



المركز العربي للأبحاث ودراسة السياسات
Arab Center for Research & Policy Studies

Situation Assessment | 18 September 2025

The Doha Emergency Summit: Outcomes and Regional Implications

Unit for Political Studies

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Series: **Situation Assessment**

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On 15 September, the Qatari capital, Doha, hosted an emergency Arab and Islamic summit convened in response to the Israeli strike against the State of Qatar on 9 September. The summit was marked by broad and high-level participation, with representatives from fifty-seven states, including heads of state and government, underscoring both the scale of solidarity with Qatar and the strength of its regional and international standing and diplomatic networks.

The summit sought to formulate a collective and effective response with in-depth deliberations on the political and diplomatic measures necessary in the face of this unprecedented assault on a state that plays a central mediating role in the region. The general tone of the summit was characterized by a clear diagnosis of the dangers inherent to Israeli policies, with participating states unanimously condemning the attack on a mediator and negotiator and reaffirming the rogue character of the occupying power. The summit further warned that the absence of a firm response would only embolden Israel to persist in its aggressions against Arab and Islamic states.

Global Rejection of Attacks Against a Mediator

The new precedent set by the Israeli assault on Qatar provoked widespread international condemnation. It was widely received as evidence that the policies of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's far-right government have expanded beyond the arenas of Gaza, Lebanon and Syria, to threaten region-wide stability. The strike also targeted a mediator that, for nearly two years, has been exerting strenuous efforts to broker an agreement to end Israel's genocidal war on Gaza, which thus far has resulted in the killing and wounding of roughly a tenth of the population.

This display of Israeli aggression reinforced a global perception that the Israeli government now operates without red lines, and without regard for international norms or even the most basic conventions governing relations between human beings. This perception was reflected in a series of solidarity visits and communications directed to Qatar, as well as in official statements from across the world condemning the Israeli assault and rejecting it as a violation of the principles underpinning the international order and the norms of inter-state conduct.¹

This sentiment was most clearly expressed in the statements of member states at the emergency session of the United Nations Security Council, convened at Algeria's request, to address the implications of the Israeli attack on Qatar. The Council issued a presidential statement, unanimously adopted, condemning the assault and stressing the importance of de-escalation and the safeguarding of Qatar's sovereignty and territorial integrity – though notably refraining from explicitly naming Israel as the aggressor, in order to secure the support of the United States.² Similarly, the United Nations Human Rights Council unanimously adopted a resolution to convene an urgent debate on the Israeli attack on Qatar.³

¹ "Response to the Israeli Aggression...Unprecedented Global Solidarity with Qatar Reflects Its Regional and International Standing," *Qatar News Agency*, 13/9/2025, accessed on 16/9/2025, at: <https://acr.ps/1L9GPZv>

² United Nations, Security Council, "Security Council Press Statement on Doha Strikes," 11/9/2025, accessed on 16/9/2025, at: <https://acr.ps/1L9GPWh>

³ "The United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva Unanimously Adopts a Resolution to Hold an Emergency Debate on the Israeli Attack on Qatar," Media Center, Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 15/9/2025, accessed on 16/9/2025, at: <https://acr.ps/1L9GPWj>

On 14 September, the foreign ministers of Arab and Islamic states convened in Doha, in preparation for the summit.⁴ During the meeting, they warned that the failure to adopt practical and concrete measures to confront the Israeli aggression could trigger a chain of grave repercussions, leading to further losses and regional devastation. The Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar, Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani, urged the international community to hold Israel accountable for its ongoing crimes, including the massacres committed against civilians in Gaza, the continuation of settlement expansion, and the obstruction of the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.⁵ His remarks were a clear reference to US support for Israel, exemplified by the attempt of US Secretary of State Marco Rubio to downplay the assault on Doha, stressing that "What happened, happened. We're not happy about it, but we need to move forward" and insisting that the attack "will not alter the nature of the strong relationship with Israel."⁶

Summit Outcomes

The Doha summit was widely attended with all round political representation, underscoring the seriousness with which Arab and Islamic states view the growing dangers posed by Israeli policies to the region. This was clearly articulated in the final communiqué,⁷ composed of twenty-five clauses, which emerged as a collective framework for the Arab-Islamic position, linking the assault on Qatar to Israel's broader policies in the region. The communiqué did not merely condemn the direct attack on Doha and the resulting casualties and damage; it also situated the strike within Israel's systematic policies of genocide, ethnic cleansing, starvation and siege, and settlement (clauses 1-2). It further affirmed that the defence of Qatar is tantamount to the defence of all Arab and Islamic states, thereby framing the assault as an issue of collective security (clauses 3-5, 8, 25) and rendering any attack on an Arab or Islamic state a threat to the entire regional order.

On the diplomatic front, the communiqué stressed Qatar's central role in mediation efforts to halt the war on Gaza, secure the release of captives, and work towards a political settlement (clauses 6, 20). This repeated emphasis signalled recognition of Qatar's importance as a mediator and highlighted that the assault on Qatar was, in essence, an attack on the diplomatic process itself.

With regard to Israel, the communiqué went beyond condemning the latest attack to rejecting attempts to impose a new *fait accompli*, policies of forced displacement, and the use of siege as an instrument of war. It warned against annexation plans and assaults on neighbouring states, called for sanctions against Israel, the suspension of arms supplies, and a review of its UN membership

⁴ "A Ministerial Meeting Begins in Preparation for the Emergency Arab-Islamic Summit in Doha," *Al Jazeera*, 14/9/2025, accessed on 16/9/2025, at: <https://acr.ps/1L9GPSC>

⁵ "The Prime Minister of Qatar on the Eve of the Doha Summit: Real Measures Must Be Taken to Prevent the Continuation of Israel", *al-Araby al-Jadid*, 14/9/2025, accessed on 16/9/2025, at: <https://acr.ps/1L9GPHI>

⁶ "Rubio in Israel: Trump 'Not Happy' with Qatar Strike," *Israel Hayom*, 14/9/2025, accessed on 17/9/2025, at: <https://acr.ps/1L9GP4w>

⁷ "Final Communiqué Issued by Arab-Islamic Emergency Summit in Doha," *Qatar News Agency*, 15/9/2025, accessed on 16/9/2025, at: <https://acr.ps/1L9GQ4H>

(clauses 7, 10-17). States were urged to adopt effective legal and practical measures to prevent further Israeli aggression, including by supporting efforts to end its impunity, holding it accountable for its violations and crimes, imposing sanctions on it, suspending the supply, transfer, or transit of weapons, ammunition, and military materials – including dual-use items – reviewing diplomatic and economic relations with it, and initiating legal proceedings against it. However, these measures were framed as options for individual states rather than as a coordinated collective action, and the communiqué lacked clear mechanisms for implementation.

The communiqué also reaffirmed the 1967 borders as the reference point for a Palestinian state, welcomed the outcomes of the "New York Declaration" and the Two-State Solution Conference (clauses 9, 18-19, 21-23), and stressed the importance of international accountability by calling for the enforcement of rulings by the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice regarding war crimes and genocide in Gaza (clause 24).

Despite its importance in expressing solidarity with Qatar, employing sharper language in addressing Israel and its policies, and the weight of attendance, the final communiqué fell short of adopting practical steps commensurate with the gravity of Israeli genocide in Gaza, escalation in the West Bank, the violation of Qatar's sovereignty, and repeated assaults on Syria and Lebanon. It contained no concrete measures against Israel, despite the significant leverage of the Arab and Islamic bloc. While the rhetoric surrounding the summit exceeded the usual ceiling, the communiqué did not translate this into action, even at the symbolic level – such as recalling ambassadors, closing airspace to Israeli commercial flights, or imposing explicit sanctions on Israel.

Nor did it attempt to exert pressure on the US to alter its policies towards Israel. Instead, Washington was referred to in the communiqué as a mediator, despite the availability of economic leverage that could have been employed, particularly against the administration of Donald Trump, which is acutely sensitive to economic sanctions. Moreover, the communiqué deferred the task of confronting Israeli expansionism to the international community, rather than assuming it as a joint Arab and Islamic responsibility, even though the continuation of Israel's genocidal war on Gaza demands urgent and decisive measures to halt it.

Activating Gulf Joint Defence Mechanisms

On the sidelines of the Arab-Islamic summit, an emergency Gulf summit was also convened, both as an expression of solidarity with a member of the Gulf bloc subjected to external belligerence and as a warning against any repetition of such attacks. This was reflected in the decision of the leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to call for an urgent meeting in Doha of the GCC Joint Defence Council, preceded by a session of the Higher Military Committee, to assess the defensive posture of member states and the sources of threat in light of the Israeli assault on Qatar. The GCC leaders instructed the Unified Military Command to take the necessary steps to activate the mechanisms of joint defence and Gulf deterrence capabilities. In this context, they affirmed that the security of



the member states is indivisible, and that any attack on Qatar constitutes an attack on them all, while expressing readiness to mobilize all resources to support Doha in confronting any aggression against its territory. This meeting was of particular significance given the GCC's historical inability to articulate a common defence and security doctrine. It signals a shift towards examining practical options available to the member states in light of the failure of the long-standing approach of complete reliance on the US, and towards a reassessment of existing security and economic alliances. Such a step may constitute an opportunity to reshape the security doctrine of the region.

Conclusion

The international, Arab, and Islamic positions expressed at the UN Security Council and the extraordinary Arab-Islamic summit in Doha reflected a state of alert in response to Israel's unprecedented violation of international norms through its attack on the Qatari mediator and the attempted assassination of members of the Hamas negotiating delegation. Despite the elevated tone of the speeches and recognition of the gravity of Israel's actions – and of the likelihood of further escalation if it is not deterred – the practical measures adopted fell short of matching the seriousness of the violations. The Security Council statement and the Arab-Islamic summit communiqué contained no concrete decisions to respond to the Israeli assault; Israel was not even explicitly named in the Security Council statement, while the Arab-Islamic summit communiqué did not go beyond customary denunciation of Israeli aggression. Nor did it succeed in capitalizing on the current international climate, which is increasingly moving towards isolating Israel.

Moreover, the communiqué confined the leverage of Arab and Islamic states to vague calls for "reviewing diplomatic and economic relations" with Israel, without advancing a binding collective commitment or an enforceable mechanism. Instead, it left the matter to the discretion of individual states, thereby squandering an important opportunity to curb Israeli practices, prevent further assaults on states in the region, and put an end to the ongoing genocide in Gaza. As for the Arab Gulf states, discussions on reactivating the joint defence framework may open prospects for a new security approach, particularly in light of the profound changes in their security environment since 7 October 2023. This requires bridging the gap between their security needs and economic interests, which in turn necessitates formulating a new framework to govern relations with the US and other major international powers.