



مَكْتَبُ الْإِتِّصَالِ الْحُكُومِيِّ

Government Communications Office

GCO Statements and Press Releases

26 May 2018

Statement by the GCO on Protecting the Safety of Consumers and to Combat Improper Trafficking of Goods

On 5 June 2017, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Egypt unexpectedly announced that they would close its land and sea borders, as well as its airports, territory and airspace, to goods destined for Qatar. These measures impacted all goods passing across (or that could pass across). They further subsequently adopted a series of ancillary restrictions and arbitrary exceptions.

To protect the safety of consumers in the State of Qatar and to combat improper trafficking of goods, the Government issued a directive to find new suppliers of the variety of goods impacted. Products originating from the blockading states, which as a result of the blockade cannot pass the GCC Customs Territory, has to undergo proper import inspections and customs procedures. Qatar conducts its trade policy in accordance with all of its multilateral and bilateral agreements.

14 November 2017

Statement by GCO Director about HM King Mohammed VI of the Kingdom of Morocco visit to the State of Qatar and the fabricated picture.

Director of the Government Communications Office HE Sheikh Saif bin Ahmed bin Saif Al-Thani said that the official visit of HM King Mohammed VI of the Kingdom of Morocco to the State of Qatar was a success by all standards and it contributed to deepening and developing the brotherly relations between the two countries.

HE Sheikh Saif bin Ahmed bin Saif Al-Thani expressed his regret for the fabricated picture, which shows HM the King carrying a scarf during a visit to an area in Doha.

HE the Director of the Government Communications Office explained that this unacceptable act, will not succeed in thwarting the visit. An investigation will be conducted to find out who tried to incite public opinion or to offend the symbols of countries. Unfortunately, media fabrications have occupied a wide space in some agencies and social networking sites over the past period.



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10 October 2017

The GCO statement in response to UAE demand that Qatar give up the 2022 World Cup

UAE's demand that Qatar give up the World Cup shows their illegal blockade is founded on petty jealousy, not real concerns. Their weak attempts to tie the hosting of the 2022 FIFA World Cup to their illegal blockade show their desperation to justify their inhumane action.

There has never been a legitimate reason for the illegal blockade of Qatar, and this is further proof of that. This demand is a clear attempt to undermine our independence.

The World Cup, like our sovereignty is not up for discussion or negotiation. Qatar will host the first World Cup in Middle East – the positive benefits and impact will extend beyond Qatar and throughout the Middle East.

2 October 2017

Statement by GCO Director in response to Le Point Magazine accusations

I was surprised and disappointed when I saw your article “L’émir du Qatar aurait fait emprisonner des membres de sa famille”, in which you take a page from the nations blockading Qatar by publishing propaganda and lies.

Your article gave credence to accusations that our government has imprisoned members of the so-called opposition on trumped up charges. This is categorically false for three reasons. First, these men are not in prison. Second, they have not said anything against the Government of the State of Qatar. Third, Qatar does not imprison individuals for expressing their opinions online or in public – the same cannot be said about the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

You also reprinted false statements by Monsieur Razavi about Qatar being on the verge of implosion. The reality is that the illegal blockade of Qatar has brought our people closer together and we have seen inspiring acts of patriotism and solidarity. This was on display last week when thousands of people lined the streets of Doha to welcome HH the Emir home from the UN General Assembly.

In the future, please give your readers a more accurate and complete picture of important world events.



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26 July 2017

Statement by HE Sheikh Saif Bin Ahmed Al-Thani, Director of the Government Communications Office

It comes as a disappointing surprise that the blockading countries are still pursuing this story as part of their smear campaign against Qatar.

Qatar is the only GCC country to act on the agreement signed in May by the United States and the Gulf Cooperation Council to confront Islamic extremism. Two weeks ago, Qatar signed an MOU with the United States that had been agreed at the start of the year aimed at combating terrorism and building on the close cooperation and partnership between the two countries. Last week, Qatar finalised plans that had been in place since February to strengthen its anti-terror laws.

Qatar constantly reviews its anti-terror laws to ensure that we remain on the front foot in the fight against extremism and terror financing. This approach has received praise from Qatar's international partners, including UK Foreign Minister Boris Johnson and US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson.

While Qatar has been making great strides to reinforce its commitment to countering terrorism, the blockading countries have done nothing. Instead they have focused their efforts on a propaganda campaign to strip Qatar of its sovereignty. In June, they published a sham list of individuals and organisations with supposed links to terrorism and Qatar. This list was widely rejected by the international community, including the United Nations.

This latest list provides further evidence that the blockading countries are not committed to the fight against terrorism. As we have previously stated, all individuals with links to terrorism in Qatar have been prosecuted. We encourage the blockading countries to spend less time on drafting these fabricated lists and more time on implementing measures to counter the threat of extremism in their own countries.

25 July 2017

Statement from HE Sheikh Saif Bin Ahmed Al-Thani, Director of the Government Communications Office

From the beginning of the UAE and Saudi Arabia's propaganda campaign against Qatar, Sky News Arabia has been the principal channel used to the blockaders to distribute false information.



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This new documentary is a desperate attempt by the UAE and Saudi Arabia to deflect attention from their own failings to counter terrorism and extremism at home.

In their campaign against Qatar the blockaders are spending millions, distorting facts, and harming innocents, but accomplish nothing, because they cannot turn a falsehood into a fact.

When the documentary comes out know what it will and will not include. We know it will include an attempt to make links between Khalid Sheikh Mohammad and Qatar – even though no links exists. We know that it will make no mention of the concrete evidence that funding for the 9/11 attacks were funneled through Dubai, and 15 terrorists from Saudi Arabia and two from the UAE carried out the 9/11 attacks.

Today in America, Saudi Arabia is being sued under the US Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act (JASTA) for its sponsorship of terrorism. When JASTA was being drafted in Congress, the UAE threatened to withhold intelligence cooperation with the United States if the families of 9/11 victims sued the UAE government for compensation.

While the blockading nations waste time and resources on an illegal blockade, Qatar continues to make progress on its commitment to countering terrorism. Qatar is the only GCC country to act on the agreement signed in May by the United States and the GCC to confront Islamic extremism, as well as the only country to sign an MOU with the United States to combat terrorism. Rather than spending time drafting fabricated lists or producing documentaries designed to defend their illegal blockade, we encourage the blockading countries to focus on implementing measures to counter the threat of extremism in their own countries.

18 July 2017

Statement from HE Sheikh Saif bin Ahmed Al-Thani, Director of the Government Communications Office to NBC News

The hacking incident on the morning of 24 May was definitely a component of a well-coordinated smear campaign designed to damage the image and reputation of Qatar. And the smear campaign, in turn, set the stage for the blockade and the ultimatum that followed in June.

Prior to April of 2017, essays about Qatar – positive or negative – rarely appeared on the op-ed pages of America's newspapers, and the few pieces that were published were invariably authored by Qatari officials. That changed in late April when a series



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of 13 anti-Qatar op-eds appeared over a 6-week period in a variety of mainstream and on-line print publications.

This smear campaign culminated in an anti-Qatar conference organized by the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies and the Hudson Institute that was held at the Fairmont Hotel in Washington on May 23. Many of the authors of the anti-Qatar op-eds were featured speakers. No one from Qatar was invited to attend or participate.

Then, in the early hours of May 24, the website of Qatar's official news agency (QNA) was hacked and fabricated quotes attributed to His Highness the Emir and Qatar's Foreign Minister were posted on QNA's website and on the website's twitter feed.

Logs of web traffic on the QNA website show a spike in visits from the UAE during the hour before the hacking incident occurred, which suggests that people in the UAE were clearly anticipating the appearance of the hacked material.

Once the fabricated quotes appeared, they immediately became big news in the UAE and Saudi Arabia.

Within 45 minutes, the Qatari government sent notices to all regional broadcasters and media outlets alerting them to the hacking incident and disavowing the fake quotes. These corrections were promptly acknowledged everywhere except the UAE and Saudi Arabia, where media outlets continued to cite the fake quotes. Sky News Arabia and Al Arabiya, located in the UAE and Saudi Arabia respectively, were also (suspiciously) quick to produce in-studio "analysts" to offer criticism of Qatar.

The fake quotes and tweets were then used as a pretext for the launching of an economic, political and social blockade of Qatar on June 5, and the contents of the fabricated quotes provided the source material for the 13 "non-negotiable" demands that were lodged against Qatar on June 23.

So yes, the hacking incident was clearly part of an overall plan to lay the PR foundation for hostile and aggressive action against Qatar. But Qatar has resisted the pressure and intimidation, and is defending its sovereignty and independence.

As regards the Iraq kidnapping incident, the UAE and Saudi Arabia continue to maintain that Qatar "paid money to terrorists" in Iran to secure the release of the 26 Qatari hostages. This is false. Qatar did pay money to help facilitate the hostages' release, which we acknowledged. But the payments were made to the government of Iraq, not to Iran or to any terrorist organizations. As Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi said on June 21, "Not one dollar, or euro... was spent; they are still in their crates, supervised by a committee, and two representatives of the Qatari government came to check when they were deposited under the trusteeship of the central bank."



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Once again, the governments of the UAE and Saudi Arabia have ignored this clarification and have continued to report “fake news” about the hostages’ release. And regrettably, some legitimate, mainstream news organizations have continued to do the same. I hope this information is useful, Mr. Windrem.

We appreciate your interest in covering this story, and we especially appreciate your reaching out to us in advance of your broadcast.

17 July 2017

Unfortunate that shameful act of cyber terrorism is attributed to a fellow GCC member: Qatar official

The State of Qatar has long maintained that its government news agency website was hacked on 24 May and fabricated quotes published. The information published in the Washington Post on 16 July 2017, which revealed the involvement of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and senior Emirati officials in the hacking of Qatar News Agency, unequivocally proves that this hacking crime took place.

His Excellency Sheikh Saif bin Ahmad Al-Thani, the Director of the Government Communications Office, stated that it is especially unfortunate that this shameful act of cyber terrorism is being attributed to a fellow member of the Gulf Cooperation Council. This criminal act represents a clear violation and breach of international law and of the bilateral and collective agreements signed between the member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council, as well as collective agreements with the Arab League, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, and the United Nations.

His Excellency further added that the Qatari Public Prosecutions investigation into this crime is on-going. The Public Prosecutor will take all necessary legal measures to bring to justice the perpetrators and instigators of this crime, whether in Qatari courts or relevant international jurisdictions specialising in cybercrimes, as per the statement of His Excellency the Public Prosecutor on 20 June 2017.

11 July 2017

Qatar denounces leaking of Riyadh documents by some GCC states

Qatar has denounced the leaking by some GCC states of the Riyadh agreement in 2013 and its supplemental agreement in 2014 to media in violation of the GCC



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statute and other agreements and internal regulations of GCC, while also their ongoing illegal siege violates the UN Charter and international law.

Government Communications Office Director HE Sheikh Saif bin Ahmed Al Thani said the steps currently being taken by these countries, especially the leaking of the Riyadh agreement and its supplemental agreement before the visit of the US secretary of state, aim to thwart the mediation efforts of the Emir of Kuwait HH Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah and US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson to resolve the current crisis. He said Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain realise that the Riyadh agreement is a clear agreement through which any GCC member state can make a point or submit a complaint against another member state.

The Government Communications Office director added that the GCC internal regulations stipulate that any member state has the right to request an urgent meeting with another GCC member state whether bilaterally or with all member states.

Sheikh Saif said the three countries neither submitted any complaint or requested any meeting before the start of the unfair and unjustified siege against Qatar on June 5. Instead, he added, they carried out a malicious campaign in international media to defame Qatar and then published fabricated extracts attributed to the Emir and the Foreign Minister in order to provoke the international public opinion against Qatar, and instead of submitting their complaint through GCC mechanisms, he added, the besieging countries launched malicious campaigns against Qatar, which is a clear evidence that their intention was not related to their claims on compliance to the implementation of the Riyadh agreement, but rather to destabilise Qatar's security and stability, interfere in its internal affairs and undermine its sovereignty.

He said the hostilities of the siege countries contravene international law and the UN Charter, which stipulates that the decision to besiege any state must be issued through the Security Council, noting that the siege countries violate international conventions and the provisions and principles of international law, particularly the principles of equality, respect for states' sovereignty, non-interference in the internal affairs of other states, human rights, and the freedom of trade and international navigation. Despite the hostile and illegal actions of the siege countries, Sheikh Saif said, Qatar remains ready to negotiate to resolve the crisis, expressing Qatar's appreciation for the mediation efforts of HH Emir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah and Secretary Tillerson. He added that Qatar will continue with them and with all the parties working to settle the crisis so as to reach a settlement for the crisis within a frame of mutual respect and not undermining the sovereignty of states.



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11 July 2017

Saif Al Thani, Director. Government Communications Office

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed today by the State of Qatar and the United States reinforces the existing strategic framework on counter terrorism and builds on the long history of cooperation and partnership between the US and Qatar. The MOU includes participation from all relevant entities in both governments and covers counter terrorism cooperation in key areas such as security, intelligence, and finance. We look forward to continuing to collaborate with our American allies in the global effort to defeat Daesh.

23 June 2017

Statement from HE Sheikh Saif Bin Ahmed Al-Thani, Director of the Government Communications Office

This list of demands confirms what Qatar has said from the beginning – the illegal blockade has nothing to do with combatting terrorism, it is about limiting Qatar's sovereignty, and outsourcing our foreign policy.

We are reviewing these demands out of respect for our brothers in Kuwait and the regional security and there will be an official response from our ministry of foreign affairs.

The US Secretary of State recently called upon the blockading nations to produce a list of grievances that was "reasonable and actionable." The British Foreign Secretary asked that the demands be "measured and realistic." This list does not satisfy that criteria.

22 June 2017

Government Communication Office Condemns Baseless Claims of Media Targeting Qatar

Government Communication Office Director HE Sheikh Saif bin Ahmed bin Saif Al-Thani expressed the State of Qatar's strong condemnation and denunciation of the



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baseless claims and fallacies made by some media outlets that lack professionalism and compliance with the rules and standards of media practice.

Speaking to QNA, HE the Government Communication Office director said the recorded confession that was aired on Thursday by Abu Dhabi and Emirates channels and features Qatari citizen Hamad Ali Mohamed Al Hamadi was recorded under force and mistreatment while being held by UAE's State Security Department in 2014.

He added that Al Hamadi traveled to the UAE by land accompanied by Youssef Abdul Samad Al Mulla, another Qatari citizen, on June 30, 2014 for tourism, adding that the security authorities there knew about Al Hamadi's workplace and, hence, arrested him and his friend at Al Ghuwaifat Border Post and fabricated charges against them without any evidence. He said the two citizens were forced under torture and duress to confess to the fabricated charges and were denied trial before a normal court and instead stood trial before state security courts that have no legal guarantees for a fair trial as they only allow one degree of litigation in violation of international standards.

HE Sheikh Saif bin Ahmed bin Saif Al-Thani said the detention of Al Hamadi and Al Mulla and fabricating charges against them was part of the campaign carried out against the State of Qatar as well as the move by Saudi Arabia, UAE and Bahrain to withdraw their ambassadors from the State of Qatar in 2014. He added that the State of Qatar didn't want back then to expose the flagrant violations and illegal actions taken against Al Hamadi and Al Mulla in order to preserve the fraternal relations between the brotherly countries, noting that Al Hamadi was released on May 22, 2015 and Al Mulla on May 8, 2015.

The Government Communication Office director stressed that it isn't unfamiliar for such media to falsify facts and violate professional rules and values because they have devoted their media outlets to tendentious political agendas.

He reaffirmed that the State of Qatar is not affected by such suspicious media campaigns, which expose the intentions of those who reveal or incite them, and that these campaigns will not succeed in achieving their illegal and despicable goals.

8 June 2017

'Don't insult countries, leaders or people'

The Government Communications Office has urged Qatari citizens and residents not to insult countries, their leaders or peoples while expressing their views on various



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means of mass communication. "We call upon you to show more responsibility, of which you are well known, while guaranteeing the right of every Qatari citizen and resident to express their opinion for showing the truth and reality in a peaceful manner, always keeping in mind the Islamic and Arab values," it said. "Allah the Whole Mighty said in the Holy Quran:"Dost thou not see how Allah sets forth the similitude of a good word? It is like a good tree, whose root is firm and whose branches reach into heaven."(Ibrahim, Verse 24)."Based on the principles of our true Islamic religion, our humanitarian values and our authentic Qatari culture, we call on all those who live on this good land to rise and continue to avoid responding similarly to the abuses that spread in various means of mass communication."

24 May 2017

Government Communications Office Statement Regarding Hacking of Qatar News Agency and False Statement

Qatar News Agency (QNA) website which is the government news agency has been hacked by an unknown entity. A false statement attributed to His Highness the Emir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani has been published.

HE Sheikh Saif Bin Ahmed Al-Thani, Director of the Government Communications Office, confirms that an ongoing investigation will be put in place to look into this matter. The statement published has no basis whatsoever, and that the competent authorities in the State of Qatar will hold all of those committed accountable.