

Qatar behind Hamas

The country's role in Hamas's Oct. 7 massacre and its massive influence operation in the U.S. demand a serious investigation.



Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani. Credit: Drop of Light/Shutterstock.



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(November 9, 2023 / JNS) In light of the horrific Oct. 7 Hamas massacre, it is important to understand Qatar's role in funding Hamas and its related activities, including in the United States. We believe that Qatar's conduct poses a serious threat to world Jewry and Western civilization.

Hamas has long been supported by the Islamic Republic of Iran, the world's most egregious state-sponsor of terrorism. Numerous U.S. federal courts have held Iran legally responsible for funding Hamas, including in cases brought by our law firm.

However, there has been insufficient attention paid to Qatar's support for Hamas. For more than a decade, Qatar has provided hundreds of millions of dollars to the terror group. It portrays its support for Hamas as humanitarian aid, but the cash has been handed over unconditionally. Qatar knows that Hamas leaders divert the aid to line their pockets and build a terrorist infrastructure at the expense of the basic needs of Gaza's residents.

Qatar must be held accountable for its role in financing and enabling the Oct. 7 massacre, including by housing Hamas leaders in luxury Doha hotels. Harboring terror leaders is not new for Qatar. It previously hosted Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the key figure behind the 9/11 attacks. Moreover, on Oct. 11, Qatar televised a statement from Khaled Mashaal, a Hamas leader comfortably based in Doha, calling for supporters to take to the streets around the world. This directly endangers the entire Diaspora Jewish community.

In addition, Qatar's Foreign Ministry has been a **leading voice** in the propaganda effort to blame Israel for the massacre committed against it, which raises significant concerns about Qatar's role in the region in general.

The U.S. Justice Department should demand Qatar extradite Hamas's leaders so they can stand trial for the barbaric atrocities they committed against innocent American civilians in southern Israel.

Qatar has also spent enormous sums buying influence in the U.S. and elsewhere, which allowed it to finance Hamas terror without repercussion. Its international façade was polished by American lobbyists whose influence was purchased and corrupted by Qatar, by the enormous reach of Qatar's state-owned media outlet *Al Jazeera* and by the presence of a pivotal U.S. military base in the country. Many celebrities and other famous people have been groomed by Qatar through visits to Doha where they are wined and dined, and thus become supporters of Qatar's brand. Qatar also scored a public relations coup through its sponsorship of the 2022 World Cup.

Academia has also been deeply corrupted by Qatari cash. Qatar has funneled billions of dollars into U.S. academic institutions and there is a clear correlation between schools that receive the most foreign and Middle Eastern money and those with the most antisemitic and anti-Israel activities. Qatar, in other words, sponsors hate and racism on American campuses.

The Qatar Foundation has sponsored Education City, a Qatari facility that houses various satellite campuses for Carnegie Mellon University, Georgetown University, Northwestern University and more. Education City also includes Hamid Bin Khalifa University, which is home to the Al-Qaradawi Center, named after Yusuf al-Qaradawi, the Arab world's most fervent proponent of violence against Jewish people. Qaradawi once issued a fatwa authorizing attacks on Jews and Americans.

Al Jazeera, headquartered in Qatar, is one of the world's most prominent media networks. It broadcasts tailored content that castigates and demonizes

Israel—and promotes antisemitism—not only in the Middle East but also North and South America and Europe.

Each of these regions is fed content that, critics argue, varies significantly in tone and bias. For example, as the Oct. 7 massacre unfolded in Israel, the deputy editor-in-chief of the Thomson Reuters foundation **lauded** an *Al Jazeera* English segment, stating, “I cannot recommend *Al Jazeera’s* coverage of Israel/Gaza enough.”

Simultaneously, *Al Jazeera’s* Arabic channels were **amplifying** horrific Hamas propaganda videos, even encouraging followers to explore the hashtag #Operations_Flood_Al_Aqsa to see what **they described** as “Palestinian joy in various cities.” Notably, *MSNBC* hosts **who argued that Israeli government policies were the root cause of Hamas’ murderous actions** were former *Al Jazeera* hosts.

This media corruption hasn’t gone unnoticed. In 2020, U.S. lawmakers, led by Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) and former Rep. Lee Zeldin, **pushed for requiring *Al Jazeera* to register as a foreign agent under the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA)**. They addressed their concerns to then-Attorney General William Barr, saying that *Al Jazeera* “engages in political activities and disseminates information in the United States that advance the interests of Qatar.” Their letter noted the outlet’s deep ties to the Qatari ruling family, referencing corporate documents from the U.K. that showed *Al Jazeera’s* connections to Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and other royals.

The letter also highlighted increasing indications that Qatar, through various entities, has been weaving an intricate web of influence in the U.S. political and national security sectors. Recent actions by the Justice Department

requiring entities like the Qatar-America Institute (QAI) to register under FARA were motivated by similar concerns,

Registered as a non-profit focusing on “arts and culture” in Qatar, the founding board of QAI reportedly includes former members of Congress and former ambassadors. Also reportedly included is ex-FBI agent and national security expert Ali Soufan, who leads the Soufan Group, a global intelligence and security consultancy that includes veterans of the national security sector. It appears to be affiliated with the Doha training facility of the Qatar International Academy for Security Studies (QIASS). The academy offers comprehensive training modules, ranging from language instruction to intricate intelligence operations, firearms handling and more for over 5,000 law enforcement and other personnel from four Arab countries, including Qatari intelligence agencies.

Notably, the president of QIASS is Majed Al-Ansari, Qatar’s official spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and advisor to the deputy prime minister and foreign minister. According to the **Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI)** and also the Middle East Forum, Al-Ansari has vociferously celebrated Palestinian terrorism in his writings.

The Soufan Center has reportedly hosted events with the Qatar Foundation, an entity that has **faced accusations** of financially supporting the BDS movement, spearheaded by designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations including Hamas, which advocates for boycotts, divestment and sanctions against Israel. In litigation filed by our firm and others, the Qatar Foundation faces pending inquiry into allegations of providing material and financial support to Hamas.

Qatar’s U.S. influence regime raises many questions. Americans who stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Qatar, for whatever reason, should be investigated.

Many have visited Doha and spoken well of its hospitality and seeming commitment to peace. Even now, despite its role in the Oct. 7 massacre, Qatar is portraying itself as a defender of human rights and reportedly acting as an intermediary with Hamas in the crucially important effort to secure the release of Hamas's hostages. In this effort, Qatar appears to be interfacing directly with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

The president, the secretary and all world leaders must use all their power and influence to bring home all the hostages from multiple countries, including Israel. As the Marines so aptly say, and which we paraphrase: There can be no child, woman or man left behind.

One of the most troubling cases of Qatari connections was revealed by a recent report from the Middle East Forum. It pertains to a prominent American Jewish organizational head, **Michael Masters**, who has had direct links to the Soufan Group—of which Masters served as president—and QIASS. Masters currently serves as director and CEO of the Secure Community Network (SCN), which is responsible for the safety and security of the U.S. Jewish community. Ours is the very community that is being assaulted, attacked, castigated and singled out on college campuses, largely funded by Qatari interests.

At this time of rampant antisemitic verbal and physical attacks on the American and global Jewish communities, it is shocking to learn of Masters's Qatari connections. They warrant a deeper investigation given Qatar's antisemitic activities. On its face, Masters's seeming duplicity and the inherent conflict of holding the key security position for the American Jewish community while simultaneously holding positions in Qatar appears wholly unacceptable, requiring full, detailed and unapologetic examination.

A serious investigation of Qatar's role in the Oct. 7 massacre, its providing of material support for Hamas, its influence peddling and funding in America, and the massive security risks facing the American Jewish community, including on college campuses, can no longer be ignored. Qatar's impunity must end. Accordingly, every American should call on Congress to add Qatar to the U.S. State Department's list of state-sponsors of terrorism.

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