



Fact Sheet: MOI Press Conference on QNA Hack

Key points

The Qatari Ministry of Interior (MOI) presented on July 20th the conclusion of their investigation on the hacking of the Qatar news Agency (QNA) on May 23rd-24th at a press conference in Doha.

Overview

- The MOI presented evidence that foreign hackers based in countries currently blockading Qatar infiltrated the QNA in the night of May 23rd-24th with the aim of broadcasting fake news about the Amir of Qatar.
- MOI representatives went further and showed that attempts at penetration had already been ongoing for about a month.
- The State of Qatar will take all necessary measures including legal measures to prosecute all those who have perpetrated this shameful act.

Timeline

- Investigators found that on 19 April, the hacker infiltrated to QNA network using VPN software and scanned the website completely
- On April 22, the hacker exploited a vulnerability in the website, installed the malicious programs and intruded into the network
- The vulnerability was shared with another person via Skype, who accessed it at 5:47 am from an iPhone IP address of one of the siege
- Later, the hacker deployed more sophisticated malicious programs to get full control of the network.
- On 28 April, the main system of QNA was targeted and addresses, passwords and e-mails of all the employees were collected.
- This was shared with another person via skype
- On the 29 April, the hacker accessed the vulnerability in QNA website via an IP from one of the siege countries.
- On May 20, the hacker carried out a final check of malicious programs, confirmed effectiveness in preparation for an attack.
- On 23 May, just minutes before the start of the attack, the QNA website witnessed significant increase in number of visitors.



- These visits were through IP addresses from one of the siege countries.
- At 11:45 pm the actual attack began and 12:13 am, false quotes attributed to HE the Amir were posted on the QNA website.
- Two minutes later, the first access of the article was recorded via IP addresses of one of the siege countries.
- Within the next few minutes and with the increase of browsing in an unprecedented manner, the website was out of service.
- At 3am, the attack was contained, the control of the website was restored, at 7pm, all QNA social media accounts were recovered.
- As well, the technical team could reach to a European telephone number that was used for the hacking process.

On the browsing data evidence

- The fabricated news was posted on the 24th May at 00.13. Analysis for web traffic over the preceding month was normal.
- On the 23rd, from the morning until 11.00, traffic continued to hold at normal levels, after which it soared in an unprecedented fashion.
- Within the first 15 minutes of the attack, 45 browsing attempts were apparent by two individuals from one of the countries imposing the siege on Qatar.
- Over the second 15 minutes, there 41 browsing attempts of the site. Again, the browsing was from one of the countries imposing the siege on Qatar.
- However, certain people started to refresh and re-browse the site in an attempt to monitor.

Qatar's efforts to combat terrorism

Counterterrorism Factsheet

Qatar has never supported terrorism in any form. Terrorism is antithetical to Qatar's values and faith.

How Qatar fights terrorism

- Qatar is a founding member of the Global Coalition to Counter Daesh and works closely with its international allies to fight terrorism. This includes



hosting the Coalition's air operations at Al Udeid air base, from which attacks on Daesh are launched every day.

- Qatar is also a member of the Global Counter Terrorism Forum, through which it coordinates counter-terrorism initiatives with 29 other member countries, including the US and Turkey.
- Qatar also works closely with its allies to combat the financing of terrorism, including cracking down on individuals accused of financing terrorism by freezing assets and imposing travel bans and significantly strengthening its legal framework to prevent illicit terrorism financing.
- The list produced by blockading countries is a political PR exercise, and highly misleading. The last thing it is about is fighting terrorism. The UN who we work very closely with has criticised it and questioned its value. We will continue to track down those individuals and stop them, not play games with a very serious subject.

Concrete steps Qatar has made to combat terrorism

- On 20 July 2017, His Highness the Amir further amended anti-terror legislation in Qatar. The decree set rules for defining terrorism, acts of terrorism and the financing of terrorism. It also created two national terrorism lists and established rules for including individuals and groups on each list.
- On 11 July 2017, Qatar signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the US outlining future efforts it can take to fortify its fight against terrorism and actively address terrorism funding issues. In line with the MoU, the US will be deploying officials to the Qatari state prosecutor's office.
- Qatar enacted new laws in September 2014 to increase government oversight of charities, including preventing them from sending money abroad to charities that are suspected of financing terrorists, and more heavily regulating fundraising by individuals, including via social media.

Qatar's countering violent extremism strategy

In addition to these measures, Qatar counters violent extremism by addressing the root causes of terrorism.

This development-based approach includes reconstruction, education, economic empowerment and prevention.



These efforts have benefited the millions of people vulnerable to violent extremism and terrorism, which has reduced the risk of global terrorism. They are structure around four pillars:

1. Reconstruction:

- a. Qatar funds reconstruction efforts around the world to address the poor conditions, including lack of education, housing, electricity, and health services that are conducive to terrorism.
- b. In Gaza, for example, 1 million sq feet of destroyed homes and buildings have been rebuilt. Similar projects have been undertaken in the West Bank, Darfur, and other areas globally.

2. Education:

- a. The State of Qatar has allocated the majority of its foreign aid to educational initiatives. For example, Education Above All Foundation, through its programme Educate A Child (EAC),empowering 10 million marginalized out of school children worldwide.
- b. In Syria, for example, Qatar launched the "Qatar Upholding Education for Syrians' Trust ", whose total funds exceed USD 150 million. The five-year initiative seeks to provide education and training to nearly 400,000 Syrian refugees in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, and Turkey.

3. Economic opportunity:

- a. Qatar seeks to empower people economically and build community resilience by reducing unemployment, especially among youth. Overall Qatar seeks to reach 2.7m Arab Youth by 2021.
- b. Qatar-based Silatech, for example, has raised US\$ 377 million, creating a network of more than 300 partners and connecting more than 650,522 young Arabs to real job opportunities. The Qatar Friendship Fund in Tunisia promotes a culture of business leadership, helping youth strengthen their ability to lead development efforts and realize their ambitions.

4. Prevention:

- a. Through innovative schemes such as the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF). Qatar is the only Arab



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Government Communications Office

country contributing to this fund which is the first global effort to support local, community-level initiatives aimed at strengthening resilience against violent extremist agendas. The scheme, whose funders include the United States, the European Union and Switzerland, operates in countries such as Mali, Nigeria, Kenya, Kosovo, Nigeria and Bangladesh.