

# Political analysis of qatar

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POLITICALENVIRONMENT Qatar also known as state of Qatar is a sovereign Arab state, located in western Asia. Its sole land border is with Saudi Arabia to the south, with the rest of its territory surrounded by the Persian Gulf. A strait of the Persian Gulf separates Qatar from nearby island state of Bahrain. Qatar has been ruled absolutely by Al-Thani family since the mid 19th century. Formerly a British protectorate noted for pearl hunting, it became independent in 1971.

Since, then it has become one of the region's wealthiest states because of its enormous oil and natural gas revenues. The most important positioning Qatar are held by the members of the al Thani family, or close confidants of the al - Thani family in 1992 Qatar built a strong military ties with united states of America and Qatar is now location of U. S. central command's forward headquarters and the combined air operations center. Qatar has the world's highest GDP per capita and proven reserves of oil and natural gas.

Qatar tops the list world's richest countries by Forbes in 2010. Qatar did not emerge as a separate political entity until the mid 19th century when the British recognized sheikh Mohamed bin Thani. This recognition came in the aftermath of maritime Qatari Bahrain war of 1867 - 1868, prior to which the British saw Qatar as a Bahraini dependency of al - Khalifa. In march 1893, at the battle of Wajbah (10 miles west of Doha), Sheikh Jassim defeated the ottomans and forced a treaty that would later form the basis of Qatar emerging as a separate country.

The reach of British Empire diminished after World War 2, especially following Indian independence in 1947. Pressure increased on British government in 1950s and British welcomed Kuwait's declaration of <https://assignbuster.com/political-analysis-of-qatar/>

independence in 1961. In 1968 Qatar joined Bahrain and seven other states in a federation, but regional dispute forced Qatar to resign from coalition. Qatar became independent sovereign state on 3 September 1971. In 1991 Qatar played a significant role in Persian Gulf War against Iraqi army. They supported Saudi Arab National Guard units.

In 1995 emir Hamad bin Khalifa al Thani seized control of the country from his father Khalifa bin Hamad al Thani while his father was enjoying vacation in Switzerland. Under emir Hamad Qatar has showed notable change like women's right to vote, drafting a new constitution, and launch of Al Jazeera. Qatar served as headquarter and one of the main launching sites of U. S. invasion of Iraq in 2003. In December 2010, Qatar was selected to host the 2022 FIFA world cup and thus Qatar will be the first country of Middle East to host the tournament.

Qataris celebrate their national day on 18th December. On this day the people of Qatar remembers Sheikh Jassim Bin Mohammad al Thani as a leader in 1878 and the force which supported Sheikh Jassim. Executive Branch In Qatar, the ruling Al Thani family continued to hold power following the declaration of independence in 1971. The head of state is the Emir, and the right to rule Qatar is passed on within the Al Thani family. Politically, Qatar is evolving from a traditional society into a modern welfare state.

Government departments have been established to meet the requirements of social and economic progress. The Basic Law of Qatar 1970 institutionalized local customs rooted in Qatar's conservative Islamic heritage, granting the Emir preeminent power. There is no electoral system. Political parties are banned. The influx of expatriate Arabs has introduced

ideas that call into question the tenets of Qatar's traditional society, but there has been no serious challenge to Al Thani rule.

In February 1972, the Deputy Ruler and Prime Minister, Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad, deposed his cousin, Emir Ahmed, and assumed power. This move was supported by the key members of Al Thani and took place without violence or signs of political unrest. On June 27, 1995, the Deputy Ruler, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa deposed his father, Emir Khalifa, in a bloodless coup. Emir Hamad and his father reconciled in 1996. Constitutional Authorities: His highness the Emir is the head of the constitutional authorities, holding both legislative and executive powers.

The Council of ministers assists in implementing the general policies of the state and the Advisory Council gives recommendations and advice on public matters referred to it by the Council of ministers. Emir: The Emir is the ruler of the state. Ruler in Qatar is hereditarily within the family of Al-Thani, whereby, power is transferred from father to son. In case no son is available, power is transferred to the person whom the Emir chooses within the family of Al-Thani in accordance with the Emiri Decision No (3) for 1995 amending some provisions of the Amended Provisional

Constitution on hereditary transfer of power. The Heir Apparent is appointed in accordance with the manner stipulated in the Article No (21) of the Constitution and carries the title of His Highness the Heir Apparent. Article (17) of the Amended Provisional Constitution authorizes the Emir to issue decrees based on the advice of the Council of Ministers and in the consultation with the Advisory Council. Article (18) gives powers to the Emir assisted by the Council of ministers. The Emir thus holds both legislative and

executive powers with the assistance of Council of Ministers and the Advisory Council.

The Emir's role is influenced by continuing traditions of consultation, rule by consensus, and the citizen's right to appeal personally to the Emir. The Emir, while directly accountable to one, cannot violate the Sharia (Islamic law) and, in practice, must consider the opinions of leading notables and the religious establishment. Council of Ministers The supreme chancellor has the exclusive power to appoint and remove the prime minister and cabinet ministers who, together, comprise the Council of Ministers, which is the supreme executive authority in the country.

The Council of Ministers also initiates legislation. Laws and decrees proposed by the Council of Ministers are referred to the Advisory Council (Majilis Al Shura) for discussion after which they are submitted to the Emir for ratification Political parties and elections Qatar held a constitutional referendum in 2003, which was overwhelmingly supported. The first municipal elections with men and women voters and candidates were held in 2007 and 2011. The first legislative council's 45 seats are planned for 2013.

Suffrage is currently limited to municipal elections and two thirds of the seats in the legislative council, with the voting age number of residents who are prevented from applying for citizenship. The selected municipal Council has no executive powers but may offer advice to the ministers. Administrative divisions Map of the municipalities of Qatar, since 2004 Before 2004, Qatar was divided into ten municipalities, also occasionally or rarely translated as governorates or provinces: 1. Doha (Ad Dawhah) 2. Al Ghuwariyah 3. Al Jumaliyah 4. Al Khawr 5. Al Wakrah 6. Ar Rayyan 7.

Jariyan al Batnah 8. Madinat ash Shamal 9. Umm Salal 10. Mesaieed Since 2004, Qatar has been divided into seven municipalities. A new municipality, Al Daayen, was created under Resolution No. 13, formed from parts of Umm Salal and Al Khawr; at the same time, Al Ghuwariyah was merged with Al Khawr; Al Jumaliyah was merged with Ar Rayyan; Jarayan al Batnah was split between Ar Rayyan and Al Wakrah; and Mesaieed was merged with Al Wakrah. For statistical purposes, the municipalities are further subdivided into zones (87 in number as of 2004), which are in turn subdivided into blocks.

The constitutional development in Qatar graduated from one phase to another, keeping pace with the development of the country and its economic growth. The first provisional constitution was issued in 1970 before independence and it was amended in 1972 after independence, in order to cope with the requirements and responsibilities of the new phase. Since that time the objectives and features of the state policy and its Gulf, Arab and Islamic affiliations were determined.

The State's authorities and apparatus acquired their experience from actually practicing these authorities in the internal and external domains. Amendments were made on some provisions of the provisional basic statute in regard to the executive authority and hereditary rule so as to conclude the constitutional arrangements in the country. The judiciary act and other basic laws, which were enacted to regulate civil and commercial interactions, were other steps on the way to build up the government apparatus and lay down the foundation for the rule of institutions and the law.

To reach that goal, an Emiri Decree was issued in July 1999 to form a high level committee to draft a new, permanent constitution for the country, one of the main provisions of which would be to cope with the achievements of the State of Qatar and to meet the aspirations and hopes of the 21st century. At the end of June 1999, the Prime Minister Sheikh Abdullah Bin Khalifa Al-Thani issued a decision to form a ministerial committee mandated to study the planning of future economic and industrial development in the country in the light of current global trends. In December 1999 H.

H. the Emir Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani issued an Emiri Decree to form the " High Committee for Coordination and Follow Up", chaired by H. H. the Heir Apparent Sheikh Jassim Bin Hamad Al-Thani. The Committee is mandated to study the projects proposed by the ministries of public utilities and services sector and work to explore the means to improve coordination among these ministries with a view to enhance cooperation and optimize the implementation of projects. In 1999, free elections were held to form the Central Municipal Council for the first time in the history of Qatar.

The historic event marked the country's first step towards democracy in its civic sense. In a pioneering move, women were allowed both to vote and run as candidates in this initial step towards popular participation in decision making in the country. Human rightsTo western eyes, the Qatari authorities seem to keep a relatively tight rein freedom of expansion and moves forequality. The Freedom in the World 2010 report by Freedom House lists Qatar as " Not Free" and on a 1-7 scale rates the country a 6 for political rights and 5 for civil liberties.

As of 2011, the Democracy Index describes Qatar an “ authoritarian regime” with the score of 3.18 out of 10, and ranks 138th out of 167 countries covered. The citizens of Qatar enjoy equal civil rights and responsibilities without discrimination on grounds of race, origin or religion. Laws cannot be applied retroactively and no sentence may be passed except under the terms of existing law. A suspect is innocent until is proven guilty and is entitled to a fair trial. The civil liberties guaranteed by the state include the right of residence, freedom of press and publication and private ownership.

These rights cannot be circumscribed except where the practice of such rights contravenes the law or the public interest. The basic statute requires all those residing in the state to observe public order and respect public customs and morals. On its part, the state is responsible for providing public jobs for all residents. Legislative Branch The advisory Council can draft and approve laws, but final say is in the hands of Emir. The council has 45 members, 30 of whom are elected by direct, general secret ballot, and 15 of whom are appointed by the Emir.

An Advisory Council or Majlis Al-Shura has limited legislative authority to draft and approve laws, but the Emir has final say on all matters. No legislative elections have been held since 1970 when there were partial elections to the body In 2003, Qatar adopted a new constitution that provided for the direct election of 30 of the 45 members of Advisory Council. As of 2012, the Council is composed entirely of members appointed by the Emir. Elections to the Majlis Al-Shura have been announced, and then postponed, several times.



In 2011 the emir announced that elections to the council would be held in the second half of 2013. An elected 29-member Central Municipal Council (CMC) has limited consultative authority aimed at improving municipal services. The CMC makes recommendations to the Ministry for Municipal Affairs and Agriculture. Disagreement between the CMC and the Ministry can be brought to the Council of Ministers for resolution. Municipal elections are scheduled for every four years. The most recent elections for the council were in May 2011. Before 1999, members of the CMC were appointed by the government. Judicial Branch

In 2007, an Administrative Court, a constitutional Court, and Courts of First instances, Appeal and Cassation were established. All judges are appointed by Amiri degree, on the recommendation of the Supreme Judiciary Council. Terms are for three years. The legal system is based on Islamic and civil law codes, and a discretionary system of law controlled by the Emir. Islamic law dominates family and personal issues. In May 2011, Qatar held nationwide elections for a 29-member Central Municipal Corporation (CMC), which has limited consultative powers aimed at improving the provision of municipal services.

Male and female Qataris aged 18 and older are able to vote, and run as candidates for election. There are no political parties in Qatar. Consultative Assembly The Consultative Assembly has 35 appointed members with only consultative tasks. However, the 2003 Constitution of Qatar calls for a 45 member elected Legislature, which is to be made up of 30 elected representatives and 15 appointed by the Emir. In 2006, Prime Minister Al Thani-then the Deputy PM- announced that elections would be held in 2007.

However, only a legislative council to review the subject was created that year.

The actual elections have been postponed three times; most recently in June 2010, when the Emir extended the Consultative Assembly's tenure until 2013. Foreign Policy H. H. Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Emir of the state of Qatar is considered a highly competent politician and a great contributor to the enrichment of international and regional political practice. The manifestations of that contribution are reflected in the boosting of the economic and political cooperation between Qatar and the Gulf Arab States in particular and between Qatar and the rest of the world in general.

Such contributions emanate from a strategic vision, which is marked by courage, objectivity and comprehensiveness. The personalities Doha received during the last five years and the official visits paid by H. H. the Emir Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani to the three old continents in addition to North America, all were positively reflected in Qatar's high standing amongst the states of the world which qualified it to play a positive and influential role marked by reality, transparency, clarity of vision and the adoption of moderate political approach.

On October 10, 2005, for the first time, Qatar was elected to a two-year term on the UN Security Council for 2006-2007. According to BBC, in April 2006 Qatar announced that it will give US\$50 million to the new Hamas-led Palestinian government. Hamas, an ally of Iran and Hezbollah, is considered by the US and the EU to be a terrorist organization. In May 2006, Qatar pledged more than \$100 million to Hurricane Katrina relief to colleges and universities in Louisiana affected by the hurricane.

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Some of this money was also distributed to families looking to repair damaged homes by Neighborhood Housing Services of New Orleans, Inc. Qatar is member of ABEDA, AFESD, AL, AMF, ESCWA, FAO, G-77, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICAO, ICRM, IDB, IFAD, IFRCs, IHO, ILO, IMF, International Maritime organization, Intelsat Interpol, IOC, ISO, ITU, NAM, OAPEC, OIC, OPCW, OPEC, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UPU, WCO, WHO, WIPO, WMO, and WTO. Most of the developed countries are exempt from visa requirements.

Citizens of exempted countries can also request a joint visa that allows them to travel to Oman as well Israeli passport holders however are forbidden to enter Qatar. The Qatari government is the primary benefactor of the Al Jazeera television network. Accused of biased reporting against some governments, the network has been banned in Kuwait. This has led to strained relations between Qatar and some government in the region who see the Qatari government as responsible for Al Jazeera's purportedly incendiary reporting. International Relations

Qatar is very keen to participate actively in the efforts to deal with all the concerns and the challenges that the Gulf region encounters. It places increasing emphasis on supporting the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and spares no effort to bring about solidarity and strengthen ties of mutual trust and communication between Arab countries, propagates the wisdom of resorting to peaceful means in resolving all the disputes among the countries, approves the United Nations efforts to uphold peace and security and works to maintain good relations with all peace-loving people and countries.

Qatar rejects and denounces all forms and manifestations of terrorism, regardless of its causes, objectives and means. It, however, differentiates between terrorism and the people's struggle and legitimate rights of freedom and self-determination in accordance with the provisions of International Laws. Qatar in all regional and international occasions, expresses its grave concerns over the escalation of conflicts, ethnic cleansing and denial of the rights of minorities in some countries of Asia, Eastern Europe, Africa and other continents.

Qatar welcomes all international agreements concluded with a view to resolving such problems and pledges support for the efforts exerted by regional and international organizations to achieve peace and stability in some states and regions of the world. In the International Arena Qatar works very hard to establish close ties of cooperation with all peace-loving countries and people, extends generous financial aid to many developing countries in Asia and Africa and contributes to various regional and international aid funds to create the widest possible avenue of international cooperation.

Qatar has always been a staunch supporter of liberation movement and has constantly denounced all kinds of racial discrimination wherever it exists. In May 1994, Qatar hosted the meetings of the Regional Security and Arms Limitations General Committee. Qatar adopts a set of principles as a basis for peace and security in the Middle East and the world at large.

At the top of those principles comes the abstention from using or threatening to use force against territorial integrity of other countries, and seeking to resolve disputes by peaceful means such as regional or international

arbitration, and dialogue. In recognition of Qatar's vital role and contribution in the efforts to uphold peace, the special work group of the Regional Security and Arms Limitations General Committee for the Middle East decided in December 1994 to establish a regional center for the group in Doha to act as a front line dispute prevention and resolution facility.

And as an expression of appreciation from the international community of the policies adopted by Qatar in the regional and the international spheres, Qatar was elected in March 1995 deputy chairman for the international social development Summit Conference, in the context of the UN regional groups representation. U. S. -Qatari Relations A U. S. embassy was established in Doha in 1973, but U. S. relations with Qatar did not blossom until the 1991 Gulf War. The United States promptly recognized the assumptions of power by Sheikh Hamad in June 1995. Qatar's articulation in Arab-Israeli peace process accord with U. S. ' efforts to foster and expanding dialogue between Israel and Arab States. The two governments differ to some degree in their positions regarding Iran and Iraq. Qatar favors a policy of constructive engagement with these two states. By contrast, the United States favors isolating them through the policy of ' Dual Containment' Trade between United States and Qatar has increased after the Gulf war. U. S. exports to Qatar amounted to \$354. 11 million in 1998, consisting mainly of machinery and transport equipment.

U. S. imports from Qatar, mainly textiles and fertilizers, totaled \$220. 36 million in 1998. Over the past five years, the level of bilateral trade has more than doubled. Although the bulk of Qatar's trade continues to be with a few European countries and Japan, several U. S. firms, including Mobil,

Occidental, Pennzoil, Enron, and Bechtel are active in the exploitation of Qatar's oil and gas resources. Despite the presence of U. S. firms in the Qatari hydrocarbon industry, the U. S. imports virtually no oil from Qatar.

Bilateral defense and security cooperation has expanded since the Gulf war. On June 23, 1992, the United States and Qatar concluded a Defense Cooperation agreement that provided for U. S. access to Qatari bases, pre-positioning of United States material, and combined military exercises. Since the agreement, the United States and Qatar have begun to implement plans for pre-positioning U. S. military equipment for a use in a future contingency in the Gulf, including enough tanks and associated equipment for an armored brigade. A warehouse for U. S.

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Henry Shelton stated that the pre-positioning station " is right on schedule at this time and will be a great enhancement to our capabilities as well as, I think, provide a great capability that we would not have had otherwise" Qatar has also expressed a willingness to host a forward presence for U. S. Central Command and it has begun allowing U. S. P-3 maritime patrols originating from Qatar. On several occasions, Qatar has hosted temporary deployments of U. S. Air Expeditionary Forces that enhance U. S. aircraft carrier coverage of the Gulf 10 Qatar has held informal discussions about purchasing the U. S. built M1 A2 tank and Patriot PAC 3 air defense system, but no U. S. sales are anticipated at this time. The U. S. has been supportive of Qatar's recent moves toward political liberalization. In March 1999, Rep. Sue Kelly and Rep. Carolyn Maloney headed a congressional delegation that observed Qatar's election for a Central Municipal Council. In the election's aftermath, Congress passed

a resolution congratulating the state of Qatar and its citizens for their commitment to democratic ideals and women's suffrage (S. Con. Res. 14, March 4, 1999, and H. Con Res. 35, April 13, 1999)