organizations Hamas, al-Qaeda, and the al-Nusra Front."*

Letter to Secretary of State John Kerry and Secretary of the Treasury Jack Lew from Rep. Peter Roskam (R-IL), July 2014: *"I am deeply concerned that your close work with Qatar in pursuit of a Gaza ceasefire rewards, bolsters, and legitimizes Qatar's longstanding sponsorship of the terrorist organization Hamas. The severity of the current conflict and possibility for even greater escalation underscores how we must hold Qatar and all those who sponsor terrorism accountable for these reprehensible crimes rather than look the other way as Doha enables terrorism against Israel."*

Letter to Ambassador Mohamed bin Abdulla Al-Rumaihi from 24 Member of Congress, August 2013: *"We write to express concern over the expanding diplomatic and economic ties between your government and Hamas, a U.S.-designated Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO)... We are disturbed by reports that Qatar pledged over \$400 million in funds to Hamas in October 2012."*

Shielding Known Terrorists

Qatar has done little to assist the U.S. and international counterterrorism efforts. Several individuals in Qatar are on sanctions lists for supporting terrorist activities, but continue to operate within the country's borders.

In February 2016, former Treasury Assistant Secretary for Terrorist Financing Daniel Glaser, now a board member of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies Center on Sanctions and Illicit Finance, criticized the pace and determination of Qatar's counterterrorism efforts. "There continue(s) to be designated terrorist financiers operating openly and notoriously," argued Glaser.

Some of the known terrorists linked to Qatar include:

- **Sa'd bin Sa'd Muhammad Shariyan Al-Ka'bi:** Qatari financier of Al-Qaeda affiliate Al-Nusrah in Syria.
 - Established donation campaigns in Qatar to aid a fundraising request from Al-Nusrah in order to purchase weapons and food.
 - Worked to facilitate a ransom payment to Al-Nusrah in exchange for a hostage being held by the terror organization.
 - Named Specially Designated Global Terrorist and sanctioned by the U.S. Treasury Department on August 5, 2015.
 - Listed on UN Security Council Sanction List on September 21, 2015.

- **Abdallah Salih Muhammad Al-Kawari:** Qatar-based Al-Qaeda financier and security official.
 - Coordinated the delivery of Qatari-financing to support Al-Qaeda and facilitated international travel for an Al-Qaeda foreign donor carrying tens of thousands of dollars earmarked for Al-Qaeda.
 - Named Specially Designated Global Terrorist and sanctioned by the U.S. Treasury Department on August 5, 2015.
 - Listed on UN Security Council Sanction List on September 21, 2015.

- **Ashraf Muhammad Yusuf 'Uthman 'Abd al-Salam:** Jordanian national, with Qatari ID card, financier and operative for Al-Nusrah and Al-Qaeda.
 - Facilitated the travel of military trainers to Syria to train Al-Nusrah in 2012.
 - Facilitated the transfer of hundreds of thousands of dollars from U.S.- and UN-designated financier and Qatar-based Khalifa Muhammad Turki al-Subaiy intended for Al-Qaeda in Pakistan.
 - Named Specially Designated Global Terrorist and sanctions by the U.S. Treasury Department on September 24, 2014.

- **'Abd al-Malik Muhammad Yusuf 'Uthman 'Abd al-Salam (AKA Umar al-Qatari):** Jordanian national, with Qatari ID card, financier, recruiter and operative for Al-Nusrah.
 - Gave thousands of dollars and materials to support Al-Qaeda in Syria in 2012.
 - Coordinated the transfer of thousands of dollars from UN and U.S.-designated Qatari Al-Qaeda financier Khalifa Muhammad Turki al-Subaiy to AQ senior leadership.
 - Named Specially Designated Global Terrorist and sanctioned by the U.S. Treasury Department on September 24, 2014.
 - Listed on UN Security Council Sanction List on January 23, 2015.

- **Ibrahim ‘Isa Hajji Muhammad al-Bakr: Qatar-based financier and logical supporter of Al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Pakistan and Afghanistan.**
 - Served as a link between Gulf-based terrorist financiers and Al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan.
 - Played a key role in a terrorist cell plotting a 2006 attack on U.S. military bases in Qatar.
 - Named Specially Designated Global Terrorist and sanctioned by the U.S. Treasury Department on September 24, 2014.
 - Released by Qatari authorities after promising not to conduct terror activity in Qatar, according to a September 2014 U.S. Treasury Department terror designation.

- **Abd al Rahman bin Umayr al Nu’aymi: Qatar-based terrorist financier and facilitator.**
 - Provided money and material support to Al-Qaeda affiliates in Syria, Iraq, Somalia and Yemen for more than 10 years.
 - Considered among the most prominent Qatar-based supporters of extremists.
 - Oversaw the transfer of more than \$2 million per month to Al-Qaeda in Iraq.
 - Named Specially Designated Global Terrorist and sanctioned by the UN on September 23, 2014 and U.S. Treasury Department on December 18, 2013.

- **Khalifa Muhammad Turki al-Subaiy: Known Al-Qaeda associate and financier.**
 - Participated in financing, planning, facilitating, preparing or perpetrating of acts or activities of Al-Qaeda.
 - Listed on the UN Security Council Sanctions list on October 10, 2008.