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**Sent:** Tuesday, October 24, 2023 12:09 PM

**To:** meghan.schmidt@mail.house.gov; chad.ramey@mail.house.gov

**Cc:** Reynolds, Thomas M (WAS - X75107) <Thomas.Reynolds@hklaw.com>

**Subject:** Tomorrow's Hearing Info on Qatar

Chad and Meghan

I understand Mitch is still out so I am sending this to you.

This is former Congressman Tom Reynolds now at Holland & Knight. We represent the Embassy of Qatar. Looking at the sub- committee tomorrow that your boss is chairing I wondered with the subject and witnesses if there were Questions on what Qatar is doing to be helpful. I have attached some background information on Qatar's efforts for your review.

If I can be of further assistance please let me know . In addition to my email address above my cell is [202-360-5600](tel:202-360-5600)

Thank you

Tom

### **Qatar position:**

- From the very first day of the outbreak of the escalation, Qatar has sought to de-escalate the situation, achieve a complete cessation of hostilities, stop the bloodshed, and to spare the region from the risk of slipping into an expansion of violence. The people of this region are exhausted by ongoing wars and conflicts, as they suffer of the consequences of such events.
- Qatar stresses its firm position in condemning all forms of targeting innocent civilians, especially women and children.
- Qatar calls for all parties to halt the escalation to attain calm and entirely stop the armed confrontations on all fronts to protect the region from the danger of descending into a wider cycle of violence.
- Qatar confirms the continual communications by Qatari officials with the relevant parties, as part of regional and international efforts to de-escalate the situation.
- Calls are also ongoing with both the Israeli side and the Palestinian side, to discuss ways to reduce the escalation, stop the bloodshed, and to spare innocent civilians from the consequences of this crisis.
- Qatar always sought to keep channels of communication open with various parties in various arenas of conflict, which has contributed to consolidating our international position as a reliable partner in peacemaking.

### **Priorities:**

- Qatar's priorities in its diplomatic actions are to seek an immediate ceasefire, protect civilians, release prisoners, and work to limit the expansion of violence and the cycle of conflict in the region, which will have serious consequences if it expands. Therefore, Qatar aims for the following:
  - Immediate stop of the bloodshed, reduce escalation, and spare civilians the consequences of the confrontations.
  - Immediate release of all prisoners, especially civilians.
  - Prevent the expansion of violence and the cycle of conflict, which will have dire consequences for the region.
  - Securing humanitarian corridors to pass aid to Gaza.

**Humanitarian aid provided by the State of Qatar to the Gaza Strip:**

- Qatar exchanged views with the US side on ways to open humanitarian corridors to ensure the delivery of relief and aid to the Palestinian.
- Qatar has been at the forefront of providing the most needed assistance to the Gazan population. This is achieved through a clear mechanism and in close coordination with the United States and many countries, including Israel.
- Qatar cannot provide financial aid to Gaza without coordinating with Israeli and UN authorities. The funds are transferred electronically from Qatar to Israel.
- Qatar's assistance has targeted the most urgent sectors in Gaza. It allocated 50% of the aid to oil supplies, with the aim of providing electricity to the Palestinian people by increasing the energy supply from two to six hours a day. The aid also allocated 50% to help the poorest families in Gaza represented by providing grants of \$100 per family.
- The cash is distributed directly to families and public servants in Gaza and each family or individual must sign next to their name that they've received the cash. One copy of that sheet goes to Israel and another copy goes to the UN.
- Since 2012 Qatar has contributed approximately \$4.1 billion in humanitarian grants, at the request of American and Israeli, for the reconstruction of humanitarian facilities such as electricity and water, thus contributing to providing stability to the sector in Gaza Strip.
- We aid the people of Gaza, not to Hamas. We have put into place, in coordination with all involved parties, including the United Nations, Israel, Egypt, and the Palestinian National Authority, mechanisms for the disbursement of this humanitarian aid.
- Qatar also supported United Nations agencies in Gaza such as the United Nations Development Organization, UNRWA and UNICEF, UNDP, UNICEF, UNRWA. We have also contributed to regional funds to support Gaza, including: 1- The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 2- The OPEC Fund for International Development, 3- The Arab Fund for Economic

and Social Development, 4- The Gulf Cooperation Council Program for the Reconstruction of Gaza, 5- The Islamic Bank for development.

**On freezing the \$6bn fund for Iran:**

- Qatar is always committed to any agreement to which it is a party of.
- No transaction is carried out without consulting with all the parties involved, the United States of America & Iran, to implement and follow all the terms of the agreement between Iran and the United States.
- Though the funds currently held in Qatar have not been used, we are confident of the terms of the agreement and the clear mechanisms put in place between the parties.
- Our primary focus and priority at this moment is to de-escalate tensions in our region.
- We will continue working with all parties to find ways to de-escalate the current crisis and prevent further loss of life.

**Hamas office:**

- Hamas political office was opened in Qatar at the request of the Bush Administration, to open a communication channel between Hamas and the US.
- The office has been used as a way of communicating to bring peace and calm to the region, not to instigate any war.
- Across several US administrations, Hamas' political office was frequently used in key mediation efforts to facilitate indirect dialogue, which has played a significant role in de-escalating conflicts and stabilizing the situation in Gaza, Palestinian Territories, and Israel.
- We maintain a dialogue with Hamas and other factions. That does not mean we support them.
- Numerous past crises have been averted or shortened because of dialogue facilitated through the office. In 2020 and 2021, as well as during several earlier

crises, negotiations to reach a ceasefire took place via communication with the Hamas political office.

- It is our tradition and our approach to maintain channels to all possible countries in the world and to *all* possible parties.
- That is why when conflicts erupt, many people and countries turn to us for help.

### Iran:

- We have stressed, during contacts and meetings with the Iranian side, on the importance of not expanding the circle of tension in the region and the importance of making efforts to reduce the escalation to reach calm and to spare civilians the consequences of the fighting.
- We share the largest gas field in the world with Iran, so it's important to maintain lines of communications, as the shared North Gas field provides the world with 28% of its gas supplies. It's also important to ensure the safe passage of vessels.

*The shared North gas field:*



## Who funds Hamas? A global network of crypto, cash and charities.

By [Hadeel Al Sayegh](#), [John O'Donnell](#) and [Elizabeth Howcroft](#)  
October 16, 2023 5:12 AM EDT

LONDON/DUBAI, Oct 13 (Reuters) - Palestinian militant group Hamas uses a global financing network to funnel support from charities and friendly nations, passing cash through Gaza tunnels or using cryptocurrencies to bypass international sanctions, according to experts and officials.

However, Hamas, which governs the Gaza Strip, will face even more obstacles accessing funds after the rampage by the group's gunmen that killed hundreds of Israelis, mainly civilians. Israel has responded with the heaviest bombardment of Gaza in 75 years of conflict.

Earlier this week, Israeli police said they froze a Barclays bank account the authorities said was linked to Hamas fundraising and blocked cryptocurrency accounts used to gather donations, without specifying how many accounts or the value of the assets.

The move provided a glimpse of a complex financial web, some legitimate, much hidden, that underpins Hamas, or the Islamic Resistance Movement, and its government in the Gaza Strip, which it has run since 2007.

Matthew Levitt, a former U.S. official specialised in counterterrorism, estimated the bulk of Hamas' budget of more than \$300 million came from taxes on business, as well as from countries including Iran and Qatar or charities.

Last February, the State Department said that Hamas raises funds in other Gulf countries and gets donations from Palestinians, other expatriates and its own charities.

Reuters was unable to reach Hamas officials for comment for this story. In the past, Hamas has said financial restrictions placed on its donors were an attempt to neutralise legitimate resistance against Israel.

Hamas, sanctioned as a terrorist organization by the United States and countries such as Britain, had increasingly used cryptocurrencies, credit cards or contrived trade deals to avoid mounting international restrictions, Levitt said.

" Hamas has been one of the more successful users of crypto for the financing of terrorism," said Tom Robinson, co-founder of blockchain research firm Elliptic.

However, this year Hamas said it would back away from crypto, after a spate of losses. Cryptocurrency's ledger system can make such transactions traceable.

Blockchain researchers TRM Labs said this week in a research note that crypto fundraising has previously increased following rounds of violence involving Hamas. After fighting in May 2021, Hamas-controlled crypto addresses received more than \$400,000, TRM Labs said.

However, since last weekend's violence, prominent Hamas-linked support groups had moved just a few thousands dollars through crypto, TRM noted.

"One likely reason for the low donation volume is that Israeli authorities are targeting them immediately," TRM said, adding that Israel had seized cryptocurrency worth "tens of millions of dollars" from Hamas-linked addresses in recent years.

Between Dec. 2021 and April this year, Israel seized almost 190 crypto accounts it said were linked to Hamas.

## **SHIPS AND SHELLS**

Whether through crypto or other means, Hamas' allies have found ways to get money to Gaza. The U.S. State Department has said that Iran provides up to \$100 million annually in support to Palestinian groups including Hamas, and has cited methods of moving the money through shell companies, shipping transactions and precious metals.

Iranian authorities did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

By last year, Hamas had established a secret network of companies managing \$500 million of investments in companies from Turkey to Saudi Arabia, the U.S. Treasury has said, announcing sanctions on the firms in May, 2022.

Israel has long accused Iran's clerical rulers of stoking violence by supplying arms to Hamas. Tehran, which does not recognise Israel, says it gives moral and financial support to the group.

Backing the Palestinian cause has been a pillar of the Islamic Republic since the 1979 revolution and a way for the country to fashion itself as a leader of the Muslim world.

Gas-rich Qatar too has paid hundreds of millions of dollars to Gaza since 2014, at one point spending \$30 million per month to help operate the enclave's sole power plant and to support needy families and public servants in the Hamas-run government.

"Qatari aid provides 100 dollars to the poorest Palestinian families and extends the period of electricity during a day in Gaza," a Qatari official said in response to a request for government comment, adding that it had helped "maintain stability and quality of life for ... Palestinian families".

Qatar walks a foreign policy tightrope, hosting the region's largest U.S. military base, the Taliban and other groups, often allowing it to mediate.

## **CASH RULES**

Qatar's funding for Gaza actually passes through Israel, a source familiar with the process said.

The funds are transferred electronically from Qatar to Israel. Israeli and U.N. officials hand-carry cash over the border to Gaza.

The cash is distributed directly to needy families and public servants in Gaza and each family or individual must sign next to their name that they've received the cash. One copy of that sheet goes to Israel, one goes to the UN and one goes to Qatar.

"Qatari aid to the Gaza Strip is fully coordinated with Israel, the UN and the U.S.," the Qatari government official said.

In recent years, Qatar bought fuel from Israel for Gaza's sole power station. It also sent Egyptian fuel that Hamas can resell, using the proceeds for salaries. Stephen Reimer of the think tank, Royal United Services Institute, predicted fresh attempts to fully restrict the group's access to formal financial channels would have limited success. "Their financing tactics have grown to circumvent these."