

QATAR

Party Portrait

Qatar is a country of 1.9 million people, of which only one-eighth are Qatari citizens. Despite its relatively small size, though, it is the world's leading exporter of liquefied natural gas and the richest in terms of GDP per capita. Like its Gulf neighbors it is a monarchy, and has been ruled since the 19th century by the Al-Thani family. Qatar is most concerned with maintaining its security and stability, particularly given the volatility of the region. It has sought to create a more proactive role as a mediating power in the Middle East and North Africa, leveraging its significant economic strength as well as its soft power.

Key Interests

- Be viewed as a powerful state in the region, a player on the international scene, and an ally of the West. To this end, it has increasingly been involved, to varying degrees, in conflicts across the region.
- Be perceived as a power broker in the Middle East, and particularly to supplant Saudi Arabian influence in the region.

Sources of Leverage

Political - It has allied itself with the West and specifically the United States, serving as a mediator in certain situations, and housing the US Central Command forward headquarters.

Economic - Its economic power allows Qatar to exert significant political influence across the region, either through aid or military support.

Soft Power - Al-Jazeera is a government-backed news outlet based in Doha and is considered the Arab world's most influential media organization, with a huge following in Arab communities.

Regional Strategy

Though it has played a mediating role in various conflicts, it has also gone beyond this in terms of funding or providing weapons to groups. Moreover, it often deviates from the GCC "party line", choosing instead to establish an independent foreign policy. Ultimately, Qatar seeks to establish relations with a wide array of actors in an effort to exert as much influence as possible in regional affairs.

Powerful Individuals

Emir: Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani; Designated Successor: Abdullah bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani (the current Emir's half-brother); Prime Minister and Minister of the Ministry of Interior: Abdallah bin Nasir bin Khalifa al-Thani; Former Emir: Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani (Tamim bin Hamad's father); Mother of Emir: Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser al-Missned; Director General of Al-Jazeera: Dr. Mostefa Souag

Potential Negotiation Moves

Regional power broker - Qatar can act as a mediator in key conflicts across the region, most notably in Syria and Yemen.

Increase support to Syrian opposition groups - Alternatively, Qatar may also wish to play a more active role in the Syrian conflict, increasing financial and armed support to rebel groups.

Internal Conflicts

Qatar is mostly ethnically and religiously homogenous and has not suffered through some of the ethnic or sectarian struggles that have burdened so many countries in the region. It is one of the wealthiest rentier states, and though political freedoms are limited, there have not been any significant disputes between citizens and the state. However, with migrants representing a majority of the population, the government has faced increased international pressure to provide greater labor rights to these groups.

Memberships

ARAB LEAGUE, GCC, IAEA, ISTANBUL COOPERATION INITIATIVE, OIC, OPEC, UN

Allies

N/A

Partners

PALESTINE Hamas, EGYPT Muslim Brotherhood, IRAN, TURKEY, UNITED STATES, UNITED KINGDOM

Rivals

SAUDI ARABIA, BAHRAIN, UAE, EGYPT Government

Adversaries

SYRIA Government

Active Armed Opponents

N/A

Proxy

SYRIA Other Opposition Groups

External Sponsor

N/A

Aid Recipient

PALESTINE Fatah, PALESTINE Hamas, YEMEN Government

Aid Donor

N/A