

Question:

Do you believe that the Qatari government has been funding Hamas? If the Qatari government has been funding Hamas, why has the State Department not designated them as a State Sponsor of Terrorism? Has the Qatari government funding of Hamas ceased? If the Qatari government has not been funding Hamas, to what were you referring?

Answer:

While the Qatari government does not fund Hamas, it does allow Hamas political representatives to be based in Qatar, which Qatar believes limits Iran's influence and pressure over Hamas. Senior Qatari officials have stated that Hamas' presence in Qatar does not imply support for the group and the Qatari government recently expelled some Hamas members. We do not expect Hamas' new Political Bureau Chief Ismail Haniyeh to be based in Qatar, unlike his predecessor. Qatar has committed to take action against terrorist financing, including shutting down Hamas bank accounts.

Qatar has provided significant assistance in Gaza. In coordination with Israel and the UN, Qatar has spent more than \$225 million to date on reconstruction efforts, largely in housing and health care facilities for the people of Gaza. This assistance partially fulfills Qatar's \$407 million pledge in 2012 and \$1 billion pledge announced during the 2014 Cairo Conference on reconstructing Gaza, following the July-August 2014 war.

