



By: The Editorial Board

Summit of Arab and Muslim countries – a response to the Israeli attack in the heart of Qatar



The Israeli **airstrike** on Doha on 9 September was a moment that fundamentally shook the balance in the Middle East.

The missiles fired at the Qatari capital hit a meeting of Hamas' political leadership in exile. Several members of this organisation and a member of the Qatari security forces were killed in the attack, while the most important Hamas leaders **survived**.

While the Israeli government **justified** the attack with the fight against the "terrorist leadership", it was seen in the Arab and Muslim world as an open violation of Qatar's sovereignty.

Qatar, which is home to the largest US military base in the region, suddenly saw itself as a target.

In doing so, the Israeli government shifted the conflict from Gaza to the territory of a third country and sent the message that borders are no longer an obstacle when the goal is to eliminate Hamas. This precedent was immediately and unanimously condemned in the Arab and Muslim world.

Qatar's offensive

Official Doha **reacted** without hesitation. Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani **called** the attack a "cowardly act" and warned it undermines all ceasefire talks in Gaza.

Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani launched an intensive diplomatic campaign and spoke to leading politicians from Washington to Ankara.

Phone calls of support came from everywhere – from Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi and US President Donald Trump.

At the same time, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu publicly left open the possibility of similar actions in the future, further raising the "temperature" in the run-up to the summit.

President Trump expressed his disapproval of Israel's actions to the Emir of Qatar and pledged to prevent a repeat of the incident

Saudi Arabia and the Emirates, which have had heated disputes with Doha in the past, did not make calculations this time.

Riyadh stressed that the security of the Gulf states must not be called into question and that the Israeli attack was an attack on the entire region.

Egypt **emphasised** that this was a "dangerous precedent that could destabilise the Middle East." Even distant partners such as Indonesia and Malaysia sent clear messages of solidarity.

Washington reacted more cautiously. President Trump **expressed** his disapproval of Israel's actions to the Emir of Qatar and pledged to prevent a repeat of the incident.

But the fact that Israeli missiles landed in a city that is home to the largest US base in the Middle East showed Arab leaders that they cannot **rely** on American protection alone.

Extraordinary summit in Doha

On the wave of this solidarity, Qatar has convened an extraordinary **summit** of Arab and Muslim countries. Today's meeting and tomorrow's sessions in Doha will bring together heads of state and high-level envoys from dozens of countries.

Among others, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif have **confirmed** their participation, while other delegations – including Egypt, Turkey, Jordan, the Palestinian Authority, Indonesia and Malaysia – have reportedly made high-level announcements and attendances.

The participating countries plan to strongly condemn Israel's "state aggression" and call on the UN Security Council to issue an urgent statement

The **purpose** of the summit is twofold. One is to show solidarity with Qatar, and the other is to send a message to Israel.

Doha insists that the attack is not just an aggression against one country but against the entire diplomatic process that Qatar has been building for years as a mediator between Israel and Hamas.

In the draft of the final declaration, the participating countries plan to strongly condemn Israel's "state aggression" and call on the UN Security Council to issue an urgent statement. Even more important than the rhetoric is the unity that is emerging despite previous divisions.

In Doha, heads of state who have been at odds for years are **sitting** around a table – Qatar and Saudi Arabia, Iran and the Gulf monarchies, and Turkey and Egypt. The attack on Qatar has temporarily quelled the differences.

New priorities

The Gulf monarchies have long viewed Qatar's closeness to Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood with suspicion. However, the Israeli coup has changed this view.

Even those countries that fear Islamist movements now recognise that there is a much broader question at stake – can a country be safe if Israel gives itself the right to hit targets wherever it wants?

Analysts point out that in the eyes of many Arab governments, Israel has at this moment **become** a threat to the stability of the region, perhaps even greater than Iran.

This changes the entire logic of the last

decade, in which some regimes in the Gulf saw Israel as a potential partner in the fight against Tehran.

Trust in the USA shaken

An even more serious consequence concerns the perception of American protection. Qatar is the US's most important non-NATO ally and is **home** to the Al Udeid strategic base, but even that has not saved it.

The missiles **struck** Doha, despite the presence of American radars and defence systems. That caused Arab leaders to wonder how much the American guarantee was worth if Washington could not prevent an attack by its closest ally.

In the region itself, there is increasing talk about reviving the idea of a joint defence pact between Arab countries

The result is an accelerated search for new partnerships. Saudi Arabia and the Emirates have been **building** relationships with China and Russia for years, and now this trend is likely to receive an additional boost.

In the region itself, there is increasing talk about reviving the idea of a joint defence pact between Arab countries. The fact that this alliance is being discussed again shows how great the mistrust of existing agreements is, even if the chances of it forming are slim.

Normalisation put on hold

The Israeli attack on Doha has effectively **eliminated** the possibility of further extending the Abraham Accords. The process of normalising relations with Israel now seems finished, despite the enormous energy the US has invested in it.

Saudi Arabia, which was the most important potential partner, has made it clear that it cannot talk about normalisation as long as the

war in Gaza continues, and after the attack on Qatar, this has become politically impossible.

The Israeli action has led to a loss of trust, even among those who presented themselves as partners

For the UAE and Bahrain, which have already **signed** agreements with Israel, the situation is unpleasant. They have had to condemn Israel's actions, even though they formally maintain diplomatic relations.

In practice, the Israeli action has led to a loss of trust, even among those who presented themselves as partners.

Qatar's role in mediation

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With the strike against Doha, Netanyahu has cut off this channel. The Qatari Prime Minister clearly **stated** before the UN Security Council that it makes no sense to continue the negotiations in their current form after this incident.

This also creates an additional problem for the USA, because without Qatar there is no real chance of the hostages being released. Israel's

decision to target the heart of Doha has therefore **weakened** its own negotiating position and jeopardised the possibility of a ceasefire.

Test of unity

For Israel, the Doha summit and the subsequent **reactions** mean that a new front has been opened, at least at the diplomatic level. Instead of **weakening** Hamas, Israel's strategy has led even moderate Arab countries to side with Qatar.

This will not end Israeli operations in Gaza, but in the coming months, Tel Aviv will face greater resistance in international forums and colder relations even with countries with which it has until recently reached quiet agreements.

The United States now finds itself in a difficult position. If it continues to support Israel unconditionally, it risks losing the trust of the entire Arab world. If they try to rein in Netanyahu, they will have to show that they still have authority over Israeli policy.

The most obvious outcome of the summit will be the adoption of a political text that qualifies the Israeli attack as a violation of Qatar's sovereignty and calls on partners outside the region to guarantee that a similar action will not be repeated.

At the same time, some countries will toughen their tone towards Israel, while the majority will maintain diplomatic channels to avoid a complete breakdown in communication.

This provides Doha the opportunity to insist that the principle that no mediator should be a target be reinstated in the negotiating framework, because without this condition, mediation loses its meaning.

The message to Washington is clear: US guarantees are worthless if there is no visible effort to defuse the crisis

If the summit confirms unity, it will be much more difficult for Israeli attacks outside Gaza to remain without consequences. Even countries that have so far come closer to Israel will have to pay attention to their own public opinion and to pressure from the Gulf.

This does not mean a complete break in relations, but it does mean the freezing of any normalisation process and the postponement of any political or economic agreements that would appear to be a reward for Tel Aviv.

The message to Washington is equally clear: US guarantees are worthless if there is no visible effort to defuse the crisis, even through mediation protection and a limited hostage exchange package.

The most dangerous scenario is that Israel could repeat the attack outside Gaza. Any subsequent operation of this kind would create strong pressure on Arab and Muslim governments to move from condemnation to retaliation.

As a result, energy markets and international transport would suffer, and the Gulf security architecture would lose what little confidence it has left. The Doha summit will therefore be a test of deterrence.

If the region manages to articulate a unified message that any new Israeli attack outside Gaza would have political and economic consequences for Tel Aviv, the room for such a strategy will be drastically narrowed, and any subsequent operation will carry a much greater risk.