



| Flash |

Israel Targets Hamas in Qatar

F-2025-09-09a

Classification: TLP:CLEAR

Criticality: High

Intelligence Requirements: Geopolitical

September 9, 2025

Scope Note

ZeroFox Intelligence is derived from a variety of sources, including—but not limited to—curated open-source accesses, vetted social media, proprietary data sources, and direct access to threat actors and groups through covert communication channels. Information relied upon to complete any report cannot always be independently verified. As such, ZeroFox applies rigorous analytic standards and tradecraft in accordance with best practices and includes caveat language and source citations to clearly identify the veracity of our Intelligence reporting and substantiate our assessments and recommendations. All sources used in this particular Intelligence product were identified prior to 12:00 PM (EDT) on September 9, 2025; per cyber hygiene best practices, caution is advised when clicking on any third-party links.

| Flash | Israel Targets Hamas In Qatar

| Key Findings

- The Israeli military has confirmed that it targeted Hamas officials in Doha, Qatar.
- Since the beginning of the Israel-Hamas war in October 2023, Israel has steadily broadened the scope of its targeting outside the Palestinian territories.
- Until now, Qatar has been offered some immunity to host internationally recognized terror groups due to its role as an intermediary in peace talks.
- Hamas representatives have conducted all negotiations abroad, and the targeting of its representatives during ceasefire discussions very likely reduces the possibility of a Gaza ceasefire or hostage release in the near-to-medium term.
- A military response from Qatar is very unlikely, but diplomatic blowback that further weakens ties between Israel and Middle Eastern states is likely.

| Analyst Commentary

Israel Targets Hamas Leadership in Doha

On September 9, 2025, Israeli military officials confirmed that Israeli forces were behind a series of explosions that hit the Qatari capital of Doha during afternoon hours local time. According to several local sources, the attack targeted senior members of Hamas, who reside in Qatar.¹

- Qatar has historical ties with the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas, its radical offshoot. In 2011, former U.S. President Barack Obama reportedly requested that the Qatari royal family host Hamas leadership in the country in order to gain an accessible backchannel to Iran,² and they have resided there since.
- Qatar has also long operated as an intermediary in talks between established governments and internationally recognized terror groups, including the Taliban.³ This has further provided Qatar, until now, some immunity to host terrorist organizations.

Context

Since the beginning of the Israel-Hamas war in October 2023, Israel has steadily broadened the scope of its targeting outside the Palestinian territories, to include regional forces that play a smaller or tangential role in the conflict.

- In April 2024, Israel struck an Iranian diplomatic facility in Syria.⁴
- Israeli forces killed prominent Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in a bomb attack in Tehran in July 2024.⁵
- Israel has also carried out numerous attacks against Houthi Movement forces in Yemen, including a strike against the group's leadership in August 2025 that killed

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[hXXps://www.timesofisrael\[.\]com/liveblog_entry/idf-says-it-carried-out-airstrike-on-hamas-leadership-as-explosions-rock-doha/](https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/idf-says-it-carried-out-airstrike-on-hamas-leadership-as-explosions-rock-doha/)

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[hXXps://www.spiegel\[.\]de/international/world/nato-partner-and-hamas-host-a-39579533-e4a2-400a-a78e-9a8836606ccc](https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/nato-partner-and-hamas-host-a-39579533-e4a2-400a-a78e-9a8836606ccc)

³ [hXXps://www.brookings\[.\]edu/articles/why-karzai-suspended-negotiations-after-taliban-opened-doha-office/](https://www.brookings[.]edu/articles/why-karzai-suspended-negotiations-after-taliban-opened-doha-office/)

⁴ [hXXps://www.nytimes\[.\]com/2024/04/02/world/europe/interpreter-israel-syria-embassy.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/02/world/europe/interpreter-israel-syria-embassy.html)

⁵ [hXXps://apnews\[.\]com/article/iran-hamas-israel-30968a7acb31cd8b259de9650014b779](https://apnews.com/article/iran-hamas-israel-30968a7acb31cd8b259de9650014b779)

12 of the organization's senior political figures, including Prime Minister Ahmed al Rahawi.⁶

- In May 2025, Israel's Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar specifically threatened to kill senior Hamas officials residing in Qatar—including Khalil al-Hayya, one of Hamas' most senior negotiators.⁷

The Israeli strikes in Doha came a day after a deadly terrorist shooting outside Jerusalem, which killed six Israelis and injured 12 more.⁸ The attack was immediately celebrated by Hamas,⁹ who later claimed official responsibility for it following the Israeli strikes on Doha.¹⁰ Given that this was the deadliest terrorist shooting in Jerusalem in two years, there is a roughly even chance that it factored into the timing of the Israeli strike on Doha.¹¹

Response

The Qatari government condemned the September 9, 2025, incident as a “cowardly” and “criminal” attack.¹² However, unlike in previous instances when Israeli strikes have occurred outside of the Palestinian territories (most notably in Iran), this attack is unlikely to elicit military retaliation by the targeted nation. Qatar rarely participates in regional conflicts and possesses one of the smallest armed forces in the Middle East (despite recent modernization efforts).¹³¹⁴

- Houthi forces periodically launch projectiles toward Israel and Israeli-linked shipping in the Red Sea; most recently a Houthi drone struck Ramon Airport on

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[hXXps://www.longwarjournal\[.\]org/archives/2025/09/israel-kills-12-top-officials-in-yemens-houthi-controlled-government.php](https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2025/09/israel-kills-12-top-officials-in-yemens-houthi-controlled-government.php)

⁷ [hXXps://x\[.\]com/Israel_katz/status/1928866722867548340](https://x[.]com/Israel_katz/status/1928866722867548340)

⁸ [hXXps://apnews\[.\]com/article/israel-jerusalem-shooting-a71a30ef7eae7a350acc1ca42e0424d](https://apnews[.]com/article/israel-jerusalem-shooting-a71a30ef7eae7a350acc1ca42e0424d)

⁹ [hXXps://www.yahoo\[.\]com/news/articles/hamas-islamic-jihad-celebrate-jerusalem-154150861.html](https://www.yahoo[.]com/news/articles/hamas-islamic-jihad-celebrate-jerusalem-154150861.html)

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[hXXps://www.reuters\[.\]com/world/middle-east/hamas-claims-responsibility-mondays-deadly-jerusalem-shooting-2025-09-09/](https://www.reuters[.]com/world/middle-east/hamas-claims-responsibility-mondays-deadly-jerusalem-shooting-2025-09-09/)

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[hXXps://www.cnn\[.\]com/world/live-news/israel-gaza-jerusalem-shooting-09-08-25#cmfawlvxb0000356kclxmyxya](https://www.cnn[.]com/world/live-news/israel-gaza-jerusalem-shooting-09-08-25#cmfawlvxb0000356kclxmyxya)

¹² [hXXps://www.aljazeera\[.\]com/news/2025/9/9/qatar-condemns-cowardly-israeli-attack-in-doha](https://www.aljazeera[.]com/news/2025/9/9/qatar-condemns-cowardly-israeli-attack-in-doha)

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[hXXps://www.armytimes\[.\]com/flashpoints/2017/09/14/qatar-diplomatic-crisis-engulfs-a-major-us-military-base/](https://www.armytimes[.]com/flashpoints/2017/09/14/qatar-diplomatic-crisis-engulfs-a-major-us-military-base/)

¹⁴ [hXXps://www.aljazeera\[.\]com/news/2021/1/5/the-dramatic-expansion-of-qatars-military](https://www.aljazeera[.]com/news/2021/1/5/the-dramatic-expansion-of-qatars-military)

September 7, 2025.¹⁵ However, the vast majority of rocket and drone fire from Yemen is successfully intercepted. Therefore, even if the Houthis threaten increased attacks as retaliation for the Doha strikes, such a reprisal is highly unlikely to have a major impact.

On September 6, 2025, the Emirati government warned that any Israeli attempt to annex portions of the West Bank would be a “red line” and threaten the United Arab Emirates (UAE)’s continuing participation in the Abraham Accords.¹⁶

- The Abraham Accords are a series of diplomatic normalization agreements between Israel and several Arab-majority states (Bahrain, UAE, Morocco, and Sudan). Since the Accords’ inception in 2020, Israel—and now the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump—has sought to expand the agreements to other countries.

The UAE’s stance was later supported by Saudi Arabia. Therefore, an attack on Qatar—a fellow member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)—is likely to further weaken the Abraham Accords and damage the prospect of their extension to other major regional players.¹⁷

| Conclusion

Until now, Hamas representatives have conducted all negotiations regarding a ceasefire abroad in places such as Egypt, Turkey, and Qatar. The Israeli strike in Doha very likely ends the prospect of productive ceasefire or hostage talks in the near-to-medium term. Furthermore, there is a roughly even chance the Israeli strike in Doha killed Hamas’ main negotiators, leaving Israel without interlocutors to discuss a possible agreement.

¹⁵

[hXXps://apnews\[.\]com/article/israel-yemen-houthis-airport-ramon-drones-eilat-185b1579e406dde80d77d7333b5ded63](https://apnews.com/article/israel-yemen-houthis-airport-ramon-drones-eilat-185b1579e406dde80d77d7333b5ded63)

¹⁶

[hXXps://www.timesofisrael\[.\]com/uae-warns-israel-annexing-west-bank-a-red-line-that-would-end-regional-integration/](https://www.timesofisrael.com/uae-warns-israel-annexing-west-bank-a-red-line-that-would-end-regional-integration/)

¹⁷

[hXXps://www.timesofisrael\[.\]com/liveblog_entry/saudi-arabia-uae-said-to-agree-on-freezing-normalization-over-west-bank-annexation-plans/](https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/saudi-arabia-uae-said-to-agree-on-freezing-normalization-over-west-bank-annexation-plans/)

- Since October 7, 2023, the entire framework for negotiating has been predicated on Israeli officials meeting Hamas representatives in third-party countries, who can then relay thoughts to Hamas in Gaza. This framework has now been dismantled, and there is no obvious replacement.

There is a roughly even chance dismantling Hamas' ability to negotiate a ceasefire was one motivation behind the Doha strike. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu likely remains incentivized to continue the conflict indefinitely, as his most extreme coalition partners would likely bring down his government if a durable ceasefire or peace accord is reached. In this vein, on September 9, 2025, the Israeli military ordered the "full evacuation" of Gaza City ahead of a major offensive in the area, with Netanyahu stating that "this is only the beginning."¹⁸

¹⁸ <https://www.cnn.com/2025/09/09/middleeast/israel-gaza-city-evacuation-netanyahu-warning-intl>

Appendix A: Traffic Light Protocol for Information Dissemination

	Red	Amber
WHEN SHOULD IT BE USED?	Sources may use TLP:RED when information cannot be effectively acted upon by additional parties and could lead to impacts on a party's privacy, reputation, or operations if misused.	Sources may use TLP:AMBER when information requires support to be effectively acted upon but carries risks to privacy, reputation, or operations if shared outside of the organizations involved.
HOW MAY IT BE SHARED?	Recipients may NOT share TLP:RED with any parties outside of the specific exchange, meeting, or conversation in which it is originally disclosed.	Recipients may ONLY share TLP:AMBER information with members of their own organization and its clients, but only on a need-to-know basis to protect their organization and its clients and prevent further harm. Note that TLP:AMBER+STRICT restricts sharing to the organization only.
	Green	Clear
WHEN SHOULD IT BE USED?	Sources may use TLP:GREEN when information is useful for the awareness of all participating organizations, as well as with peers within the broader community or sector.	Sources may use TLP:CLEAR when information carries minimal or no risk of misuse in accordance with applicable rules and procedures for public release.
HOW MAY IT BE SHARED?	Recipients may share TLP:GREEN information with peers and partner organizations within their sector or community but not via publicly accessible channels.	Recipients may share TLP:CLEAR information without restriction, subject to copyright controls.

| Appendix B: ZeroFox Intelligence Probability Scale

All ZeroFox intelligence products leverage probabilistic assessment language in analytic judgments. Qualitative statements used in these judgments refer to associated probability ranges, which state the likelihood of occurrence of an event or development. Ranges are used to avoid a false impression of accuracy. This scale is a standard that aligns with how readers should interpret such terms.

Almost No Chance	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Roughly Even Chance	Likely	Very Likely	Almost Certain
1-5%	5-20%	20-45%	45-55%	55-80%	80-95%	95-99%