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Don't Shoot the Mediator

The Campaign to Undermine Qatar's Role in the Iran and Lebanon Ceasefires

Unit for Political Studies

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Over the past three decades, conflict mediation has become a central pillar of Qatar's foreign policy, building on a diplomatic model it had built around establishing balanced relations with various regional and international powers, including both states and non-state actors. This allowed it to act successfully as mediator in some of the most complex regional and international issues,¹ consolidating its position as a go-between who enjoys the trust of parties that are difficult to bring together in a single negotiating framework. This success was not the result of ad hoc initiatives, but rather the fruit of strategic planning, accumulation of experience, and long investment in the tools of diplomacy, dialogue, and crisis management.

Yet Doha's efforts have repeatedly been the target of political and media campaigns aimed at questioning its legitimacy and eligibility to play that role. These attacks escalate whenever Qatar emerges as a mediator in crises at the intersection of regional and international interests, as happened during Israel's genocide against the Gaza Strip between 2023 and 2025. This pattern has starkly reappeared in recent weeks, after Qatar played a key major role in bringing about the Memorandum of Understanding which paused the US war on Iran – a role that extended to include understandings related to Israel's assault on Lebanon. Forces opposed to the truce and insistent that the war must continue – both in the US and Israel, as well as in some parts of the Iranian opposition – launched a wide-ranging lobbying and media campaign that questioned the neutrality of Qatar's mediation, representing it as a biased actor rather than a diplomatic mediator. This discourse goes further than questioning the performance of the mediator, or criticizing foreign policy choices, attempting to undermine the very model of mediation that Qatar represents, by reinterpreting the underpinnings of its effectiveness as sources of bias.

Qatar's Role in the US-Iranian Truce

Qatar played a pivotal role in bringing about the ceasefire between the US and Iran. Its involvement in this process did not arise from a unilateral initiative or an attempt to monopolize the mediation process, but rather developed gradually, in a manner imposed by the evolution of the crisis itself. In the early stages, its role was limited to supporting existing negotiating efforts, especially those led by Pakistan, before it moved to direct participation in management of the negotiating process, while other tracks faltered and proved unable to bridge the gap between Washington and Tehran. During this stage, Qatar intensified its contacts with both parties, not only conveying messages, but also helping to bring positions closer together and build the minimal level of political trust necessary for the negotiations to continue.²

¹ Vassilis K. Fouskas, "Qatar and the Israel-Hamas Conflict: Hybrid Mediation Power on Display," *Open Access Government*, 24 November 2023, accessed on 12 July 2026, at: <https://acr.ps/hBxMvVb>.

² "The Decisive Mediator: How Qatar Led the Final-Hour Marathon to End the War Between Washington and Tehran," *Al Jazeera*, 21 June 2026, accessed 12 July 2026 (in Arabic), at: <https://acr.ps/hBxNLJT>.

Qatar did not initially show enthusiasm for taking on the role of lead mediator,³ especially as its territory came under repeated Iranian attack, culminating on 18 March 2026 in an operation against the giant Ras Laffan gas facility, which cut off about 17 percent of the country's liquefied natural gas (LNG) production capacity. At first, Qatar preferred to distance itself from any mediation efforts,⁴ instead favouring ongoing efforts led by other regional parties – until they faltered, creating the need for a mediator with functioning channels of communication with both parties.

From this perspective, Qatar's move to the position of lead mediator was not merely an expression of a desire to mediate, given its interest in stopping a war that directly affected it. Nor was its move to take on this role again an attempt to expand its regional clout, as it is not a major state with such spheres of influence. Rather, its involvement was a response to a need for negotiations, with the existing process blocked. The US and Iran had found themselves facing a situation in which the cost of continuing the military confrontation was no longer acceptable, yet neither was prepared to make the kind of unilateral concessions that would allow the crisis to end. In light of this Catch 22 situation, Qatar emerged as the party best equipped to manage negotiations, thanks to its network of relations, the experience it has accumulated with various regional and international actors, and the access this given it with all relevant parties. It also benefited from its knowledge of the minutiae of the dispute between Washington and Tehran, resulting from previous rounds of mediation such as the negotiations that successfully led to a US-Iranian prisoner exchange in September 2023.⁵

The crisis shifted significantly when US President Donald Trump announced he was retreating from military escalation in light of efforts made by Qatar and several other countries in the region.⁶ This shift paved the way for Doha to move diplomatically, having spent the preceding months intensifying its contacts with Washington and Tehran through mutual visits and high-level meetings regarding ways to contain the crisis and build confidence between them. In the final stage of the negotiations, the Qatari delegation led on managing the details of the accord, and contributed to addressing the issues that were hindering efforts to reach an agreement, which paved the way for a transition from military escalation to diplomacy.⁷

3 Summer Said, Anat Peled and Robbie Gramer, "Qatar Resists Being Key Mediator," *The Wall Street Journal*, 6 April 2026, accessed on 12 July 2026, at: <https://acr.ps/hBxNLWs>.

4 At the onset of the war on Iran, the Qatari government announced that it was not directly involved in mediation efforts, though it supported all diplomatic tracks, official or unofficial, aimed at ending the conflict. Its efforts at that stage were focused on defending its territory and addressing the losses resulting from the various attacks it had undergone. It emphasised that its position from day one had been that the war must be brought to an end through diplomatic means. See: "Advisor to the Prime Minister and Official Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Qatar is not involved in mediation between the US and Iran, but supports all diplomatic paths to end the war," Media Center of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar, 24 March 2026, accessed 12 July 2026 (in Arabic), at: <https://acr.ps/hBxNM91>.

5 "The Tehran-Washington Deal: Released Iranian and American Prisoners," *Al Jazeera*, 18 September 2023, accessed 12 July 2026 (in Arabic), at: <https://acr.ps/hBxNMH4>.

6 Maegan Vazquez et al., "Trump Says Iran Ceasefire Deal in Final Stages, to be 'Announced Shortly'," *The Washington Post*, 23 May 2026, accessed on 12 July 2026, at: <https://acr.ps/hBxNM90>.

7 Anwar Al-Khateeb, "How Qatar's Quiet Diplomacy Helped Pave the Way for the US-Iran Deal," *The New Arab*, 16 June 2026, accessed on 12 July 2026, at: <https://acr.ps/hBxNLtd>.

These factors underpinned the effectiveness of Qatar's mediation, allowing it to operate within in a negotiating space where many other mediators had struggled. As the talks moved into their decisive stages, Qatar played a key role in addressing the most complex issues, including the question of Iran's frozen assets, regional security arrangements, and the future of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz. The country even received public praise from top US officials, who stressed the key role of Qatari mediation in reaching the agreement.⁸

However, this diplomatic success was accompanied by an escalation of a political and media discourse that reinterpreted Qatar's role from a different angle. Instead of viewing the country as a constructive actor that help contain the crisis and avoiding it having profound effects on the global economy, this discourse presented Qatar's mediation efforts as evidence of the country's growing influence and its bias toward one of the two sides of the conflict – either the US or Iran, depending on the source of the criticism. Consequently, the success of the mediation did not serve to bolster Doha's legitimacy. Rather, it became a primary driver of the backlash – particularly from Israel, which sought to prevent a ceasefire. This discourse, which aimed to undermine any effort at mediation, demand an examination of its underlying narratives and their key premises.

Background

The smear campaign against Qatar's mediation role leading up to the US-Iranian MoU, cannot be understood in isolation from the path Qatar has trodden in establishing itself as a successful mediator in some of the most complex regional and international crises.⁹ However, this accumulation of experience and effectiveness came in parallel with growing attempts to cast doubt over its role, especially when its efforts began to touch on issues with direct implications for the outcomes of regional conflicts.

From this standpoint, the controversy that followed the US-Iranian agreement was less concerned with the details of the negotiating process or the effectiveness of the mediation efforts, and more concerned with targeting the mediator itself. Certain actors in the political and media spheres, especially in the US and Israel – in addition to some Iranian opposition circles¹⁰ – sought to portray the network of relations that Qatar has built with various actors in the region as evidence of bias, rather than the essential underpinnings of a successful mediation process. Put otherwise, the fact

⁸ "Vice President JD Vance Briefs Members of the Media," The White House, 18 June 2026, accessed on 12 July 2026, at: <https://acr.ps/hBxNMIA>; "Joint Statement Following the Ministerial Meeting of the United States and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)," U.S. Department of State, 25 June 2026, accessed on 12 July 2026, at: <https://acr.ps/hBxNMy9>. During a meeting with Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, on the sidelines of the G7 summit in France, President Donald Trump himself praised Doha's mediation role. See: "A Bridge Between Adversaries: How did Qatari Mediation Help Protect the Negotiation Process Between Washington and Iran?" *Al Araby TV*, 17 June 2026, accessed 12 July 2026 (in Arabic), at: <https://acr.ps/hBxNLGE>.

⁹ "Issues that Qatari mediation has succeeded in resolving through agreements," *Al Jazeera*, 19 March 2025, accessed 12 July 2026 (in Arabic), at: <https://acr.ps/hBxNM5M>.

¹⁰ These parties viewed the agreement as a lifeline for the Iranian regime, in direct opposition to their vision of toppling it through military force or by inciting popular protests. Consequently, they attacked all the parties that contributed to its conclusion, including Qatar. See: Danny Zaken, "Senior Iranian Opposition Figure: Qatar Bribed the Entire Region, the IDF is our Hope," *Israel Hayom*, 17 June 2026, accessed on 12 July 2026, at: <https://acr.ps/hBxNMuv>.

Qatar has channels of communication with opposing parties was presented as evidence that it was not neutral, rather than one of the basic tools that enabled it to play the role of go-between.

This discourse went beyond political criticism, evolving into a search for alternatives to Qatari mediation, and even efforts to undermine and weaken it. In the conservative American media, some pro-Israeli or Israel-backed voices proposed the idea of entrusting the mediation to other countries such as Switzerland, on the basis that they would be more neutral. It is worth stressing that Qatar did not take the initiative to ask for this role; rather, it was entrusted to it by both the US and Iran, which confirms that the success of mediation efforts depends less on the mediator's theoretical neutrality than on its ability to maintain the confidence of all sides and keep channels of communication open with them. Hence, a comparison between mediators reveals that effectiveness in mediating international conflicts is not measured by neutrality alone.

It is also impossible to separate these narratives from Israel's hostility and incitement against Qatar, especially in light of Doha's efforts to halt Israel's assault on the Gaza Strip since October 2023. As a result, Israel escalated its mobilization against Qatar's efforts, in multiple forms, from casting doubt over its role as mediator and accusing it of siding with the Palestinian militant group Hamas, all of which culminated in a direct attack on Qatar. On 9 September 2025, Israel fired missiles against homes and residential buildings where members of the Palestinian group's negotiating delegation were staying. This attack resulted in a number of deaths, including that of the son of the delegation's head Khalil Al-Hayya, as his office director, several others from his entourage, and a Qatari security guard, as well as wounding several civilians who were at the scene.¹¹

This attack was a highly unusual case study in international relations, whereby one party to a conflict attacked the territory of the mediating state in an attempt to kill the delegates of the other side.¹² Yet Qatar was able to turn this attack into a tool for leverage with the aggressor, helping bring its mediation to a successful conclusion and ending the war. Yet this success led to an escalation of the campaign against it. More recently, with Qatar's successful and pivotal role in bringing about the US-Iranian deal on 17 June 2026, this coordinated effort has redoubled. Israeli media outlets and so-called research centres have pumped out narratives questioning Doha's motives and positions, without hesitating to cite reports based on speculation, lies, and unproven rumours, alongside their own political and ideological biases.

Israel's discourse was not limited to repeating its accusations over Qatar's relations with Hamas or Iran. Rather, it sought to expand the scope of doubts over Doha's efforts to include topics not directly related to the mediation process, such as allegations of corruption, illegal political financing, and shady foreign investments,¹³ in further efforts to undermine Qatar's credibility as an international

11 "Qatari Interior Ministry: Security Personnel Killed in Israeli Aggression on Doha," *Al-Araby Al-Jadeed*, 9 September 2025, accessed 12 July 2026 (in Arabic), at: <https://acr.ps/hBxMw8M>.

12 "The Drivers and Consequences of Israel's Attack on Qatar," Situation Assessment, Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, 11 September 2025, accessed 12 July 2026, at: <https://www.dohainstitute.org/en/PoliticalStudies/Pages/israeli-attack-on-qatar-motivations-and-implications.aspx>.

13 Shachar Kleiman, "US-Iran Deal Leaves Qatar on Top," *Israel Hayom*, 16 June 2026, accessed on 12 July 2026, at: <https://acr.ps/hBxNMuU>.

mediator. Some of these analyses even interpreted the course of the war itself in a way that served this narrative, by suggesting that a decrease in Iranian attacks on Qatar during the final weeks of the war represented evidence of private understandings between Tehran and Doha.¹⁴ Those making these claims provided no evidence to support them, nor did they take into account the fact that successful mediation requires, by its very nature, open channels of communication with the various parties to the conflict. But Israel, which is on a drive to expand its influence in the region, is not satisfied with merely inciting war: it is suspicious of everyone who opposes it, as if the natural position should be to submit to Israel's every whim. This reflects a new Israeli strategy based on a particularly acute form of arrogance, which may backfire on Israeli society itself.

A review of the discourse promoted by some conservative, pro-Israeli American media outlets reveals inconsistent arguments, ranging from criticism of specific policies to questioning the mediator's goals themselves. The scope of the accusations subsequently expanded to encompass other issues, such as the editorial lines of Qatari-funded media, Doha's relations with Beijing, and its investments in the fields of technology and Artificial Intelligence – all of which apply to Israel as much as anyone, as well as to other Gulf Arab countries. All this aimed to paint a mythical image of Qatar, and to pressure the US to exclude it from mediation efforts and search for another go-between.¹⁵ The ultimate goal was to thwart the negotiations and ensure that the war continued, a position that Israel has more or less explicitly championed – placing doubt over its claims regarding Qatar's mediation efforts.

Israel's discourse goes beyond this, reframing Qatar's role as part of the Iranian system of influence in the region. In this narrative, relations between Doha and Tehran are not presented as part of a foreign policy based on engagement and balance, or aimed at reducing tension between neighbours in a complex region. Rather, they are seen as a sharing of roles between the "hard power" of Iran and the "soft power" represented by Qatar and manifested through diplomacy, the media, and investment.¹⁶

This inventive framing, influenced by the kind of conspiracy theories Israeli racism often attributes to Arabs, leads to a reinterpretation of Qatar's various tools of soft power, including cultural investments, university funding, public diplomacy, and media outlets like Al Jazeera English. It recasts these as extensions of Iran's influence, of the Muslim Brotherhood (as was the accusation until recently), or as promoting "terrorist" activities – rather than as components of an independent foreign policy. One cannot help but notice Israel's anger at the mere existence of Arab soft power of any kind.

However, this approach rests on flimsy assumptions that ignore the contexts of many regional and international developments. These include, for instance, the widespread protests at American universities sparked by Israel's genocidal war on Gaza, demonstrations that have become part of

14 Ibid.

15 "How about NOT Relying on Qatar as an Honest US-Iran Broker?" *New York Post*, 24 June 2025, accessed on 12 July 2026, at: <https://acr.ps/hBxNMHt>.

16 Aviram Bellaishe, "Iran Builds Proxies, Qatar Peddles Influence: Decoding Doha's Double Game – Analysis," *The Jerusalem Post*, 7 May 2026, accessed on 12 July 2026, at: <https://acr.ps/hBxNLPY>.

an impassioned debate among both the elite and the general public in the US over the damage to the country due to its alliance with Israel, in light of the crimes committed by Israel's extreme right-wing government in Palestine. This perspective also portrays each of Qatar's foreign policy tools, regardless of its nature or function, as evidence of its involvement in a regional project hostile to American interests. Thus, the discourse is not limited to criticizing specific policies; rather, it redefines the state's identity and regional role through a selective reading of its foreign engagements.

Another narrative is built on portraying Qatar as an "opportunistic state" playing a double game,¹⁷ combining both a security partnership with the US and relations with Iran and Hamas. This places it, so this narrative runs, in opposition to warmongers in the US and Israel, thus disqualifying it from acting as a neutral mediator. This argument rests on the assumption that security partnerships with the US necessarily entail full political alignment and total conformity with Washington's positions. Yet Qatar's experience demonstrates that maintaining strategic partnerships has not prevented it from pursuing an independent foreign policy based on maintaining its engagement with various parties and adopting principled stances on just causes, such as that of Palestine, in accordance with international law. Indeed, it is precisely this capability that has made Qatari mediation possible on issues where others have failed to achieve any breakthrough. Consequently, opposition to its role appears not to be targeting mediation as a conflict-management mechanism, but rather seeking to derail the negotiations, prolong the war, and ensure compliance with Israeli dictates regarding Palestine, Lebanon, and Iran. Anti-Qatar narratives are not only redefining the role of the mediator, but also narrowing the very concept of mediation and making its legitimacy contingent upon alignment with the vision of one party, rather than on its ability to de-escalate tensions and pave the way to a political settlement.

Lebanon as a Stumbling Block

The inclusion of the question of Lebanon within the US-Iran MoU marked a significant shift in the negotiation process between Washington and Tehran. Israel's aggression against its northern neighbour was no longer viewed as independent of other issues in the conflict, but rather as integral to broader regional arrangements. This linkage shifted the topic of Lebanon from a bilateral framework into a broader regional context. Conversely, Israel has explicitly sought to keep the Lebanese file subject to its own calculations – and possibly to secure US endorsement of those calculations.

Qatar did not limit itself to facilitating communication between Washington and Tehran. It extended to attempting to link three parallel tracks: implementing the terms of the MoU, supporting negotiations to consolidate the ceasefire between Lebanon and Israel, and establishing a political and security umbrella to prevent southern Lebanon from sliding toward a new round of confrontation. This manifested in support for ceasefire-monitoring mechanisms and the encouragement of efforts

¹⁷ Munir Dahir, "Qatar: A mediator or sponsor of terror? Time to draw the line," *Ynet Global*, 13 September 2025, accessed on 12 July 2026, at: <https://acr.ps/hBxNM2x>.

to stabilise southern Lebanon, alongside intensified pressure for an Israeli withdrawal from areas it continued to occupy after it had ceased military operations.

However, this approach met with clear opposition in Israeli political and media circles. They viewed the inclusion of Lebanon in the US-Iran understanding as imposing constraints on Israel's freedom of military action, and as legitimizing an approach to negotiations that made resolving the Lebanese issue contingent upon an understanding with Iran, rather than relying solely on direct channels with the Lebanese state.¹⁸ Consequently, Israeli criticism here focused on the proposed mechanisms to prevent military friction and on what was perceived as a retreat from granting Israel broad latitude for military action in southern Lebanon – a shift that revealed a growing divergence between Washington and Tel Aviv regarding management of the phase following the agreement.¹⁹

These objections were not limited to the new security arrangements; they extended to a reinterpretation of Qatar's overall presence in Lebanon. Under this narrative, Qatar's contributions to the reconstruction of southern Lebanon following the 2006 war, and its sponsorship of the 2008 Doha Agreement, were no longer viewed as efforts to contain Lebanon's internal division and prevent the collapse of the Lebanese state. Instead, they were reinterpreted as actions that directly or indirectly bolstered Hezbollah's position within the Lebanese political system. Thus, Qatar's various initiatives in Lebanon were subsumed into a single narrative linking Doha's diplomacy to Tehran's regional agenda.

This perspective reveals a shift in the discourse of opposition to Qatari mediation, which has moved from questioning the mediator's neutrality to rewriting the history of the Lebanese crisis itself. Reconstruction efforts, the brokering of political settlements, and the provision of economic aid are no longer portrayed as tools to alleviate the war's impact on civilians or to avert the collapse of state institutions. Instead, they are interpreted as means to perpetuate Hezbollah's influence in Lebanon – just as any support for the besieged Gaza Strip is depicted as strengthening Hamas's authority. This stance from Israel starkly contradicts the international legal principles and International Humanitarian Law (IHL), as it presents the cutting off of food, medicine, and vital supplies to areas frequented by Israel's adversaries as a legitimate tool, while humanitarian aid is held hostage to political conditions.

This interpretation overlooks a range of structural factors that contributed to the rise of Hezbollah and the consolidation of its political and military clout – first and foremost, the ongoing conflict with Israel, and the latter's repeated occupations and violations on Lebanese territory. All these factors have led a broad segment of Lebanese society viewing Hezbollah as key to the equation of deterrence with Israel. Furthermore, the narrative described above ignores the fact that Qatar's

18 Kleiman.

19 By contrast, Israel viewed the framework agreement signed by the US, Israel, and Lebanon on 26 June 2026 as "an important step toward normalizing relations between Jerusalem and Beirut. For now, it allows the IDF to remain in key areas of southern Lebanon to prevent renewed cross-border threats from the Iran-backed terrorist group Hezbollah." See: Mark Dubowitz, "U.S. Quietly Shelves Proposed Hezbollah 'Deconfliction Mechanism'," Policy Brief, *The Foundation for Defense of Democracies*, 30 June 2026, accessed on 12 July 2026, at: <https://acr.ps/hBxNLZi>.

interventions in Lebanon, at various stages, came in response to specific crises caused by wars and internal divisions, rather than being attempts to reshape the country's political balance of power. Consequently, re-framing the Lebanese issue within narratives hostile to Qatar's role is not based on an objective assessment of the outcomes of mediation, but rather reflects an attempt to broaden the scope of accusations to criticising Doha's various regional roles. While these narratives have focused primarily on questioning the mediator's neutrality in managing US-Iran negotiations, here we see the history of Qatari policy in Lebanon itself being rewritten. This allows for its mediation efforts to be portrayed as the continuation of a long-standing bias, rather than a diplomatic endeavour that has, at various junctures, aimed to support the Lebanese state and contain armed conflicts and their repercussions.

Tactics Used to Attack Qatar's Mediation Role

The narratives slamming Qatar's mediation efforts cannot be explained solely in terms of the mediator's performance. It must instead be understood within a broader context linked to the nature of the US-Iran ceasefire agreement and the outcomes it yielded. The MoU was signed at a time when hopes were still pinned on the possibility that US and Israeli military might bring about a radical shift in the battlefield – in both Iran and Lebanon – or force through a political settlement that would, at the very least address, the core points of contention. Yet this did not happen. Instead, the lack of a decisive outcome led to a new round of negotiations on far more complex issues, foremost among them Iran's nuclear programme, regional security arrangements, and the future of the conflict in Lebanon. In the shadow of persistent disagreements over these matters, a narrative emerged that sought to hold the mediator at responsible, at least in part, for the failure to meet those expectations and for the subsequent complication and stagnation of the negotiating process – even though the root causes of the deadlock lay in the divergent positions of the warring parties.

It appears that the criticism directed at Qatar was really aimed at the outcomes of the mediation rather than its mechanisms. For certain segments of the political and media elite, particularly in Israel and among certain conservative factions in the US, the problem lay not in Doha's management of the negotiations, but rather in the fact that it helped contain the military escalation, providing a negotiating framework that incorporated the issue of Lebanon into broader regional arrangements, thus limiting the prospects for the military campaign advocated by some of these factions. In this sense, the very success of the mediation in de-escalating tensions became a reason for casting doubt over its legitimacy.

Intertwined with this factor were other political and strategic considerations – most notably, objections to a process of negotiations that had the potential to grant political gains to Tehran, rather than subjecting it to the logic of military pressure. Israel also feared that linking the Lebanese file to a US-Iran understanding could restrict Israel's military freedom of action in southern Lebanon, thereby reshaping the surrounding security environment through negotiated arrangements that would not

align with its strategic priorities. Nor must one overlook the competitive dimension inherent in the role of mediator, given the efforts of other regional and international powers to play similar roles in managing regional crises.

The data also indicates that rather than being a series of disparate reactions, the campaign against Qatar's mediation efforts showed a degree of coordination. Misbar,²⁰ a fact-checking and investigative website focused on combating fake news and misinformation on social media, carried out an analysis which reveals that during the critical phase of US-Iran negotiations, there was intense activity on X (formerly Twitter) that cast doubt over Qatar's role. This involved over 342,000 posts from more than 160,000 accounts, with a notable surge in engagement during the second half of June 2026 as the negotiations entered their critical phase. The analysis further reveals that a significant portion of this activity centred on a relatively small group of accounts that repeatedly reproduced the same narratives, suggesting a degree of coordination in steering and recycling this discourse, through fake or bot accounts.

The identities of the accounts spreading this discourse reveal a Venn diagram comprised of three main circles: Israeli or pro-Israel accounts, those linked to the American conservative right, and those affiliated with the monarchist Iranian opposition. This distribution indicates that rather than reflecting a single political stance, the campaign represents a convergence of parties with differing political backgrounds, united in their rejection of the US-Iranian accord and insistent that the war must continue until the fall of the Iranian regime or the total destruction of Iran.

The linguistic and geographic characteristics of the campaign reinforce this conclusion. Most of the content was published in English, indicating that the target audience was not Arab public opinion, but rather decision-making circles and public opinion in the West, particularly the US. The activity was concentrated in the latter, alongside a substantial number of accounts operating from the United Kingdom and France. Conversely, activity originating from within Iran was limited compared to the heavy presence of Persian-language accounts outside the country, suggesting that Iranian opposition circles contributed to generating this narrative. This data reflects the transnational nature of the campaign, which united diverse networks around the singular goal of undermining Qatar's mediation efforts.

Analysis of the content of these tweets reveals that the discourse was not focused on discussing the details of the mediation or evaluating the result. Instead, it reframes the initiative in security and political terms. Qatar's role was linked to narratives about its supposed support for terrorism, its ties with Iran and Hamas, and Doha's influence in Washington's decision-making circles – themes that closely align with the prevailing conservative discourse in the US and Israel. The debate shifted away from evaluating success or failure. Instead, it cast mediation as a contentious political activity

²⁰ "Israeli accounts lead a digital attack on Qatar over its mediation between Washington and Tehran," *Misbar*, 5 July 2026, accessed 12 July 2026 (in Arabic), at: <https://acr.ps/hBxNMhW>; "It targeted Qatari mediation and the US and Iranian negotiating teams: Al Araby TV investigation reveals systematic campaign on X," *Al Araby TV/X*, 6 July 2026, accessed 12 July 2026 (in Arabic), at: <https://acr.ps/hBxMwzY>.

by embedding it within discursive frameworks concerning national security, counterterrorism, and Iranian influence.

The Misbar analysis further demonstrates that the campaign relied not only on public figures and influencers, but also on a vast network of accounts, many of them recently created or with few followers, which nevertheless helped amplify the anti-mediation narrative by intensively retweeting the same content. Despite the limited impact of these accounts individually, their coordinated activity within interactive networks enabled them to amplify the reach of their messages and create the impression of a broad consensus – a pattern that has become familiar in digital mobilization efforts surrounding political and diplomatic issues.

Ultimately, the campaign reveals a striking paradox: this hostile discourse transformed the very attributes that gave Qatari mediation its widely acknowledged effectiveness into grounds for doubting its legitimacy. Qatar having channels of communication with parties inaccessible to Western powers, and its ability to bring adversaries to the same negotiating table, were not viewed as assets for making the mediation a success. Rather, they were presented as evidence of bias or collusion – despite the principle that having access to all sides is a fundamental prerequisite for successful mediation in international conflicts.

Conclusion

The campaign targeting Qatar's mediation following the US-Iranian MoU reflects more than disagreement over diplomatic performance; it reveals sustained opposition to efforts aimed at ending the war. To advance this position, the discourse systematically reframed the very attributes underpinning Qatar's effectiveness – its access to all parties and its ability to facilitate dialogue – as evidence of bias and collusion. In doing so, it shifted attention away from evaluating outcomes and toward questioning the legitimacy of the mediator itself.

This dynamic points to a broader contest over the meaning and practice of mediation. Narratives promoted across segments of the US and Israeli media, policy circles, and parts of the Iranian opposition do not reject mediation as such; rather, they challenge the neutrality of any mediator whose efforts produce outcomes misaligned with their strategic preferences. The result is a conflation of neutrality, accessibility, and bias, whereby engagement with all sides – a prerequisite for successful mediation – is recast as partiality.

More fundamentally, the campaign targets a diplomatic model grounded in dialogue, inclusivity, and de-escalation. It suggests that the effectiveness of mediation may, paradoxically, increase the likelihood of political and informational attacks against the mediator, particularly when negotiated outcomes constrain military options or reshape regional dynamics in ways that lack consensus among key actors.



In this context, opposition to Qatari mediation forms part of a wider struggle over the emerging regional order in the aftermath of the conflicts in Gaza, Lebanon, and Iran. At stake is not only the role of specific mediators, but the extent to which regional actors can shape diplomatic outcomes independently of externally imposed frameworks. Efforts to discredit such mediation ultimately reflect an attempt to narrow that space, redefining credibility not in terms of conflict resolution, but in alignment with the interests of dominant powers.