

QATAR'S MEDIATION RECORD: SUCCESSES, FAILURES, AND COSTS

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Speaking to Qatar's emir on the sidelines of the June G7 summit, President Donald Trump praised Qatar for helping defuse the war with Iran. "Working with Qatar and the people of Qatar was really a pleasure," he said.¹ Three weeks later, President Trump declared the Qatar and Pakistan-brokered ceasefire "over."² The U.S.-Iran Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is but the latest agreement delivered by Qatar that has foundered.

Mediation is a cornerstone of Qatari foreign policy. Article 7 of Qatar's constitution explicitly declares that the country's foreign policy "shall be based on the principle of consolidating international peace and security, via encouraging the peaceful resolution of international disputes." In a November 2025 interview with CNN, Qatar's prime minister said that "each country in the international community needs to contribute something," and that Doha's niche is its ability "to convene between conflicted parties and understand the grievances."³

Qatar has vigorously pursued this mission in the Middle East and beyond. The 2026 U.S.-Iran MOU is but one example. But does Qatar's track record as a mediator hold up under scrutiny? This report surveys Qatar's mediation efforts over the years and assesses the country's successes and failures alike.

The problem is not Qatar's failures, but the price of its successes. Too often, Doha's mediation succeeds to the detriment of American interests, including by empowering groups like Hamas, al-Qaeda, and the Taliban through ransom payments, positive publicity, or enhanced international standing. Other times, Qatar simply strengthens existing bad dynamics, negotiating brief respites to perennial conflicts that soon grind on.

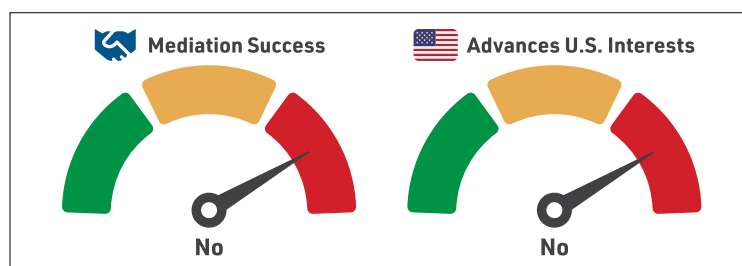
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 1. Al Jazeera English, "Trump praises Qatar's role in Iran deal at G7 meeting," *YouTube*, June 16, 2026. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3yOytho6RjE>)

2. Barak Ravid, "With Iran ceasefire 'over,' Trump shifts to battle for Hormuz," *Axios*, July 8, 2026. (<https://www.axios.com/2026/07/09/trump-iran-strait-hormuz-battle>)

3. David Cohen, "Qatar trying to keep Israel-Hamas ceasefire from falling apart, prime minister says," *Politico*, November 2, 2025. (<https://www.politico.com/news/2025/11/02/qatar-israel-hamas-diplomacy-00632932>)

IRAN

After the United States launched Operation Epic Fury in February, the Islamic Republic began striking Qatar. Even after months of conflict, aside from a token measure of expelling Iran's security and military attaches, the countries maintain full diplomatic ties.⁴ And those ties may even strengthen. This is consistent with recent history. Over the years, Doha has deepened its relationship with the regime while brokering deals that ensured it would fight another day. At best, Qatari mediation has forestalled the Islamic Republic's demise. At worst, it has empowered the regime.



Qatar and Iran share a massive natural gas field, and both sponsor Hamas, giving them incentives to cooperate.⁵ Additionally, Doha owes Tehran a debt of gratitude for coming to its aid in 2017 after Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Bahrain imposed a blockade on Qatar.⁶

Nevertheless, consecutive U.S. administrations have enabled Qatar to serve as an intermediary with Iran. Doha hosted indirect nuclear talks in 2022 and brokered a U.S.-Iran prisoner swap in 2023 that involved transferring \$6 billion of frozen Iranian oil revenue from South Korea to Qatar's Central Bank. This was effectively a ransom deal that benefited Iran's clerical regime.⁷

Qatar remained involved with the nuclear file during the second Trump administration.⁸ In October 2025, Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani said that Doha was "trying to engage with the United States and the Iranians" to get talks "back on track."⁹ Critically, Al-Thani added: "Iran is my neighbor ... for me, the stability of Iran is key. It's not a luxury ... it's very important." Tehran evidently understands that Qatar has its interests at heart, which is perhaps why the regime asked Qatar to intervene on its behalf twice in 2025. First, Tehran requested Qatar's diplomatic services during the 12-Day War with Israel in June 2025.¹⁰ In September, Tehran reportedly asked Doha to mediate talks with the United States, France, Germany, and United Kingdom to thwart the reimposition of UN sanctions.¹¹

4. Stephen Kalin, "Qatar Expels Senior Iranian Diplomats After Missile Attack," *The Wall Street Journal*, March 18, 2026. (<https://www.wsj.com/livecoverage/iran-us-israel-war-news-2026/card/qatar-expels-senior-iranian-diplomats-after-missile-attack-B5kPhmlKSPZVNf8cN1pS>)

5. "Factbox: Qatar, Iran share world's biggest gas field," *Reuters*, July 26, 2010. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-northfield-qatar/factbox-qatar-iran-share-worlds-biggest-gas-field-idUSTRE66P1VV20100726>)

6. "Qatar, Iran, and the United States," *United Against Nuclear Iran*, accessed August 24, 2026. (<https://www.unitedagainstnucleariran.com/qatar-iran-and-united-states>)

7. "Qatar steps up its mediation role in US-Iran nuclear negotiations," *Arab News* (Saudi Arabia), March 8, 2022. (<https://www.arabnews.com/node/2038671/middle-east>); Farnaz Fassihi and Michael D. Shear, "U.S. Reaches Deal With Iran to Free Americans for Jailed Iranians and Funds," *The New York Times*, August 10, 2023. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/10/us/politics/iran-us-prisoner-swap.html>)

8. Dan De Luce, "U.S.-Iran nuclear negotiations in Qatar end without breakthrough," *NBC News*, June 30, 2022. (<https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/national-security/us-iran-nuclear-negotiations-doha-end-breakthrough-rcna36008>)

9. "Qatar offers to help revive US-Iran nuclear talks," *Iran International* (UK), October 29, 2025. (<https://www.iranintl.com/en/202510295277>)

10. Amichai Stein, "Iran turns to Qatar, Oman in bid to halt Israeli strikes, U.S. presses for nuclear concessions," *i24 News* (Israel), June 15, 2025. (<https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel/defense/artc-iran-turns-to-qatar-oman-in-bid-to-halt-israeli-strikes-u-s-presses-for-nuclear-concessions>)

11. "Iran taps Doha to broker nuclear talks, signals flexibility on uranium stocks," *Iran International* (UK), September 9, 2025. (<https://www.iranintl.com/en/202509080879>)

Then, as the Trump administration considered a military response to Tehran's crackdown on anti-regime protests in January, Qatar attempted to walk Washington back from the brink. A Saudi source told the media that Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Oman "led a long, frantic, diplomatic last-minute effort to convince President Trump to give Iran a chance to show good intention."¹² Qatar's emir again urged President Trump to deescalate during a phone call on February 11.¹³

Qatari hopes were dashed on February 28 when the United States launched Operation Epic Fury. Breaking from precedent, Doha backed the United States, condemned Iran, and maintained its "full right to respond" to Iranian attacks — nearly 300 of which targeted Qatar.¹⁴ Qatari Foreign Ministry spokesperson Majed al-Ansari said on March 31 that Qatar was "ready to help" negotiate.¹⁵ Pakistan was the lead broker of the ceasefire announced on April 7, but Qatar had reportedly been working behind the scenes.¹⁶ By May, Qatari mediators appeared to have assumed a larger public role. Qatari officials met with Vice President JD Vance, Secretary of State Marco Rubio, and Special Envoy Steve Witkoff to discuss end-of-war terms and were reportedly instrumental in convincing President Trump to put off an attack on Iran.¹⁷

When the MOU landed in June, *The Wall Street Journal* reported that Washington was working with Doha to unlock \$6 billion of frozen Iranian oil revenue that had been sitting in Qatari banks since the Biden-era ransom deal.¹⁸ Absent proper oversight, Qatar could allow the regime to divert the money for military or other prohibited purposes — a distinct possibility when one considers Doha's historical support for the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

Vice President JD Vance also indicated that a deconfliction team with representatives from U.S. Central Command and the IRGC would be established in Qatar.¹⁹ Doha was thus involved in an effort to normalize ties between Washington and Iran's most fervent terrorist supporters within the regime.

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12. Stuart Williams and Haitham El-Tabei, "US says Iran halts executions as Gulf allies pull Trump back from strike," *Al-Monitor*, January 15, 2026. (<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2026/01/us-says-iran-halts-executions-gulf-allies-pull-trump-back-strike>)

13. "Qatar Emir, Trump discuss de-escalation as US, Iran pursue diplomacy," *Reuters*, February 11, 2026. (<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/qatar-emir-trump-discuss-regional-de-escalation-royal-court-says-2026-02-11>)

14. U.S. Department of State, "Joint Statement on Iran's Missile and Drone Attacks in the Region," March 1, 2026. (<https://www.state.gov/releases/office-of-the-spokesperson/2026/03/joint-statement-on-irans-missile-and-drone-attacks-in-the-region>); @MofaQatar_EN, X, February 28, 2026. (https://x.com/MofaQatar_EN/status/2027709423007793154); @MofaQatar_EN, X, March 4, 2026. (https://x.com/MofaQatar_EN/status/2029230874890248407); "Islamic Republic of Iran Attacks the Arab World," *Foundation for Defense of Democracies*, March 3, 2026. (<https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2026/03/03/islamic-republic-of-iran-attacks-the-arab-world>)

15. @AJENews, X, March 31, 2026. (<https://x.com/AJENews/status/2039023542516269164>)

16. Barak Ravid, "Vance meets Qatari mediator as U.S. awaits peace plan response," *Axios*, May 8, 2026. (<https://www.axios.com/2026/05/08/vance-qatar-mediator-iran-war>); "Qatar emir, Trump discuss Washington-Tehran ceasefire," *Reuters*, April 24, 2026. (<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/qatar-emir-trump-discuss-washington-tehran-ceasefire-2026-04-24>); @BarakRavid, X, April 24, 2026. (<https://x.com/BarakRavid/status/2047745944804884784>)

17. Barak Ravid, "Scoop: Rubio and Witkoff meet Qatari mediator in Miami on Iran deal," *Axios*, May 9, 2026. (<https://www.axios.com/2026/05/09/witkoff-rubio-qatar-iran-deal>); Barak Ravid, "Trump says he's pausing plan to attack Iran," *Axios*, May 18, 2026. (<https://www.axios.com/2026/05/18/trump-iran-attack-suspend-nuclear-talks>); @ariel_oseran, X, May 19, 2026. (https://x.com/ariel_oseran/status/2056673322679541828)

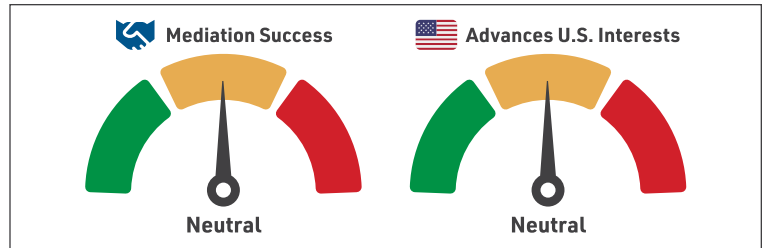
18. Benoit Faucon, Alexander Ward, and Summer Said, "U.S., Qatar Work to Give Iran Access to Billions of Dollars in Frozen Cash," *The Wall Street Journal*, June 19, 2026. (<https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/iran-frozen-funds-qatar-effed975>)

19. "Vance says direct IRGC-CENTCOM channel agreed in Switzerland talks," *Iran International*, June 25, 2026. (<https://www.iranintl.com/en/202606257889>)

THE MIDDLE EAST BEYOND IRAN

GAZA

Qatar came to the negotiating table after October 7, 2023, as an experienced interlocutor with Hamas. However, every previous ceasefire Qatar brokered bought Hamas time and space to prepare for the next battle. Moreover, Doha's efforts to reconcile Hamas with its rival, Fatah, have also fallen short. Thus, Qatar's mediation has repeatedly resulted in temporary quiet that leaves Hamas entrenched and empowered.



As early as 2003, Hamas reportedly worked with Qatari mediators in an unsuccessful effort to bring an end to the Second Intifada.²⁰ Three years later, the 2006 Palestinian legislative elections provided new opportunities for conflict resolution. After Hamas won the elections, Qatar debuted as a mediator for the intra-Palestinian conflict — a role traditionally reserved for Egypt.²¹ Qatar's diplomatic role expanded significantly after Hamas conquered Gaza in 2007.

When a civil war erupted in 2007 between Hamas and Fatah, Qatar was one of several countries that attempted to end the violence and negotiate a unity government. The talks failed, and Hamas remained in control of Gaza. Concurrently, Qatar emerged as one of Hamas's top financial patrons. At the time, Hamas's political leadership operated out of Damascus, but they moved to Doha in 2012 after the Syrian civil war erupted.

After Hamas's political chief reportedly left Syria in January 2012, Doha again engaged with the rival Palestinian factions to broker a power-sharing agreement that would install a "Palestinian National Reconciliation Government of independent technocrats."²² The agreement was never implemented. The two sides reconvened in Doha in 2016, but Qatar failed to broker unity.²³

The 2014 conflict between Hamas and Israel was Qatar's next major foray into Gaza diplomacy. During the 51-day conflict, Qatar and Turkey lobbied Secretary of State John Kerry for an end state that would have eased restrictions in Gaza without addressing Israeli concerns about Hamas's terror infrastructure — infrastructure reportedly enhanced with Qatari help.²⁴ Egypt intervened to protest this arrangement, along with Israel. The disagreement reflected a growing rift between the pragmatic Arab states and those like Qatar that backed the Muslim Brotherhood

20. Arnon Regular, "Hamas Proposed a Cease-fire via Qatar Mediators; Message Relayed to U.S." *Haaretz* (Israel), December 23, 2003. (<https://www.haaretz.com/2003-12-23/ty-article/hamas-proposed-a-cess-fire-via-qatari-mediators-message-relayed-to-u-s/0000017f-f04f-dc28-a17f-fc7ffe820000>)

21. Greg Myre, "Qatar Emerges as a Mediator Between Fatah and Hamas," *The New York Times*, October 10, 2006. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/10/world/middleeast/10mideast.html>)

22. Nidal al-Mughrabi, "Hamas quietly quits Syria as violence continues," *Reuters*, January 27, 2012. (<https://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/01/27/190918>); "Doha Declaration (2012)," *Economic Cooperation Foundation*, accessed August 21, 2026. (<https://ecf.org.il/issues/issue/1168>)

23. Peter Baker, "Rival Palestinian Leaders Agree to Agree, but Not on the Details," *The New York Times*, October 27, 2016. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/28/world/middleeast/palestinian-meeting-abbas-meshal.html>)

24. Raphael Ahren, "Leaked document confirms US ceasefire bid generous to Hamas," *The Times of Israel* (Israel), July 27, 2014. (<https://www.timesofisrael.com/leaked-document-confirms-us-ceasefire-bid-generous-to-hamas/amp>); David Shamah, "Qatari tech helps Hamas in tunnels, rockets: Expert," *The Times of Israel* (Israel), July 31, 2014. (<https://www.timesofisrael.com/qatari-tech-helps-hamas-in-tunnels-rockets-expert>)

during the Arab Spring. In the end, Hamas remained entrenched in Gaza, even after losing the war, thanks to Qatar's efforts.

Qatar again emerged as a mediator during the 11-day clash between Israel and Hamas in May 2021. This time, Qatar mediated alongside Egypt.²⁵ But the end result was no different. Hamas remained in power, with no effort to dislodge the terrorist group from its stronghold.

During a short battle between Israel and Iran-backed Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) in 2022, Doha intervened again as a broker. The result was a ceasefire between Islamic Jihad and Israel.²⁶ Qatar again angled for the status quo: leaving PIJ in place.

For years, Qatar's diplomatic efforts achieved nothing other than a deceiving calm. Hamas enjoyed funding and safe haven in Doha while the Qataris provided \$30 million per month to Hamas in Gaza. One might argue that this bought time for both Hamas and Islamic Jihad, whose terrorists flooded southern Israel on October 7, 2023 and plunged the region into conflict.

Since 10/7, Qatar has worked with both the Biden and Trump administrations to mediate between Hamas and Israel. A year before the attack, in the wake of the Ukraine war that left the West in a precarious place regarding energy, the Biden administration elevated energy-rich Qatar to the status of a Major Non-NATO Ally. The Trump administration chose to continue with Biden's approach of relying on Qatar, dispatching an envoy with close business ties to Doha.²⁷ On a bipartisan basis, the United States trusted a mediator that had nourished Hamas for nearly two decades.

Six weeks after the war erupted, a Qatar-brokered ceasefire began on November 24, 2023, and it even led to the release of hostages. However, after seven days, Hamas refused to send a new list of hostages for release and resumed firing rockets at Israel.²⁸ It took 13 months to clinch a new deal, with both the incoming Trump and outgoing Biden administrations pushing to end the war. The terms of that second deal in January 2025, brokered by Qatar, secured the return of Israeli hostages — with sickening videos of their release broadcast widely across the Arab world via Qatar's Al Jazeera television network. The deal collapsed after about two months, when the Israelis grasped that the deal's terms would have left Hamas in power in Gaza.

The September 9, 2025 Israeli strike on a Hamas office in Doha was ultimately what broke the ensuing logjam.²⁹ It was on that day that Doha realized that its policy of simultaneously sponsoring Hamas and playing the disingenuous role as hostage negotiator had its limits.

25. Vivian Salama, Felicia Schwartz, and Jared Malsin, "Israel and Hamas Near Cease-Fire Amid Mounting Pressure," *The Wall Street Journal*, May 19, 2021. (<https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/israel-says-it-is-assessing-a-possible-cess-fire-with-hamas-11621423957>)

26. The White House, "Statement by President Biden on the Ceasefire in Gaza," August 7, 2022. (<https://bidenwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/08/07/statement-by-president-biden-on-the-ceasefire-in-gaza>)

27. Debra Kamin and Bradley Hope, "Where Mideast Envoy Pitched Peace, His Son Pitched Investors," *The New York Times*, September 26, 2025. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/09/26/business/witkoff-son-qatar-gaza.html>)

28. Itamar Eichner, "What led to the end of the pause in fighting in Gaza?" *Ynet* (Israel), December 1, 2023. (<https://www.ynetnews.com/article/bktbbgvh6>)

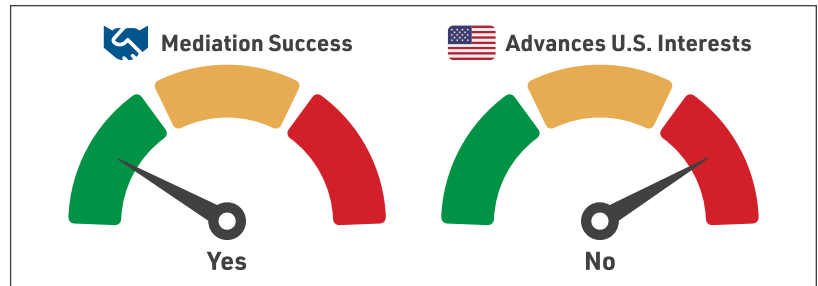
29. Jonathan Schanzer and Natalie Ecanow, "Israel's Doha Strike May Have Turned the Tide," *Commentary*, October 5, 2025. (<https://www.commentary.org/jonathan-schanzer/israels-doha-strike-may-have-turned-the-tide>)

Following the strike, which narrowly missed Hamas senior leadership but killed a number of bodyguards and the son of Hamas politburo member Khalil al-Hayya, Qatar sued for an end of conflict agreement that ultimately released all the living and slain hostages still held in Gaza.

History must play out before judging the success of the current ceasefire, driven now by Donald Trump's Board of Peace. What is clear is that Qatar will continue to actively play a role. In February, Doha pledged \$1 billion to the board.³⁰ Any change for the better will likely be a product of American diplomacy, rather than Qatari efforts to weaken Hamas.

LEBANON

Qatar has intervened in Lebanon on multiple occasions to help resolve political crises. Each time, Qatar brokered deals that resulted in short-term calm but did not improve Lebanese stability or encourage meaningful reform. In fairness, Doha never declared the ability or ambition to reshape Lebanon or its institutions. However, in practice, Qatari mediators succeeded only at perpetuating a status quo that has pushed Lebanon to the brink of collapse while helping to sustain Hezbollah, a U.S.-designated terrorist organization.³¹



In 2005, former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri was assassinated, igniting protests that led to the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon after 29 years of occupation. Political divisions between Lebanon's Hezbollah-led Shiite bloc and Western-backed Sunni bloc intensified, resulting in prolonged political turmoil. Tensions reached a fever pitch in May 2008 when the Lebanese government, under the leadership of U.S.-backed Prime Minister Fouad Siniora, moved to shut down Hezbollah's telecommunications network and dismiss the Hezbollah-aligned head of security at Beirut's international airport.³² Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah vowed "to cut the hand that targets the weapons of the resistance." Hezbollah violently seized swaths of Beirut in what the government described as an "armed coup" by way of "weapons sent by Tehran."³³ Against this backdrop, Qatar stepped in to prevent Lebanon from descending into civil war. In practice, this only succeeded in maintaining Hezbollah's extralegal position and prerogatives.

On May 21, 2008, Lebanon's Hezbollah-led opposition reached an agreement with the country's governing majority, thanks to the personal intervention of Qatar's emir.³⁴ The agreement set a timeline for the formation of a cabinet and the election of pro-Hezbollah figure Michel Suleiman as president, committed all parties "not to use weapons or violence in order to achieve political gains," and granted Hezbollah and its allies veto power over

30. "Contributions for Gaza from Board of Peace members," *Reuters*, February 19, 2026. (<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/contributions-gaza-board-peace-members-2026-02-19>)

31. Kali Robinson, "Is Lebanon a Failed State? Here's What the Numbers Say," *Council on Foreign Relations*, September 16, 2020. (<https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/lebanon-failed-state-heres-what-numbers-say>)

32. Nada Bakri, "Clashes erupt in Beirut as Hezbollah enforces strike," *The New York Times*, May 7, 2008. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/07/world/africa/07iht-beirut.4.12662439.html>)

33. Robert F. Worth and Nada Bakri, "Hezbollah Seizes Swath of Beirut From U.S.-Backed Lebanon Government," *The New York Times*, May 10, 2008. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/10/world/middleeast/10lebanon.html>)

34. Nada Bakri and Alan Cowell, "Lebanese reach agreement to resolve 18-month political crisis," *The New York Times*, May 21, 2008. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/21/world/africa/21iht-lebanon.4.13105564.html>)

cabinet decisions. Effectively, the Doha Agreement avoided civil war by yielding to Hezbollah's use of force and granting the Iran-backed group control over Beirut's decision-making.³⁵

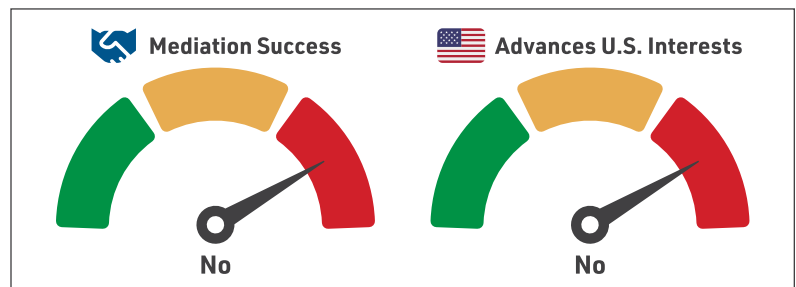
Qatar played a similar role during Lebanon's two-year interregnum without a president, which lasted from October 2022 until January 2025 amidst Hezbollah's repeated efforts to prevent parliament from selecting a new leader.³⁶ During this time, Qatar attempted to break the stalemate in partnership with France, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the United States.³⁷ Doha did not back a specific candidate and instead maintained that the presidency "is an internal Lebanese matter, and the first and the last decision is for the Lebanese themselves." This effectively enshrined Hezbollah's role in Lebanon's politics until war erupted after Hamas's October 7, 2023, attack. Thanks to Israel's targeted killing of Nasrallah and the now-famous beeper operation in September 2024 that felled dozens of top commanders, Hezbollah is far weaker today.

To this day, Qatar remains involved in Lebanon's domestic affairs, and its role may be intensifying.³⁸ Qatar's emir met with Lebanese President Joseph Aoun in Doha in September 2025.³⁹ The commander of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) met with Qatar's prime minister in October.⁴⁰ Then, in January 2026, Qatar pledged \$480 million in reconstruction aid and at least \$400 million more primarily to support Lebanon's infrastructure.⁴¹ Doha did not attach any conditions to the aid, but worked with the Trump administration to obtain written assurances that Qatari-funded construction in south Lebanon would not come under Israeli fire.

Doha's continued engagement with Lebanon will likely produce the same result it always has: temporary stability that all but guarantees the country's dysfunction — a state of affairs that empowers actors like Hezbollah.

YEMEN

Qatar has tried repeatedly to mediate between the Iran-backed Houthis and Yemen's internationally recognized government. Doha has notched small wins releasing hostages from Yemen, but only by enriching terrorists without bringing Yemen's civil war closer to an end.



35. Robert F. Worth and Nada Bakri, "Deal for Lebanese Factions Leaves Hezbollah Stronger," *The New York Times*, May 22, 2008. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/22/world/middleeast/22lebanon.html>)

36. "Lebanon's crisis deepens as presidential vote collapses," *Reuters*, June 14, 2023. (<https://gulfnews.com/world/mena/lebanons-crisis-deepens-as-presidential-vote-collapses-1.96391319>)

37. Asmahan Qarjouli, "Quintet Group on Lebanon to reconvene in a bid to break presidential deadlock," *Doha News* (Qatar), January 18, 2024. (<https://dohanews.co/quintet-group-on-lebanon-to-reconvene-in-a-bid-to-break-the-presidential-deadlock>)

38. Yoel Guzansky and Orna Mizrahi, "The Increasing Qatari Involvement in Lebanon," *The Institute for National Security Studies* (Israel), November 5, 2024. (<https://www.inss.org.il/publication/qatar-lebanon>)

39. State of Qatar, Amiri Diwan, "HH The Amir Receives the President of Lebanon," September 15, 2025. (<https://www.diwan.gov.qa/en/briefing-room/news/receiving-guests/2025/september/15/hh-the-amir-receives-president-of-lebanon>)

40. Lebanese Army, "LAF Commander Visits the State of Qatar and Meets With the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defense Affairs, and the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces," October 8, 2025. (<https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/laf-commander-visits-state-qatar-and-meets-prime-minister-and-minister-foreign-affairs>)

41. David Daoud and Natalie Ecanow, "Without Conditions, Qatari Aid to Lebanon Isn't Helpful," *Foundation for Defense of Democracies*, January 29, 2026. (<https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2026/01/29/without-conditions-qatari-aid-to-lebanon-isnt-helpful>); "Qatar says it will provide Lebanon with \$430 million in financial support," *Reuters*, January 26, 2026. (<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/qatar-says-it-will-provide-lebanon-with-430-million-financial-support-2026-01-26>)

In 2007, Doha brokered a ceasefire between Yemen's warring parties after conducting a series of meetings in Yemen and Qatar.⁴² The agreement paused the fourth of six bouts of fighting in the "Saada Wars." However, fighting quickly resumed. The parties reconvened in Qatar in early 2008 and clinched a new deal that provided for reconstruction and reportedly envisioned the exile of Houthi leaders to Doha. That summer, Yemen's President Ali Abdullah Saleh declared an end to the fighting in Houthi-held Saada Province.⁴³ But again, the peace was fleeting. By August 2009, Yemeni forces launched a full-scale operation against the Houthi rebellion in Saada, and Saleh declared that Qatar's mediation was a "failure."⁴⁴

Nonetheless, Qatar remained involved. In 2010, Doha brokered a 22-point agreement calling for "a final close to the war and the start of a political dialogue."⁴⁵ The agreement produced interim peace but did not substantially weaken the Houthis or prevent their ultimate march to Yemen's capital, Sanaa, in 2014. In fact, Qatar participated in the Saudi-led intervention in Yemen from 2015 until 2017, when a rift developed between Doha and its Gulf neighbors.⁴⁶ At that point, Qatar offered again to mediate between Saleh and the Houthis, but the rebels declined. At the same time, Yemeni government officials charged that Qatar supported the Houthis.⁴⁷

Four years later, Qatar participated in back-channel talks between the Houthis and Washington, again to no avail.⁴⁸ By this time, the Qataris reportedly welcomed Houthi leader Abdul-Malik al-Ajri to Doha as an unofficial ambassador of the terror group and opened an Al Jazeera office in Houthi-held Sanaa.⁴⁹ Analysts in Israel say the Qataris continued to support the Houthis after October 7 by "casting them as the Robin Hoods of the Middle East" on Al Jazeera.⁵⁰

Like in Gaza, Qatar failed to stabilize Yemen but successfully facilitated the release of hostages. In 2013, Qatar negotiated the release of Swiss teacher Silvia Eberhardt, who was kidnapped by al-Qaeda operatives in Yemen the previous year. Qatari officials reportedly deplaned with bags of cash when they arrived in Yemen to retrieve Eberhardt.⁵¹ The exchange was an early example of Doha financing terrorist groups through exorbitant ransom payments.

Eberhardt's case is arguably Qatar's only lasting success in Yemen — and it came only after Doha pumped cash into al-Qaeda's coffers. The Houthi threat only continues to grow.

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42. Sultan Barakat, "Qatari Mediation: Between Ambition and Achievement," *Brookings Doha Center*, November 2014. (<https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Final-PDF-English.pdf>)

43. "Factbox: Roots of Yemen's conflict with northern rebels," *Reuters*, January 30, 2010. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/world/factbox-roots-of-yemens-conflict-with-northern-rebels-idUSTRE60T1QN>); "Yemeni president claims revolt is over," *France 24* (France), July 18, 2008. (<https://www.france24.com/en/20080718-yemeni-president-claims-revolt-over-shia-revolt-yemen>)

44. Kristen Coates Ulrichsen, "Qatar's mediation initiatives," *Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre*, February 2013. (https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/pbei/noref/0027682/f_0027682_22546.pdf)

45. "Yemen officials, rebels reach peace deal in Qatar," *Reuters*, August 27, 2010. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/world/yemen-officials-rebels-reach-peace-deal-in-qatar-idUSTRE67Q39T>)

46. "Qatar sends 1,000 ground troops to Yemen conflict: al Jazeera," *Reuters*, September 7, 2015. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/world/qatar-sends-1000-ground-troops-to-yemen-conflict-al-jazeera-idUSKCN0R710W>)

47. Mariam al-Jaber, "Yemeni info official: Qatar provided Houthis with all kind of support," *Al-Arabiya English* (Saudi Arabia), June 23, 2018. (<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/gulf/2018/06/23/Yemeni-info-official-Qatar-provided-Houthis-with-all-kind-of-support>)

48. "Qatar postures as 'neutral mediator' in Yemen crisis, back channel for US-Houthi contacts," *The Arab Weekly* (UK), February 18, 2021. (<https://the arabweekly.com/qatar-postures-neutral-mediator-yemen-crisis-back-channel-us-houthi-contacts>)

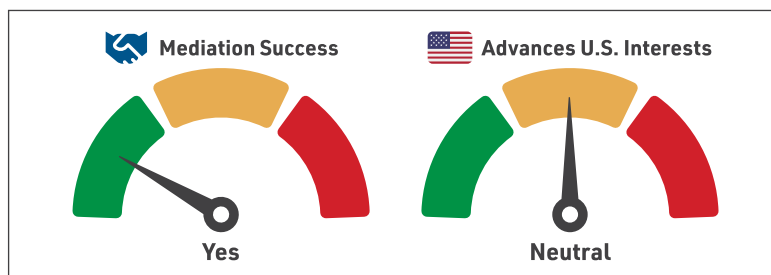
49. "Qatar postures as 'neutral mediator' in Yemen crisis, back channel for US-Houthi contacts," *The Arab Weekly* (UK), February 18, 2021. (<https://the arabweekly.com/qatar-postures-neutral-mediator-yemen-crisis-back-channel-us-houthi-contacts>)

50. Ksenia Svetlova, "The power behind the power: How Qatar helped the Houthis become a threat to Israel," *The Times of Israel* (Israel), December 28, 2023. (<https://www.timesofisrael.com/the-power-behind-the-power-how-qatar-helped-the-houthis-become-a-threat-to-israel>)

51. Ellen Knickmeyer, "Al Qaeda-Linked Groups Increasingly Funded by Ransom," *The Wall Street Journal*, July 29, 2014. (<https://www.wsj.com/articles/ransom-fills-terrorist-coffers-1406637010>)

SYRIA

Doha has proven skilled at getting prisoners released around the world. However, it's often accomplished this through lopsided swaps or expensive ransom payments, raising terror finance concerns and questions about whether these payoffs encourage bad actors to pursue hostage-taking as a source of leverage. Qatar's negotiations in Syria are particularly instructive.



Prior to the fall of the Bashar al-Assad regime, Western governments employed Qatar to free their citizens from the al-Qaeda-affiliated Nusra Front and its successor group, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), both of which received support from Doha. Qatari mediators succeeded, but often by paying large ransoms, enriching terrorists, undercutting American interests, and incentivizing further hostage-taking. Qatar's success, in other words, created demand for its services.

In 2013, Qatar brokered the release of nine Lebanese Shiite pilgrims from the Nusra Front in exchange for two Turkish pilots detained in Lebanon. Reports suggested that Doha paid as much as \$150 million to facilitate the exchange.⁵² A Lebanese security official said that figure “seemed high” but that “the deal did include money paid by Qatar.”⁵³

The following year was another busy one. In March 2014, Qatar negotiated the release of 16 women held hostage by Nusra fighters. The deal reportedly involved a multi-million-dollar ransom payment.⁵⁴ Qatar then secured the release of American freelance writer Theo Padnos in August. Padnos, whom the Nusra Front kidnapped in 2012, later said he was aware of “negotiations between members of Nusra Front and a Qatari ambassador” and that he held “the impression that hostage-taking and paying ransom to release the hostages is a way for Qatar to fund Nusra Front.”⁵⁵ One month after Padnos’ release, Doha reportedly paid the Nusra Front as much as \$25 million to free 45 kidnapped Fijian peacekeepers. Qatar and the United Nations deny a ransom was paid.⁵⁶

52. “Syria releases 61 female detainees in three-way prisoner exchange,” *Associated Press*, October 24, 2013. (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/24/syria-releases-women-detainees-prisoner-swap>); Aykan Erdemir and Varsha Koduvayur, “Brothers in Arms,” *Foundation for Defense of Democracies*, December 11, 2019. (<https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2019/12/11/brothers-in-arms>)

53. David Andrew Weinberg, “Terrorist Financing: Kidnapping, Antiquities Trafficking, and Private Donations,” *Testimony before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade*, November 17, 2015. (<https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2015/11/16/terrorist-financing-kidnapping-antiquities-trafficking-and-private-donations>)

54. Ellen Knickmeyer, “Al Qaeda-Linked Groups Increasingly Funded by Ransom,” *The Wall Street Journal*, July 29, 2014. (<https://www.wsj.com/articles/ransom-fills-terrorist-coffers-1406637010>); “Report: \$4M ransom paid to al-Qaeda-linked group for release of 13 nuns,” *Reuters*, March 11, 2014. (<https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4497257,00.html>)

55. “Ex-Nusra hostage Theo Padnos: Qatar’s ransom payouts were tactic to fund terror,” *Al Arabiya English* (Saudi Arabia), May 15, 2018. (<https://english.alarabiya.net/features/2018/05/01/American-ex-Nusra-Front-hostage-Qatar-s-ransom-payouts-are-tactic-to-fund-terror->)

56. “Report: UN Had Qatar Pay Off Al-Qaida Fighters for Release of Fiji Peacekeepers,” *Haaretz* (Israel), October 11, 2014. (<https://www.haaretz.com/2014-10-11/ty-article/report-un-had-qatar-pay-off-al-qaida/0000017f-e88a-dc7e-adff-f8af6b560000>)

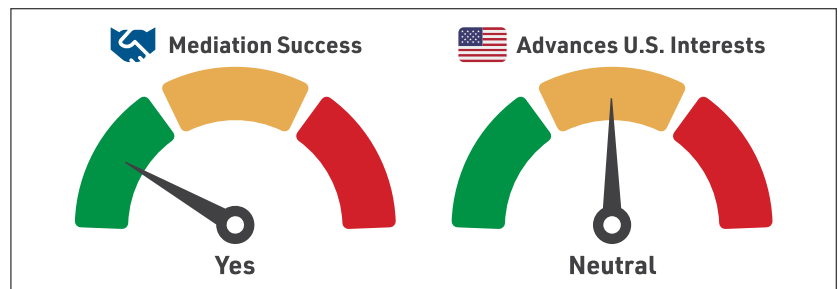
The next year, Qatar brokered an agreement where the Nusra Front released 16 Lebanese soldiers in exchange for 25 individuals detained in Lebanon.⁵⁷ Qatar also helped secure the 2018 release of Japanese journalist Junpei Yasuda from HTS. HTS claimed it received a \$3 million ransom payment, though Japanese Secretary Yoshihide Suga denied that ransom was paid.⁵⁸

In 2015, Iran-backed Iraqi militants kidnapped 25 Qatari citizens, including nine members of the royal family, on a hunting expedition in southern Iraq. Qatar reportedly doled out over \$1 billion to free the hostages, sending payments to HTS in Syria, Iranian proxy Kata'ib Hezbollah in Iraq, and Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.⁵⁹ Doha maintains that it sent the entire sum to the Iraqi government for "economic development" and "security cooperation."⁶⁰

Meanwhile, Qatar actively supported the Nusra Front as it brokered these transactions. Doha even welcomed Nusra leaders for meetings "with senior Qatari military officials and financiers" as early as 2012.⁶¹ Thus, Doha's successes in Syria are not born of neutrality. Nor were Qatar's successes cost-free. They came at the price of enriching terrorists and encouraging hostage-taking. Qatar is today a patron of the new government in Damascus, which is led by Ahmad al-Sharaa, former commander of Nusra and then HTS.

AFGHANISTAN

Qatar's role negotiating the end of the war in Afghanistan is perhaps the crown jewel of Qatari diplomacy. The United States wanted a way out of its 20-year intervention and Qatar delivered, though at a steep price. Qatar helped craft the terms of America's withdrawal, which set the stage for the Taliban to return to power. Did Qatar help end America's "forever war"? Yes. Did the Qatari-brokered exit secure long-term American interests? No.



Qatar emerged as an interlocutor between the United States, the Taliban, and Afghan representatives as early as 2010. In November of that year, Taliban leaders met with American officials in Germany. According to news reports, Qatari officials attended the meeting at the Taliban's request.⁶²

57. Qatar Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Qatar's Mediation Succeeds in Releasing Captured Lebanese Soldiers," December 1, 2015. (<https://mofa.gov.qa/en/qatar/latest-articles/latest-news/details/2015/12/01/qatar-s-mediation-succeeds-in-releasing-captured-lebanese-soldiers>);

"How Qatari-mediated deal secured Lebanese soldiers' freedom," *The New Arab* (UK), December 1, 2015. (<https://www.newarab.com/news/how-qatari-mediated-deal-secured-lebanese-soldiers-freedom>)

58. Richard Lloyd Parry and Hannah Lucinda Smith, "Syrian militants free Japanese journalist Junpei Yasuda 'for \$3m ransom,'" *The Times* (UK), October 24, 2018. (<https://www.thetimes.com/world/middle-east/article/syrian-militants-free-japanese-journalist-junpei-yasuda-for-3m-ransom-l8vhd22z>); "Japanese journalist Junpei Yasuda free 3 years after kidnap in Syria," *CBS News*, October 24, 2018. (<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/japanese-journalist-junpei-yasuda-released-syria-kidnap-al-qaeda-nusra-front>)

59. Erika Solomon, "The \$1bn hostage deal that enraged Qatar's Gulf rivals," *Financial Times* (UK), June 5, 2017. (<https://www.ft.com/content/dd033082-49e9-11e7-a3f4-c742b9791d43>)

60. Paul Wood, "Billion dollar ransom: Did Qatar pay record sum?" *BBC* (UK), July 16, 2018. (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-44660369>)

61. Jay Solomon and Nour Malas, "Qatar's Ties to Militants Strain Alliance," *The Wall Street Journal*, February 23, 2015. (<https://www.wsj.com/articles/qatars-ties-to-militants-strain-alliance-1424748601>)

62. Ahmed Rashid, "Talks with Taliban must be secret to be successful," *The Global and Mail* (Canada), July 1, 2011. (<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/talks-with-taliban-must-be-secret-to-be-successful/article587524>)

In 2013, amidst reports that the United States sought to end its military operations in Afghanistan, the Taliban established a diplomatic office in Doha. The Taliban raised their black flag above the office, violating the agreement that allowed it to open and prompting Afghan officials to cancel a visit to Doha.⁶³ Qatari officials say the office, which the Taliban referred to as their embassy, opened at the Obama administration's request. Then-Secretary of State John Kerry later thanked Qatar for its "willingness to host the Taliban office" without confirming which government initiated the project.⁶⁴ The purpose of the office was to facilitate dialogue, but it was also a fundraising platform for the Taliban.⁶⁵

Qatar-mediated talks continued throughout the Obama, Trump, and Biden administrations, culminating with the February 2020 agreement that set the stage for the withdrawal of American troops.⁶⁶ The episode ended with the disastrous U.S. withdrawal in August 2021, the suicide bombing at Kabul airport's Abbey Gate that killed 13 American servicemembers and 170 Afghans, the collapse of the government in Kabul, and the Taliban's return to power.⁶⁷ In February 2025, the Taliban said they no longer consider the 2020 Doha agreement valid.⁶⁸

Admittedly, the United States was keen to exit Afghanistan and, in that sense, Qatar delivered. However, in its eagerness to withdraw, the United States ultimately accepted terms that served Afghanistan to the Taliban on a silver platter. This was not an unforeseen outcome. In March 2020, Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) expressed concern that "by announcing a timetable for the complete withdrawal of U.S. forces," the United States was "undermining the Afghan government and validating the Taliban's long-standing perception that they can wait us out."⁶⁹

After the U.S. withdrawal, then-commander of U.S. Central Command Gen. Frank McKenzie testified that "the primary accelerant to lowering moral [sic] and general efficiency of the Afghan military was what they saw coming in the heels of the Doha agreement." At the same hearing, then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Mark Milley noted that "while the Taliban did not attack U.S. forces, which was one of the conditions, it failed to fully honor ... any other condition under the Doha agreement."⁷⁰ Those conditions included guaranteeing that no "group or individual, including al-Qaeda" would use Afghanistan "to threaten the security of the United States and its allies."⁷¹

63. "Taliban says Doha office flag, banner raised with 'agreement of Qatar,'" *Reuters*, June 23, 2013. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/world/asia-pacific/taliban-says-doha-office-flag-banner-raised-with-agreement-of-qatar-idUSDEE95M052>)

64. U.S. Department of State, "Remarks With Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim Al Thani After Their Meeting," June 22, 2013. (<https://2009-2017.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2013/06/211008.htm>)

65. Joe Wallen, "How the Taliban helped build the stadiums for the Qatar World Cup," *The Telegraph* (UK), November 25, 2022. (<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/global-health/terror-and-security/how-taliban-helped-build-stadiums-qatar-world-cup>)

66. U.S. Department of State, "Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan between the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognized by the United States as a state and is known as the Taliban and the United States of America," February 29, 2020. (<https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Agreement-For-Bringing-Peace-to-Afghanistan-02.29.20.pdf>)

67. David Zucchino, "Collapse and Conquest: The Taliban Strategy That Seized Afghanistan," *The New York Times*, August 18, 2021. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/18/world/asia/taliban-victory-strategy-afghanistan.html>); Haley Britzky, "Families of Troops killed in Abbey Gate bombing in Afghanistan demand accountability in emotional testimony," *CNN*, August 29, 2023. (<https://www.cnn.com/2023/08/29/politics/abbey-gate-afghanistan-families-house-roundtable>)

68. "Taliban Declares End to Doha Agreement With The United States," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, February 28, 2025. (<https://www.rferl.org/a/afghanistan-taliban-united-states-doha-agreement/33331666.html>)

69. Gen. Frank McKenzie, Commander of U.S. Central Command, "Transcript Gen. McKenzie SASC Testimony," *Testimony before the Senate Committee on Armed Services*, March 13, 2020. (<https://www.centcom.mil/MEDIA/Transcripts/Article/2111126/transcript-gen-mckenzie-sasc-testimony>)

70. Gen. Mark Milley, "Hearing to Receive Testimony on the Conclusion of Military Operations in Afghanistan and Plans for Future Counterterrorism Operations," *Testimony before the Senate Committee on Armed Services*, September 28, 2021. (https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/21-73_09-28-2021.pdf)

71. U.S. Department of State, "Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan between the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognized by the United States as a state and is known as the Taliban and the United States of America," February 29, 2020. (<https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Agreement-For-Bringing-Peace-to-Afghanistan-02.29.20.pdf>)

The Doha agreement yielded chaos, but Qatar also played a role in managing it. Approximately 40 percent of those airlifted out of Afghanistan in the immediate aftermath of the U.S. pullout transited through the Gulf emirate.⁷² Qatar Airways continued to charter flights out of Afghanistan after the United States completed its withdrawal on August 30, 2021.⁷³

Despite the terrible outcome in Afghanistan, Qatari mediators have achieved success securing the release of Westerners held hostage by the Taliban. Many exchanges have been lopsided and to the Taliban's benefit. One well-known case is the 2014 swap of U.S. Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl for the "Taliban Five," a group of senior Taliban prisoners held at Guantanamo Bay. The Taliban Five resettled in Qatar, where at least three reportedly "tried to plug back into their old terror networks."⁷⁴ This was not unexpected. Representative Mike Rogers (R-MI), then Chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, warned in June 2014 that the Bergdahl deal was a "serious geopolitical mistake" that "empowered the Taliban."⁷⁵ Indeed, Qatar failed to prevent the Taliban Five from rejoining the terror organization they served: four of the five assumed senior roles in Afghanistan's government after the Taliban seized Kabul in 2021.⁷⁶

Over the years, Qatar mediated with the Taliban to facilitate the release of:

- Four Tajik border guards (2014).⁷⁷
- Canadian national Colin Rutherford (2015).⁷⁸
- American Kevin King and Australian Timothy Weeks (2019).⁷⁹
- Argentinian national Benjamin Sinonegui (2024).⁸⁰
- Austrian national Herbert Fritz (2024).⁸¹
- American citizen George Glezmman (2025).⁸²
- American citizen Amir Amiry (2025).⁸³

72. Aya Batrawy, "Qatar emerges as key player in Afghanistan after US pullout," *Associated Press*, August 30, 2021. (<https://apnews.com/article/middle-east-afghanistan-qatar-6c1e9e4ef1a9f0c3d19eac20b9321339>)

73. U.S. Department of State, Press Statement, "Departure of Qatar Airways Charter Flight from Kabul," September 9, 2021. (<https://2021-2025.state.gov/departure-of-qatar-airways-charter-flight-from-kabul/>); "US suspends diplomatic presence in Afghanistan, moves mission to Qatar," *Reuters*, August 31, 2021. (<https://www.arabnews.com/node/1920146/amp>)

74. Catherine Herridge, "Official: At least 3 members of 'Taliban 5' tried to reconnect with terror networks," *Fox News*, March 25, 2015. (<https://www.foxnews.com/politics/official-at-least-3-members-of-taliban-5-tried-to-reconnect-with-terror-networks>)

75. Imtiyaz Delawala, "Rep. Mike Rogers Convinced Released Taliban Will Return to Fight Against U.S." *ABC News*, June 8, 2014. (<https://abcnews.go.com/blogs/politics/2014/06/rep-mike-rogers-convinced-released-taliban-will-return-to-fight-against-u-s/>)

76. House GOP, Press Release, "Meet The New Afghanistan Government, It's Filled With Radical Islamic Terrorists," January 12, 2023. (<https://www.gop.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=265>)

77. Catherine Putz, "Tajik Border Guards Held by Taliban To Be Released," *The Diplomat*, June 16, 2015. (<https://thediplomat.com/2015/06/tajik-border-guards-held-by-taliban-to-be-released>)

78. Joshua Berlinger, "Canadian Colin Rutherford freed after 5 years as Taliban captive in Afghanistan," *CNN*, January 11, 2016. (<https://www.cnn.com/2016/01/11/americas/candian-captive-freed-afghanistan>)

79. "US and Australian hostages freed in Taliban prisoner swap," *BBC (UK)*, November 19, 2019. (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-50471186>)

80. Qatar Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Qatar's Mediation Efforts," accessed February 12, 2026. (<https://mofa.gov.qa/en/foreign-policy/mediation/mediation>)

81. "Taliban releases Austrian far-right activist held in Afghanistan," *Reuters*, February 25, 2024. (<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/taliban-releases-austrian-far-right-activist-held-afghanistan-2024-02-25/>)

82. Alireza Hajihosseini and Ivana Kottasova, "American detained by Taliban in Afghanistan is freed in deal mediated by Qatar," *CNN*, March 20, 2025. (<https://www.cnn.com/2025/03/20/asia/us-citizen-george-glezmman-released-taliban-afghanistan-qatar-intl>)

83. U.S. Department of State, Press Release, "Welcoming the Release of Amir Amiry in Afghanistan," September 28, 2025. (<https://www.state.gov/releases/office-of-the-spokesperson/2025/09/welcoming-the-release-of-amir-amiry-in-afghanistan>)

- American citizens Ryan Corbett and William McKenty (2025).⁸⁴
- Canadian national David Lavery (2025).⁸⁵
- British couple Peter and Barbie Reynolds (2025).⁸⁶

In short, Qatar worked with the United States and other governments to achieve tactical aims in Afghanistan, such as releasing their nationals. However, Doha also worked with the Taliban to achieve a strategic victory. After a protracted war with the United States, the Taliban is back in power as the sovereign in Afghanistan. Qatar continues to support the regime.⁸⁷

In late 2025, skirmishes erupted between Taliban-ruled Afghanistan and the Taliban's former patrons in Pakistan. Qatar intervened there, too. Doha, along with Turkey, helped broker a ceasefire between Afghanistan and Pakistan in October 2025.⁸⁸ However, tensions continued to flare. After a series of cross-border exchanges, Pakistan's defense minister declared "open war" with Afghanistan on February 26.⁸⁹ One week later, Afghanistan launched ground assaults on at least 16 Pakistani positions. The clashes left over 65 Afghan troops dead.⁹⁰

Hostilities climaxed on March 16 when a Pakistani airstrike hit a drug rehabilitation center in Kabul.⁹¹ Within 48 hours — after engagement from Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey — Pakistan and Afghanistan announced a temporary ceasefire ahead of Eid al-Fitr.⁹² Qatar continues to mediate between the two countries, seemingly to preserve the Taliban's position of power above all else.

84. "Taliban says 2 Americans freed in prisoner swap with U.S., and Ryan Corbett's family says he's one of them," *CBS News*, January 21, 2025. (<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/american-ryan-corbett-freed-by-taliban-in-prisoner-exchange>)

85. Nassima Babassa, "Qatar's intervention helps secure Canadian veteran release from Afghanistan," *Doha News* (Qatar), January 27, 2025. (<https://dohanews.co/qatars-intervention-helps-secure-canadian-veteran-release-from-afghanistan>)

86. Caroline Hawley and Aleks Phillips, "British couple reunited with daughter after months held by Taliban," *BBC* (UK), September 20, 2025. (<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c0q7l8ewj0wo>); The U.S. State Department also thanked Qatar for its support after the Taliban freed Dennis Coyle in March 2026 but did not specify what role Qatar played in Coyle's release: U.S. State Department, Press Release, "Release of Dennis Coyle," March 24, 2026. (<https://www.state.gov/releases/office-of-the-spokesperson/2026/03/release-of-dennis-coyle>).

87. "Qatar and Taliban sign air services agreement," *Amu TV*, October 28, 2024. (<https://amu.tv/133546>); "Qatari Foreign Minister meets senior Taliban leaders in Kandahar," *KabulNow*, May 12, 2023. (<https://kabulnow.com/2023/05/qatari-foreign-minister-meets-senior-taliban-leaders-in-kandahar>)

88. Riazat Butt, "Afghanistan and Pakistan pledge to respect ceasefire after more than a week of deadly fighting," *Associated Press*, October 19, 2025. (<https://apnews.com/article/afghanistan-pakistan-taliban-qatar-ceasefire-5644c17728ef48434e50e6e8be49294b>)

89. Sayed Hassib, "Pakistan, Afghanistan forces exchange fire after airstrikes deepen tensions," *Reuters*, February 24, 2026. (<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/pakistan-afghan-forces-exchange-fire-after-airstrikes-deepen-tensions-2026-02-24>); Elian Peltier, Safiullah Padshah, and Zia ur-Rehman, "Pakistan Strikes Afghanistan in 'Open War' Against Taliban Government," *The New York Times*, February 26, 2026. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2026/02/26/world/asia/pakistan-afghanistan-taliban.html>)

90. "Pakistan says it killed 67 Afghan security force members in fifth day of fighting," *Al Arabiya English* (Saudi Arabia), March 3, 2026. (<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/world/2026/03/03/pakistan-says-it-killed-67-afghan-security-force-members-in-fifth-day-of-fighting>)

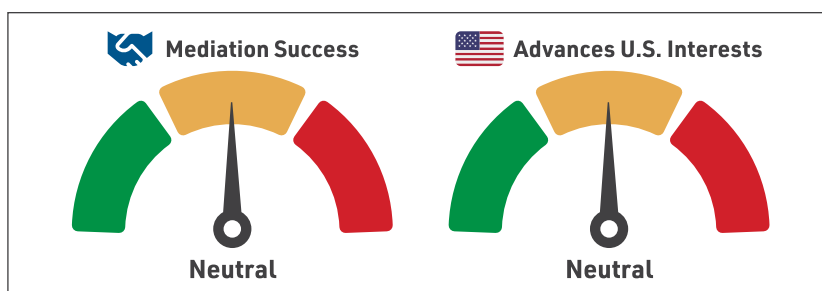
91. @FitratHamd, X, March 16, 2026. (<https://x.com/FitratHamd/status/2033674000547581953>); Mohammad Yunus Yawar, Ariba Shahid, and Asif Shahzad, "Kabul says Pakistan airstrike kills 408 at rehab centre, Islamabad rejects claim," *Reuters*, March 17, 2026. (<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/afghan-taliban-says-400-killed-250-injured-pakistan-air-strike-kabul-hospital-2026-03-17>)

92. Mohammad Yunus Yawar and Ariba Shahid, "Pakistan, Afghanistan to pause fighting for Eid, as dispute rages over Kabul bombing target," *Reuters*, March 18, 2026. (<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/afghans-search-loved-ones-kabul-rehab-centre-bombed-by-pakistan-2026-03-18>)

UKRAINE

Qatar positioned itself as an interlocutor between Russia and Ukraine soon after Russia's invasion in February 2022. Since then, Qatar has achieved tactical successes reuniting families, while maintaining limited involvement in broader negotiations to end the war.

Qatar has brokered multiple family reunification agreements since the war began, including in October 2023, April 2024, May 2024, February 2025, and March 2025.⁹³ Qatar's success here is laudable.



In July 2023, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky announced that Qatar would help implement his 10-point peace plan.⁹⁴ Curiously, reports suggested that Qatar was simultaneously working with Russia and Turkey on a framework for exporting Russian grain, circumventing the Black Sea Grain Initiative — a UN- and Turkey-brokered agreement for the safe export of Ukrainian grain during the first year of the war. Doha dismissed these reports as “inaccurate” and maintained that it “supports a return” to the Black Sea initiative.⁹⁵

One year later, Zelensky's 10-point plan remained aspirational. Switzerland hosted a global summit in June 2024 to discuss Zelensky's “peace formula” following a preparatory meeting in Qatar.⁹⁶ Doha brokered unsuccessful talks for an aerial truce that summer but was reportedly involved in crafting the 28-point plan for Ukraine that Washington announced in November 2025. Reports do not clarify how much, if any, sway Qatar exercised over the content of the 28 points, which received fierce international criticism for their bias towards Russia.⁹⁷

93. “Ukraine updates: Qatar mediates return of Ukrainian children,” *Deutsche Welle* (Germany), October 16, 2023. (<https://www.dw.com/en/ukraine-updates-qatar-mediates-return-of-ukrainian-children/live-67110766>); Asmahani Qarjouli, “Russia announces deal to exchange children with Ukraine following Qatar’s mediation,” *Doha News* (Qatar), April 25, 2024. (<https://dohanews.co/russia-announces-deal-to-exchange-children-with-ukraine-following-qatars-mediation>); Fatemeh Salari, “Qatar mediated the return of six Ukrainian children held in Russia to their families,” *Doha News* (Qatar), May 23, 2024. (<https://dohanews.co/qatar-mediated-the-return-of-six-ukrainian-children-held-in-russia-to-their-families>); Qatar Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Qatar Announces its Successful Mediation in Reuniting a New Group of Children with their Families in Russia and Ukraine,” February 14, 2025. (<https://mofa.gov.qa/en/qatar/latest-articles/latest-news/details/2025/02/14/qatar-announces-its-successful-mediation-in-reuniting-a-new-group-of-children-with-their-families-in-russia-and-ukraine>); Qatar Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Qatar Announces the Success of Its Mediation in Reuniting Two New Groups of Children with Their Families in Russia and Ukraine,” March 27, 2025. (<https://mofa.gov.qa/en/qatar/latest-articles/latest-news/details/2025/03/27/qatar-announces-the-success-of-its-mediation-in-reuniting-two-new-groups-of-children-with-their-families-in-russia-and-ukraine>)

94. Martin Fornusek, “Zelensky says Qatar joins Ukraine’s Peace Formula,” *The Kyiv Independent* (Ukraine), July 29, 2023. (<https://kyivindependent.com/zelensky-says-qatar-joins-ukraines-peace-formula>)

95. “Russia says it will have talks with Turkey about alternative to Black Sea deal,” *Reuters*, August 30, 2023. (<https://www.reuters.com/markets/commodities/russia-says-it-will-have-talks-with-turkey-about-alternative-black-sea-deal-2023-08-30>); Asmahani Qarjouli, “Qatar dismisses ‘inaccurate’ claims on role in new Russia-Turkey grain deal,” *Doha News* (Qatar), September 5, 2023. (<https://dohanews.co/qatar-dismisses-inaccurate-claims-on-role-in-new-russia-turkey-grain-deal>)

96. Alberto Nardelli, Alex Wickham, and Alessandro Speciale, “Qatar Will Host Meeting to Discuss Ukrainian Proposal to End War,” *Bloomberg*, April 24, 2024. (<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-04-24/qatar-will-host-meeting-to-discuss-ukrainian-proposal-to-end-war>)

97. Christopher Miller and Max Seddon, “‘Massive’ Russian air attack targets Ukraine’s battered energy grid,” *Financial Times* (UK), December 13, 2024. (<https://www.ft.com/content/4f096be9-8dac-4deb-ac01-139327889bcd>); Barak Ravid, “Scoop: Trump plan asks Ukraine to cede additional territory for security guarantee,” *Axios*, November 19, 2025. (<https://www.axios.com/2025/11/19/trump-ukraine-peace-plan-russia-donbas>)

While Qatar has remained nominally neutral, it has steadily deepened its relationship with Russia.⁹⁸ Bilateral trade grew 7.5 percent during the first year of the war — trade between Qatar and Ukraine contracted — and Doha pledged to contribute \$1 billion to a joint investment fund with Moscow in April 2025.⁹⁹ Qatar owns just under one-fifth of Russia's state oil company Rosneft, which the U.S. Treasury Department sanctioned in October 2025 for helping “fund the Kremlin's war machine.” The chairman of Rosneft's board of directors is former Qatari Minister of Energy and Industry Affairs Mohammed bin Saleh al-Sada.¹⁰⁰ Qatar, in other words, did not arrive at the negotiating table as a disinterested party. That said, Qatar has recently deepened its partnership with Ukraine. In March 2026, after coming under fire from Iran, Qatar signed a 10-year defense agreement with Ukraine anchored in counter-drone cooperation.¹⁰¹

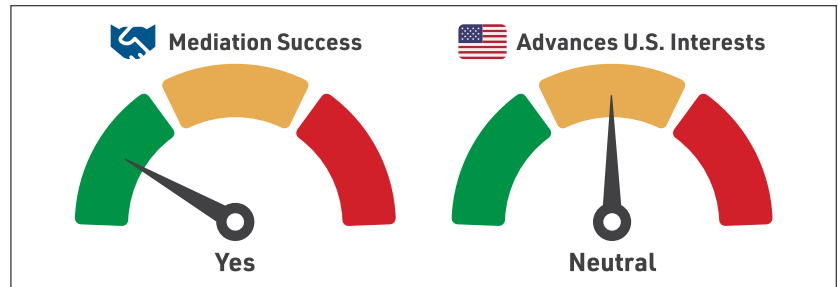
AFRICA

Qatar has engaged in diplomatic efforts across the African continent for years. It is unclear what Doha has sought to gain from these mediations. However, most of Qatar's efforts have failed, despite some initial successes.

CHAD AND SUDAN

Qatar achieved lasting success brokering rapprochement between Chad and Sudan, normalizing a relationship fractured by cross-border tensions and proxy warfare. But within each country, Qatar has been less successful.

In February 2010, Chadian President Idriss Deby traveled to Sudan for the first time in six years. Chad and Sudan had been clashing for years over each other's support for rebel groups on opposite sides of their border. Tensions reached a fever pitch in 2006 when Deby cut diplomatic relations with Khartoum following a deadly rebel attack on Chad's capital city.¹⁰² Chad-supported Darfur rebels responded by launching a strike on Sudan's capital in May 2008. The tides appeared



98. Qatar News Agency, “Qatar and Russia.. Strategic Interests, Burgeoning Economic and Investment Prospects,” April 17, 2025. (<https://qna.org.qa/en/news/news-details?id=qatar-and-russia-strategic-interests-burgeoning-economic-and-investment-prospects&date=17/04/2025>)

99. Arsalan Altaf, “Qatar-Russia trade grew 7.5% to \$91mn in 2023: Official,” *The Peninsula* (Qatar), May 20, 2024. (<https://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/20/05/2024/qatar-russia-trade-grew-75-to-91m-in-2023-official>); Deepak John, “Qatar, Ukraine ties have potential to expand further,” *The Peninsula* (Qatar), October 23, 2023. (<https://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/23/10/2023/qatar-ukraine-ties-have-potential-to-expand-further>); “Russia and Qatar sign 2 billion euro investment deal,” *Reuters*, April 17, 2025. (<https://www.reuters.com/markets/deals/russia-qatar-sign-2-billion-euro-investment-deal-2025-04-17>)

100. “Qatar's investments in Russia exceed \$13 bln, ambassador says,” *TASS* (Russia), April 17, 2025. (<https://tass.com/economy/1945315>); “Qatar-Glencore venture values its Rosneft stake at 7.4 billion euros,” *Reuters*, August 15, 2018. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/world/europe/qatar-glencore-venture-values-its-rosneft-stake-at-74-billion-euros-idUSKBN1L01WX>); U.S. Department of the Treasury, Press Release, “Treasury Sanctions Major Russian Oil Companies, Calls on Moscow to Immediately Agree to Ceasefire,” October 22, 2025. (<https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sb0290>); “Rosneft says ex-Qatari energy minister re-elected as company chairman,” *Reuters*, July 21, 2025. (<https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/rosneft-says-ex-qatari-energy-minister-re-elected-company-chairman-2025-07-21>)

101. Agnes Helou, “Ukraine inks defense agreements with Qatar and Saudi Arabia, with UAE to follow,” *Breaking Defense*, March 30, 2026. (<https://breakingdefense.com/2026/03/ukraine-inks-defense-agreements-with-qatar-and-saudi-arabia-with-uae-to-follow>)

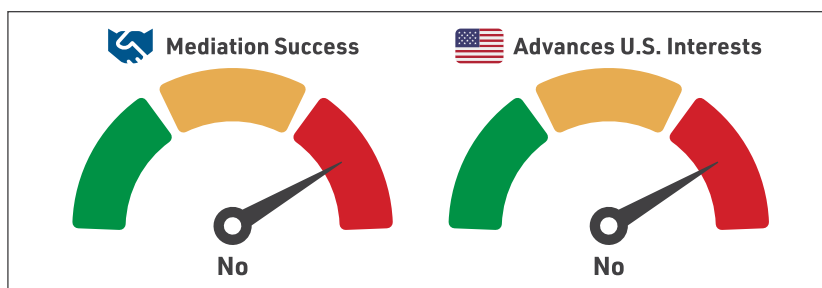
102. “Chad breaks off diplomatic relations with Sudan,” *The New York Times*, April 14, 2006. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2006/04/14/world/africa/chad-breaks-off-diplomatic-relations-with-sudan.html>)

to turn in 2009 when Qatar stepped in to mediate a normalization agreement.¹⁰³ However, the Qatari-brokered deal did not immediately succeed. The violence continued, leading to a second agreement between Chad and Sudan in January 2010.¹⁰⁴

One month later, Deby made his historic visit. Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir said that Deby's trip "put an end to all the problems between Sudan and Chad" and signified a "new page" in the two countries' relationship.¹⁰⁵ Qatar successfully helped mend the relationship between Khartoum and N'Djamena, though it was not a disinterested third party. Doha's efforts were designed to help stabilize Sudan, which was a key part of an axis of Muslim Brotherhood-influenced countries led by Qatar. Meanwhile, Chad and Sudan both continued to suffer from internal strife. Qatar stepped in to mediate in both cases, but without success.¹⁰⁶

CHAD

Qatar began mediating between Chad's interim government, known as the Transitional Military Council (TMC), and dozens of rival factions in 2022.¹⁰⁷ The TMC signed an agreement with over 30 rebel and opposition groups in August 2022, committing to engage in a national dialogue that Chadian President Mahamat Deby said "could pave the way to elections."¹⁰⁸ On its face, this was a positive development. However, the agreement did not include the Front for Change and Concord in Chad (FACT), the largest rebel group fighting Chad's transitional authorities. At least eight other factions did not sign the Qatar-brokered agreement either.¹⁰⁹



The National Dialogue enshrined in the Qatar-brokered agreement issued an ad hoc commission report in September 2022. The Biden administration was "deeply concerned" by the dialogue's recommendations, which it believed "would jeopardize the democratic transition that was promised to the people of Chad."¹¹⁰ The National Dialogue concluded in October 2022 and extended the transitional period by two years. Violent political repression preceded the country's May 2024 presidential elections, which resulted in Mahamat Deby consolidating

103. State of Qatar, Press Release, "Sudan and Chad sign the 'Doha Accord,'" May 3, 2009. (<https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/sudan-and-chad-sign-doha-accord>)

104. United Nations, UN News, "Ban expresses unease over mounting tension between Chad, Sudan," June 15, 2009. (<https://news.un.org/en/story/2009/06/303462>); U.S. Department of State, Press Statement, "U.S. Welcomes Normalization of Chad-Sudan Relations," January 20, 2010. (<https://2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2010/01/135476.htm>)

105. "Sudan, Chad Agree to End Hostilities," *Voice of America*, February 8, 2010. (<https://www.voanews.com/a/sudan-chad-agree-to-end-hostilities-83885312/153141.html>)

106. Eline Rosenhart, "Chad-Sudan Relations and the Qatar Crisis," *The Moshe Dayan Center*, September 14, 2017. (https://dayan.org/content/chad-sudan-relations-and-qatar-crisis#_edn11)

107. "Qatar takes up mediation role in Chad talks: officials, rebels," *Agence France-Presse* (France), March 25, 2022. (<https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20220325-qatar-takes-up-mediation-role-in-chad-talks-officials-rebels>)

108. Andrew Mills, "Chad signs peace pact with rebels, but main insurgents stay out," *Reuters*, August 8, 2022. (<https://www.yahoo.com/news/chad-rebels-sign-peace-deal-063408523.html>)

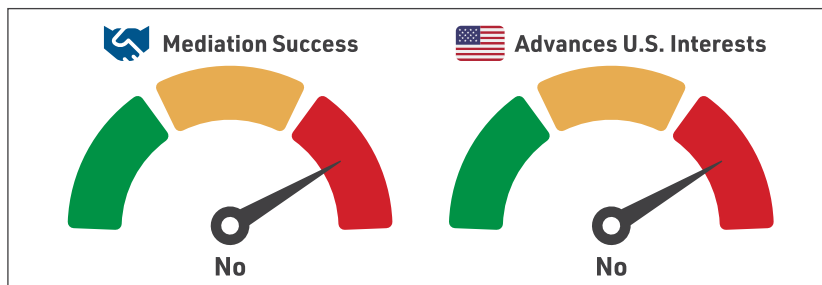
109. "Chad: Implications of President Déby's Death and Transition," *Congressional Research Service*, April 26, 2021. (https://www.congress.gov/crs_external_products/IF/PDF/IF11817/IF11817.1.pdf)

110. U.S. Department of State, Press Statement, "Chad's National Dialogue Commission Report," October 1, 2022. (<https://2021-2025.state.gov/chads-national-dialogue-commission-report>)

power. Today, Freedom House scores Chad a combined 15/100 for political rights and civil liberties, noting that opposition to Deby's rule "generated protests by political and civil society activists, who in turn have faced violence, imprisonment, torture, and intimidation."¹¹¹

SUDAN

In 2003, civil war broke out in Sudan's Darfur region between the Islamist Khartoum government and Darfur rebel groups, particularly between government-backed Janjaweed paramilitary forces and the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) and Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) rebels. The ensuing war killed approximately 300,000 people and displaced over 2 million.



In 2009, Qatar brokered a "confidence-building agreement" between the Sudanese government and JEM — the first of several Qatar-brokered agreements intended to resolve the crisis in Darfur. Doha mediated a framework peace accord in 2010, which was followed in 2011 by the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD).¹¹² The Sudanese government and a third rebel group known as the Liberation and Justice Movement signed the DDPD. JEM did not.¹¹³ The DDPD served as the basis for subsequent agreements between Khartoum and JEM in 2012, and Khartoum and a JEM splinter group in 2013.¹¹⁴ Like the regime of President Omar al-Bashir, JEM also has Islamist roots.

Despite Qatar's successive efforts, the conflict in Sudan did not abate. Eyewitnesses commented in 2015 that the DDPD "did not bring the people anything other than destruction, devastation, displacement, more suffering, and no tangible improvements on the ground."¹¹⁵ Bashir, whom the International Criminal Court charged in 2009 with "genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes," remained in power, buoyed by the Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated Sudanese Islamic Movement (SIM). Bashir's 30-year reign came to an end in 2019 only after a military coup.

Meanwhile, the war in Darfur continued until 2020, and then a renewed civil war erupted in Sudan in 2023.¹¹⁶ The internecine conflict continues to this day, with Qatar providing military and financial support to the Islamist-

111. "Chad," *Freedom House*, accessed February 18, 2026. (<https://freedomhouse.org/country/chad>)

112. "Sudan peace accord signed, state media reports," *CNN*, February 23, 2010. (<https://www.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/africa/02/23/sudan.peace.agreement/index.html>); "Q&A: Sudan's Darfur conflict," *BBC (UK)*, February 23, 2010. (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/3496731.stm>); United Nations, "Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD)," accessed February 25, 2026. (<https://peacemaker.un.org/en/node/8873>)

113. United Nations, Department of Public Information, "Security Council Is Told Implementation of Doha Document for Peace, Key to Success in Darfur, Needs Full Support of All Parties," October 25, 2011. (<https://press.un.org/en/2011/sc10421.doc.htm>)

114. "Declaration of cessation of hostilities and commitment to the peace process between the Government of Sudan and the Justice and Equality Movement Sudan (JEM)," *Sudan News Agency (Sudan)*, October 22, 2012. (archived version available at https://www.peaceagreements.org/media/documents/ag855_562de2f47b722.pdf); "Sudan, Darfur Rebels Sign Truce in Qatar," *Newsmax*, February 11, 2013. (<https://www.newsmax.com/world/africa/sudan-darfur-cease-fire-signed/2013/02/11/id/489748>)

115. "Doha peace accord brought us more suffering: Darfur displaced, refugees," *Radio Dabanga* (Netherlands), January 13, 2015. (<https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/doha-peace-accord-brought-us-more-suffering-darfur-displaced-refugees>)

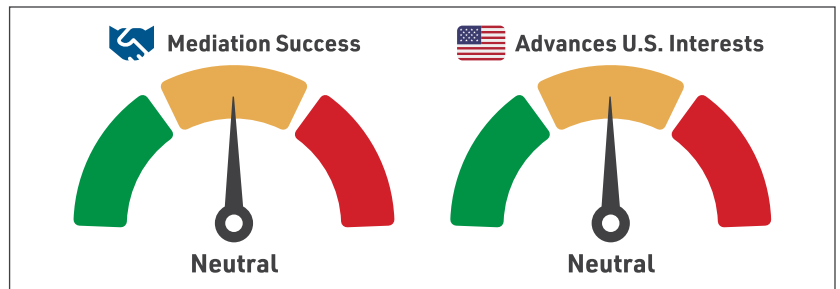
116. *Prosecutor v. Omar Hassan Ahmad Al Bashir* ("Omar Al Bashir"), ICC-02/05-01/09 (March 4, 2009). (https://www.icc-cpi.int/sites/default/files/CourtRecords/CR2009_01514.PDF)

influenced Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) — and deepening its investment in Sudan’s mining sector — while simultaneously participating in peacemaking efforts.¹¹⁷

DJIBOUTI AND ERITREA

As with Chad and Sudan, Qatar stepped in to mediate a border conflict between Djibouti and Eritrea. Doha was successful, albeit temporarily.

A long-simmering conflict between Djibouti and Eritrea boiled over in 2008 after Djibouti accused Eritrea of sending troops across their shared border.¹¹⁸ Deadly clashes erupted, and Qatar soon stepped into the breach.¹¹⁹ In June 2010, Djibouti and Eritrea signed an agreement that provided for “the withdrawal of Eritrean troops from Djiboutian territory” and “the deployment of a Qatari observation force” to monitor the border.¹²⁰ Qatar brokered a subsequent agreement in 2016 that saw Eritrea release four Djiboutian prisoners captured during the 2008 clashes.¹²¹



However, the calm proved fleeting. In November 2016, Djibouti’s Ambassador to the United Nations claimed that Eritrea “offered a misleading and deceptive account of the progress made in the implementation” of the 2010 agreement. “Djibouti was hopeful,” the ambassador said, that the prisoner release would “induce a change in the behavior of the State of Eritrea ... but that hope has quickly vanished!”¹²²

The situation deteriorated further in June 2017 when Qatar withdrew its peacekeepers from the Djibouti-Eritrea border.¹²³ The precipitating cause was reportedly Eritrea’s decision to side with the Saudi-led group that imposed

117. Qatar Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Qatar Armed Forces Aircraft Arrives in Sudan with Additional Aid for Sudanese People,” March 9, 2024. (<https://mofa.gov.qa/en/qatar/latest-articles/latest-news/details/2024/03/09/qatar-armed-forces-aircraft-arrives-in-sudan-with-additional-aid-for-sudanese-people>); Qatar Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Qatar Pledges USD 50 Million to Support Humanitarian Response Efforts in Sudan,” accessed August 24, 2026. (<https://mofa.gov.qa/en/qatar/latest-articles/latest-news/details/1444/12/01/qatar-pledges-usd-50-million-to-support-humanitarian-response-efforts-in-sudan>); @MofaQatar_EN, X, January 14, 2026. (https://x.com/MofaQatar_EN/status/2011471055999717632); “Qatar restarts Sudan mining operations after war disruption, targeting \$800 million copper project,” *Business Insider Africa*, May 17, 2026. (<https://africa.businessinsider.com/local/markets/qatar-restarts-sudan-mining-operations-after-war-disruption-targeting-dollar800/w2lc0h6>); Cyril Bensimon, “In Sudan, the two warring sides continue to upgrade their weaponry in spite of an arms embargo,” *Le Monde* (France), October 24, 2025. (https://www.lemonde.fr/en/le-monde-africa/article/2025/10/24/in-sudan-the-two-warring-sides-continue-to-upgrade-their-weaponry-in-spite-of-an-arms-embargo_6746728_124.html)

118. Jeffrey Gettleman, “A Conflict’s Buffer Zone: Rocks, and Inches,” *The New York Times*, May 25, 2008. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/25/world/africa/25djibouti.html>)

119. U.S. Department of State, Press Statement, “Eritrea-Djibouti Border,” June 11, 2008. (<https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2008/jun/105834.htm>)

120. United Nations, Security Council, “Report of the Secretary-General on Eritrea,” June 22, 2010. (<https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n10/405/74/pdf/n1040574.pdf>)

121. Salem Solomon, “Eritrea Releases Four Djiboutian Soldiers After Eight Years Imprisonment,” *Voice of America*, March 20, 2016. (<https://www.voanews.com/a/eritrea-releases-4-djiboutian-soldiers-after-eight-years-imprisonment/3246435.html>)

122. The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Djibouti to the United Nations, “Statement by H. E. Mr. Mohamed Siad Doualeh Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Djibouti to the United Nations Before the Security Council on the Situation in Somalia,” November 10, 2016. (<https://www.un.int/djibouti/news/it-would-be-no-exaggeration-state-assertion-eritrea-fully-committed-qatar-mediation-process>)

123. Qatar Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “دولة قطر تبلغ جيبوتي سحب كامل قواتها العسكرية (Qatar Informs Djibouti on Withdrawing All it[s] Troops),” June 14, 2017. (<https://mofa.gov.qa/en/qatar/latest-articles/latest-news/details/2017/06/14/qatar-informs-djibouti-on-withdrawing-all-it-troops>)

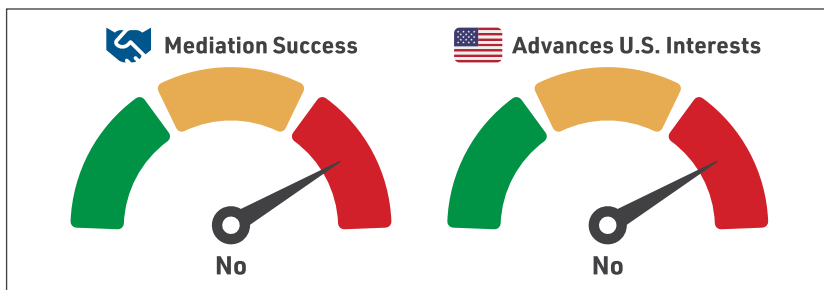
a blockade on Qatar over Doha's support for extremism. Within days, Djibouti accused Eritrea of occupying the disputed territory. Djibouti's foreign minister told *Reuters* that "Qatari peacekeepers withdrew on June 12 and 13" and "on the same day, there were Eritrean military movements on the mountain."¹²⁴

Djibouti and Eritrea have since agreed to end their conflict, independent of Qatari efforts.¹²⁵

DRC-RWANDA

The 1994 Rwandan genocide gave birth to an intractable conflict between Rwanda and neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Despite repeated Qatari efforts to bring this decades-long chapter to a close, the conflict grinds on.

After the 1994 genocide, the responsible militias fled to the DRC, which has served as a base for them and their successors ever since.¹²⁶ The feud escalated in early 2025 when the Rwanda-backed M23 rebel group rapidly gained ground in eastern DRC.¹²⁷



In June 2025, the Congolese and Rwandan foreign ministers signed a peace agreement jointly brokered by the United States and Qatar.¹²⁸ The deal did not include M23. One of the document's provisions provided for the establishment of the "Joint Oversight Committee" (JOC) staffed by representatives from Qatar, the United States, and the African Union.¹²⁹ When the JOC met in November 2025, the parties advanced economic initiatives but "recognized lagging progress" on the implementation of the peace agreement.¹³⁰

Nonetheless, Congolese President Felix Tshisekedi and Rwandan President Paul Kagame flew to Washington in December 2025 for a signing ceremony. The event was largely symbolic given that the foreign ministers of both countries had already signed the U.S.- and Qatar-brokered agreement over the summer, and the fighting had still not abated. In fact, the day

124. Aaron Maasho, "Djibouti, Eritrea in territorial dispute after Qatar peacekeepers leave," *Reuters*, June 16, 2017. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/world/djibouti-eritrea-in-territorial-dispute-after-qatar-peacekeepers-leave-idUSKBN197191>)

125. Aaron Maasho, "Djibouti, Eritrea agree to normalise ties strained since 2008," *Reuters*, September 7, 2018. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/world/djibouti-eritrea-agree-to-normalise-ties-strained-since-2008-idUSKCN1LM2IM>)

126. Elian Peltier, "Why Are Congo and Rwanda at War?" *The New York Times*, January 28, 2025. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/01/28/world/africa/congo-m23-rwanda.html>)

127. Sonia Rolley, "Thousands uprooted as Congo M23 near Goma in major advance," *Reuters*, January 23, 2025. (<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/thousands-uprooted-congo-m23-rebels-near-goma-major-advance-2025-01-23>)

128. Carlos Mureithi, "Trump eyes mineral wealth as Rwanda and DRC sign controversial peace deal in US," *The Guardian* (UK), June 27, 2025. (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jun/27/rwanda-drc-peace-deal-us-trump-m23>)

129. U.S. Department of State, Bureau of African Affairs, "Peace Agreement Between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of Rwanda," June 27, 2025. (<https://www.state.gov/peace-agreement-between-the-democratic-republic-of-the-congo-and-the-republic-of-rwanda>)

130. U.S. Department of State, Office of the Spokesperson, Media Note, "Joint Statement on the Fourth Joint Oversight Committee for the Peace Agreement between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of Rwanda and the Initialing of the Regional Economic Integration Framework," November 7, 2025. (<https://www.state.gov/releases/office-of-the-spokesperson/2025/11/joint-statement-on-the-fourth-joint-oversight-committee-for-the-peace-agreement>)

after the signing ceremony, a spokesperson for the Congolese army said that Rwandan forces were “bombing blindly.”¹³¹ Six months later, the JOC reconvened in London and “expressed serious concern over the escalating fighting, the impact of drone strikes on civilians and the peace process, and the deepening humanitarian situation in eastern DRC.”¹³²

Qatar brokered a parallel agreement between M23 and the DRC in July 2025. The agreement set August 18, 2025, as the deadline for a final peace agreement. M23 and the Congolese government accused each other of violating the deal, missed the August deadline, and continued fighting.¹³³

Qatar subsequently negotiated prisoner exchange and ceasefire monitoring agreements before brokering a “Framework for a Comprehensive Peace Agreement” in November 2025.¹³⁴ However, months passed with little progress. Qatar mediated additional talks in Montreux, Switzerland, in April 2026, where the parties agreed “to facilitate rapid, unimpeded, safe, and sustained humanitarian access” and “to release prisoners.”¹³⁵ As of writing, no prisoner exchange has occurred; M23 and Congolese forces continue to clash regularly.¹³⁶ Notably, Qatar’s peacemaking efforts coincided with a \$500 million investment in Ivanhoe Mines, a Canadian mining company with significant operations in the DRC.¹³⁷

Qatar did have an isolated success facilitating the release of Rwandan human rights activist and U.S. permanent resident Paul Rusesabagina.¹³⁸ Rwandan authorities arrested Rusesabagina in 2021 after luring him to Rwanda through an “elaborate ruse” and sentenced him to 25 years in prison on spurious charges of membership to a terrorist group, murder, and abduction.¹³⁹

131. “Congo fighting flares within hours of Trump’s peace deal ceremony,” *Reuters*, December 5, 2025. (<https://www.nbcnews.com/world/africa/congo-rwanda-fighting-donald-trump-peace-deal-ceremony-rcna247540>); Dave Lawler, “Trump’s peace deal without the peace between DRC and Rwanda,” *Axios*, December 4, 2025. (<https://www.axios.com/2025/12/04/trump-rwanda-drc-peace-deal>)

132. U.S. Department of State, Office of the Spokesperson, Media Note, “Joint Statement on the Sixth Joint Oversight Committee for the Peace Agreement Between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of Rwanda,” June 24, 2026. (<https://www.state.gov/releases/office-of-the-spokesperson/2026/06/joint-statement-on-the-sixth-joint-oversight-committee-for-the-peace-agreement-between-the-democratic-republic-of-the-congo-and-the-republic-of-rwanda>)

133. “DR Congo and M23 rebels miss peace deal deadline but will continue talks,” *France 24*, August 19, 2025. (<https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20250819-dr-congo-and-m23-rebels-miss-peace-deal-deadline-but-will-continue-talks>); Sarah Dean and Larry Madowo, “Two countries signed a peace deal in Washington. On the ground, little has changed,” *CNN*, September 22, 2025. (<https://www.cnn.com/2025/09/22/africa/dr-congo-rwanda-peace-deal-trump-fighting-intl-cmd>)

134. “Congo, M23 sign deal in Doha on ceasefire monitoring,” *Reuters*, October 14, 2025. (<https://www.arabnews.com/node/2618898/world>); @US_SrAdvisorAF, X, November 15, 2025. (https://x.com/US_SrAdvisorAF/status/1989798537270526228)

135. “DR Congo, AFC/M23 group agree to facilitate aid, release prisoners within 10 days,” *France 24* (France), April 19, 2026. (<https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20260419-dr-congo-afc-m23-group-agree-to-facilitate-aid-release-prisoners-within-10-days>)

136. “Congo War Security Review,” *Critical Threats Project*, May 1, 2026. (<https://www.criticalthreats.org/briefs/congo-war-security-review/may-1-2026>)

137. Ivanhoe Mines, News Release, “Ivanhoe Mines and Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) Announce Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to Further Critical Mineral Exploration, Development and Mining of Critical Minerals,” November 21, 2025. (<https://www.ivanhoemines.com/news-stories/news-release/ivanhoe-mines-and-qatar-investment-authority-qia-announce-memorandum-of-understanding-mou-to-further-exploration-development-and-mining-of-critical-minerals>)

138. Cara Anna, “Freed ‘Hotel Rwanda’ hero in Qatar, heading to family in US,” *Associated Press*, March 28, 2023. (<https://apnews.com/article/rwanda-rusesabagina-arrest-qatar-e399d9d2cc63a845a221c520c796a9ab>)

139. Abdi Latif Dahir, Declan Walsh, Matina Stevis-Gridneff, and Ruth Maclean, “How the Hero of ‘Hotel Rwanda’ Fell Into a Vengeful Strongman’s Trap,” *The New York Times*, September 18, 2020. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/18/world/africa/rwanda-paul-rusesabagina.html>)

LIBYA

In Libya, Qatar has produced a similar mix of tactical success and broader failure seen elsewhere in its mediation portfolio.

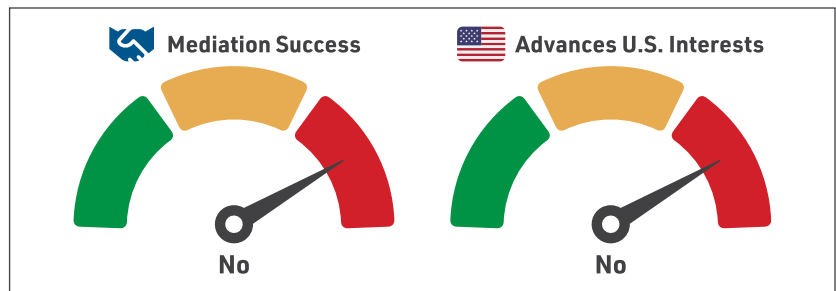
During the civil war in Libya that led to the ouster of Moammar Qaddafi, there was a jarring moment in 2011 during which the Qatari flag was hoisted over Tripoli.¹⁴⁰ This was a testament to the extent to which Doha

had supported the Islamist rebels who overthrew Qaddafi's regime. The end of the Qaddafi era afforded Libya an opportunity to establish a new government with greater rights for the Libyan people, yet the country remains mired in chaos and civil war with no sign of stability on the horizon.

Despite supporting Qaddafi's ouster, Qatar likely padded the dictator's coffers in prior years. In 2007, Doha mediated the release of five Bulgarian nurses and a Palestinian doctor whom Libyan authorities had arrested in 1999, accusing them of deliberately infecting hundreds of Libyan children with HIV. France's then-first lady Cecilia Sarkozy was reportedly instrumental in securing the medical workers' release.¹⁴¹ However, Qatar allegedly paid the price — as much as \$300 million to Qaddafi's regime.¹⁴²

Within a few years of Qaddafi's fall, Doha began offering its services to Libya's warring parties. Qatar mediated a reconciliation deal in November 2015 between Libya's Tuareg and Tebu tribes, which had been warring in southwestern Libya for over a year.¹⁴³ According to the UN Security Council, the agreement "was violated the next day by missile attacks from Tebu-affiliated armed groups on Tuareg positions."¹⁴⁴ The Secretary-General of the UN Support Mission in Libya reported in February 2016 that "the implementation" of the Qatari-brokered agreement had "stalled following doubts raised by Tebu representatives" about "the neutrality of the force tasked with monitoring the ceasefire."¹⁴⁵

Neutrality — or lack thereof — remained an issue as Qatar continued to back the Government of National Accord (GNA) — an entity closely tied to the Muslim Brotherhood.



140. Habib Toumi, "Raising of Qatar's flag in Libya was an eerie moment," *Gulf News* (UAE), November 1, 2018. (<https://gulfnews.com/world/gulf/qatar/raising-of-qatars-flag-in-libya-was-an-eerie-moment-1.2042345>)

141. "10 years on, Bulgarian nurses leave Libya ordeal behind," *Agence France-Presse* (France), July 22, 2017. (<https://www.france24.com/en/20170722-10-years-bulgarian-nurses-leave-libya-ordeal-behind>)

142. Franck Johannes, "Sarkozy's trial revisits release of Bulgarian nurses held by Gaddafi," *Le Monde* (France), January 28, 2025. (https://www.lemonde.fr/en/france/article/2025/01/28/sarkozy-s-trial-revisits-release-of-bulgarian-nurses-held-by-gaddafi_6737524_7.html)

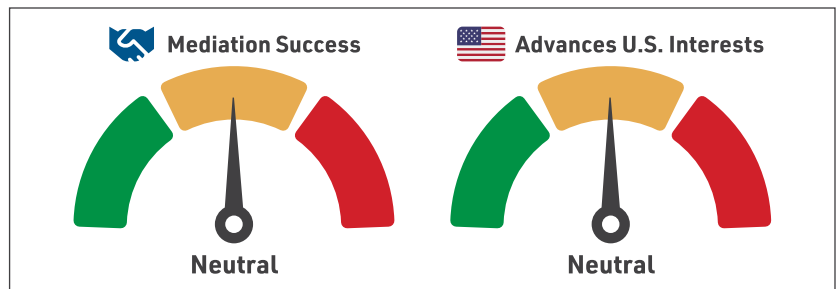
143. "Qatar brokers reconciliation deal between Libyan tribes," *Gulf Times* (Qatar), November 24, 2015. (<https://www.gulf-times.com/story/464034/Qatar-brokers-reconciliation-deal-between-Libyan-tribes>)

144. United Nations, Security Council, "Letter dated 4 March 2016 from the Panel of Experts on Libya established pursuant to resolution 1973 (2011) addressed to the President of the Security Council," March 9, 2016. (https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2016_209.pdf)

145. United Nations, High Commissioner for Refugees, "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya," February 25, 2016. (<https://www.refworld.org/reference/mission/unsc/2016/en/109235>)

SOMALIA

Qatar has pursued two lines of effort in Somalia: mediating between the Somali government and al-Qaeda-affiliated Al-Shabaab, and between Somalia and neighboring Kenya. Doha has not moved the needle with Al-Shabaab but did mend ties between Mogadishu and Nairobi after they broke down in 2020.



Somalia has historically been an arena of competition between Qatar and the UAE, which has allegedly driven Qatar to periodically engage with Al-Shabaab. In 2019, *The New York Times* said it had obtained a recording of a phone call during which “a businessman close to the emir of Qatar” claimed that Al-Shabaab had carried out a car bombing in Somalia “to advance Qatar’s interests by driving out its rival, the United Arab Emirates.”¹⁴⁶ Two years later, Al-Shabaab spokesman Ali Dheere was allegedly evacuated to Qatar for medical treatment.¹⁴⁷ In the interim, Washington had reportedly asked Qatar to mediate with Al-Shabaab, suggesting that a level of trust had developed between Doha and the al-Qaeda-affiliated group.¹⁴⁸

Meanwhile, Qatar was simultaneously working with the United States, United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates, and Turkey on the Somalia file. Doha hosted the third Somalia Quint Group meeting in June 2023 in an effort to coordinate “counterterrorism and international security assistance” and “enhance confidence-building” and “capacity-building” measures.¹⁴⁹ As of this writing, the Somalia Quint Group has reconvened, but little progress has been made.¹⁵⁰

On the other hand, Doha has achieved success mediating between Somalia and Kenya. Diplomatic ties broke down in late 2020 after Mogadishu accused Nairobi of interfering in Somalia’s internal affairs. Qatar successfully brokered rapprochement in May 2021. Kenya suspended commercial flights to Somalia days later without explanation but reopened its airspace in June 2021 in “consideration of intercessions made.”¹⁵¹

146. Ronen Bergman and David D. Kirkpatrick, “With Guns, Cash and Terrorism, Gulf States Vie for Power in Somalia,” *The New York Times*, July 22, 2019. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/22/world/africa/somalia-qatar-uae.html>)

147. U.S. Department of Justice, Rewards for Justice, “Ali Mohamed Rage,” accessed February 24, 2026. (<https://rewardsforjustice.net/rewards/ali-mohamed-rage>); Tricia Bacon, “Inside the Minds of Somalia’s Ascendant Insurgents: An Identity, Mind, Emotions and Perceptions Analysis of Al-Shabaab,” *The George Washington University, Program on Extremism*, March 2022, (https://extremism.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs5746/files/Al-Shabaab-IMEP_Bacon_March-2022.pdf)

148. Charlie Savage and Eric Schmitt, “He Sidestepped Pompeo and Got Slapped Down. Now He’s the New Pentagon Chief,” *The New York Times*, November 11, 2020. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/11/us/politics/christopher-miller-pentagon-shabab.html>)

149. Qatar News Agency, “Joint statement of the 3rd Meeting of the Quint Group Held in Doha on Somalia,” June 6, 2023. (<https://qna.org.qa/en/news/news-details?id=0043-joint-statement-of-the-3rd-meeting-of-the-quint-group-held-in-doha-on-somalia&date=6/06/2023>)

150. U.S. Department of State, Office of the Spokesperson, Media Note, “Joint Statement from the Somalia Quint,” October 3, 2024. (<https://2021-2025.state.gov/joint-statement-from-the-somalia-quint>)

151. “Kenya suspends Somalia flights for three months,” *Al Jazeera* (Qatar), May 11, 2021. (<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/11/kenya-suspends-commercial-flights-from-somalia-for-three-months>); Andrew Wasike, “Airspace reopens as Kenya, Somalia dial down tensions,” *Anadolu Agency* (Turkey), June 10, 2021. (<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/airspace-reopens-as-kenya-somalia-dial-down-tensions/2269758>)

VENEZUELA

Qatar played a supporting role in Venezuela until American forces captured then-Venezuelan president Nicolas Maduro in January. Doha's involvement was neither neutral nor effective at preventing U.S. military action.

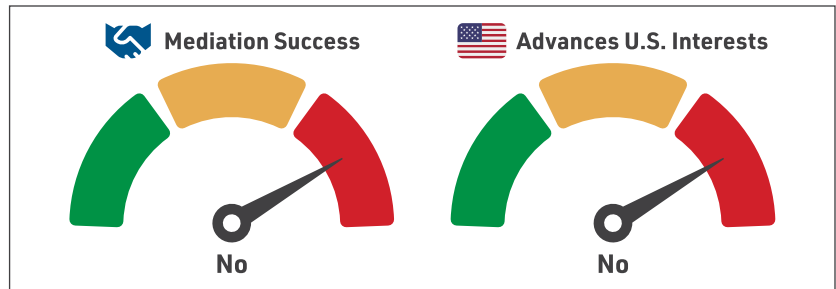
In June 2023, Venezuelan politician Jorge Rodriguez, whose sister Delcy was sworn in as interim president of Venezuela in January

2026, met with White House advisor Juan Gonzalez in Doha “to establish a direct channel of communication” between Caracas and Washington.¹⁵² Before year's end, Qatar brokered a deal for the release of 10 American citizens and the extradition of a fugitive Malaysian businessman wanted in the United States for defrauding the U.S. Navy. In exchange, the Biden administration granted clemency to Alex Saab, a close ally of Nicolas Maduro.¹⁵³

Qatar remained eager to stay involved when Trump returned to office. In October 2025, as the U.S. military amassed forces in the Caribbean, Gonzalez told *The New York Times* that the Qataris were “trying to find a way to encourage a more structured dialogue or back channel” but that they were not “getting much traction with the Trump administration.” Reports surfaced in December suggesting that the Trump administration might allow Maduro to relocate to Qatar.¹⁵⁴

Maduro reportedly wanted Qatar to intervene, as did Colombian President Gustavo Petro.¹⁵⁵ While both men sought to forestall U.S. military action, their hopes were dashed on January 3, 2026, when U.S. forces captured Maduro and transferred him to New York to stand trial. Rumors resurfaced about secret Qatari-mediated talks between then-Venezuelan Vice President Delcy Rodriguez, her brother Jorge, and U.S. officials in the run-up to Maduro's capture.¹⁵⁶

Qatar reportedly disapproved of the U.S. rendition operation.¹⁵⁷ Still, Washington transferred the revenue from the first sale of Venezuelan oil to an offshore account in Qatar, making Qatar an intermediary between Venezuela and



152. Juan Diego Quesada, “United States and Venezuela hold secret meeting in Qatar,” *El Pais* (Spain), June 29, 2023. (<https://english.elpais.com/international/2023-06-30/united-states-and-venezuela-hold-secret-meeting-in-qatar.html>)

153. “Twenty-four Venezuelans released as part of U.S. prisoner swap, opposition says,” *Reuters*, December 21, 2023. (<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/twenty-four-venezuelans-released-part-us-prisoner-swap-opposition-says-2023-12-21>); Vanessa Romo, “Who is ‘Fat Leonard’ and how did he end up as part of the Venezuelan prisoner swap?” *NPR*, December 20, 2023. (<https://www.npr.org/2023/12/20/1220816420/who-is-fat-leonard-and-how-did-he-end-up-as-part-of-the-venezuelan-prisoner-swap>)

154. Steven Nelson and Caitlin Doornbos, “Nicolas Maduro could end up in gas-rich Qatar under Trump pressure — as US weighs strikes in Venezuela’s waters,” *New York Post*, December 2, 2025. (<https://nypost.com/2025/12/02/us-news/qatar-floated-as-new-home-for-maduro-as-us-weighs-strikes-in-venezuelas-waters>)

155. Edward Wong, Eric Schmitt, and Julie Turkewitz, “Qatar Pushes U.S. Venezuela Diplomacy as Trump Focuses on Military Action,” *The New York Times*, October 8, 2025. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/10/08/us/politics/venezuela-trump-qatar.html>); Astrid Suarez, “Colombian President Petro suggests Qatar could mediate US military actions off Venezuela,” *Associated Press*, October 9, 2025. (<https://apnews.com/article/colombia-petro-trump-venezuela-maduro-qatar-4d6c3ecb42334592f29e0ee2fce7b062>)

156. Cody Weddle, “Secret meetings point to inside job to take down Maduro,” *The Telegraph* (UK), January 4, 2026. (<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2026/01/04/secret-meetings-point-to-inside-job-to-take-down-maduro>)

157. @MofaQatar_EN, X, January 3, 2026. (https://x.com/MofaQatar_EN/status/2007492846664999072)

Western oil companies with claims to settle.¹⁵⁸ Secretary of Energy Chris Wright said that arrangement ended in February, without elaborating why.¹⁵⁹

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Qatar has attempted to broker resolutions to some of the world's thorniest conflicts. A perfect record cannot be expected. However, Qatar has rarely, if ever, successfully brokered lasting, long-term peace or stability. At best, Doha has achieved short-term success. At worst, Qatari mediators have brokered arrangements that tip the scales in favor of dangerous actors. And in most cases, Qatar arrived at the negotiating table with baggage.

Washington needs a due-diligence policy. The U.S. government should establish criteria for evaluating potential mediators with an eye toward assessing whether governments have financial, strategic, or ideological interests in a given conflict that will impact their ability to negotiate effectively. Where conflicts of interest arise, Washington should seek alternative mediators.

In particular, Congress should require the secretary of state to certify that all intermediaries, including Qatar, act in the U.S. national interest and are not supporting actors that the United States classifies as terrorist entities. Washington should request that mediators maintain sanction measures equivalent to the U.S. Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designations, with emphasis on the Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) and Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) lists.

158. Shelby Talcott and Eleanor Mueller, "US gets first \$500 million Venezuelan oil deal, holding some proceeds in Qatar," *Semafor*, January 14, 2026. (<https://www.semafor.com/article/01/14/2026/us-gets-first-500-million-venezuelan-oil-deal-holding-some-proceeds-in-qatar>); Ivan Penn, "Oil Firms Say Venezuela Owes Them Billions Over Earlier Investments," *The New York Times*, January 7, 2026. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2026/01/07/business/energy-environment/trump-venezuela-oil-exxon-mobil-conocophillips.html>)

159. Spencer Kimball, "Venezuela oil sales top \$1 billion, funds won't go to Qatar account anymore, Energy secretary says," *CNBC*, February 13, 2026. (<https://www.cnn.com/2026/02/13/venezuela-oil-sales-qatar-chris-wright-trump.html>)

About the Foundation for Defense of Democracies

The Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD) is a Washington, DC-based, nonpartisan policy institute focusing on foreign policy and national security. For more information, please visit www.fdd.org.

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