

Emerging Qatar Through the Pandemic 2020

Summer Institute

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### Abstract

The goal of the current proposal is to study how the Qatar government can improve their country's public image and repair their relationship with the GCC countries by leveraging their support and humanitarian aid for needy countries, the GCC countries in particular, during the COVID-19 pandemic. It also evaluates Qatar's position to support other needy countries with health and humanitarian aid to combat the virus considering Qatar has the highest COVID-19 infected cases per capita in the world.

*Keywords:* Qatar, GCC, COVID-19

### **Introduction**

In June 2017, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, etc. severed diplomatic relations with Qatar. The main reason is these countries believe that Qatar supported terrorism. Saudi Arabia and some countries criticized the relationship between Qatar and Iran. Meanwhile, they insisted that Qatar violated a 2014 agreement with the members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). The Gulf Cooperation Council includes Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. Even though Qatar denied they did not aid militant groups linked to al-Qaeda or the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), and claimed Qatar assisted the United States in the War on Terror and the ongoing military, these countries who cut off the relations with Qatar still implement a blockade policy on Qatar. Until today, Qatar has been working hard to repair the diplomatic relations with the countries who blockade Qatar.

According to Kristian Ulrichsen (2019), the blockade has become stuck at a political level where the Saudi and Emirati leadership, and especially Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Mohammed bin Zayed appear reluctant to make the first move to offer concessions or progress to a negotiated compromise. Qatar still needs to spend more time and effort to repair diplomatic relations with GCC countries. This crisis does not solve; another crisis arises.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19 happened in the beginning of 2020, no country can be excluded from this pandemic. As of today(June 27, 2020), there are 93,663 confirmed cases in Qatar; however, the total number of deaths is 110 (data from Wikipedia). The mortality rate in Qatar is the lowest in the world. Not only that, but Qatar also has one of the highest testing rates. This is the reason why Qatar has the most COVID-19 infected cases per capita in the world. HE Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani stated: "Qatar has had a strong health care response concerning COVID-19, including free tests for the virus; free patient care and designating

several hospitals for that" (QatarTribune, 2020). There is a significant improvement in the healthcare system of Qatar in the last decades because the government of Qatar has substantial investments in healthcare (Sillitoe, 2014). In 2014, the government of Qatar invested \$4.7 billion in healthcare. The spending on healthcare was the highest in the Middle East that year. Qatar has an excellent performance in this pandemic with the preparation for COVID-19 and the excellent healthcare system.

In regard of the situation in the Middle East, HE Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani said: "This is the reason why Qatar's approach to mitigating the effects of COVID-19, addresses not only local policies, but also includes regional and international support, as the spread of the virus has become a security concern for the region, and therefore we must all unite to support each other (QatarTribune, 2020)." Meanwhile, we live in a "global village." No country can be alone. States should cooperate to defeat coronavirus in this pandemic. Therefore, Qatar is in the position to support other needy countries with health and humanitarian aid to combat the virus.

Humanitarian aid is material or logistical assistance provided for humanitarian purposes, typically in response to humanitarian relief efforts, including natural disasters and human-made disasters. Qatari international aid program, a humanitarian aid program, has expanded dramatically since the beginning of 2010 and focuses heavily on the Arab world, most notably in the humanitarian crises in Syria and Gaza (Kharas, 2015). According to Kamrava (2013), Qatar has emerged to play a high-profile role in regional and international affairs. One dimension of this role is its status as a foreign aid donor, and more recently, as a major humanitarian aid donor (Barakat, Milton and Elkahlout, 2019). However, humanitarian aid has become part of the

landscape of conflict and contestation within the Gulf crisis because it has long been thoroughly politicized and assumed to form a part of the foreign policy engagement of the Gulf states (Young, 2015). Comparing with Saudi Arabia or the UAE, Kuwait, and Qatar offer a higher degree of autonomy to humanitarian actors (Barakat, Milton and Elkahlout, 2019). According to Barakat, Milton, and Elkahlout (2019), Qatar's hyperactive regional role is among the underlying drivers that led to the Gulf crisis. The countries severed relations with Qatar believed that Qatar used "humanitarian aid" as an excuse to support terrorism.

If one of the differences between Qatar and other countries is in "humanitarian aid," it is reasonable to resolve the Gulf crisis from the perspective of "humanitarian aid." Qatar should keep transparent when they provide humanitarian aid to other countries. Qatar did shift their funding patterns to increase multilateral contributions and demonstrate transparency.

Maintaining cooperation with international organizations, especially the UN system and expanding its humanitarian and foreign aid sector, are Qatar's strategies. Qatar wants the world to see "human development in Qatar is "at the core of Qatar's home and foreign policy." These strategies did bring some success to Qatar. The public image of Qatar is changing. During the pandemic of COVID-19, Qatar must keep cooperation with other countries and international organizations. As HE Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani (Qatar Tribune, 2020) mentioned, Qatar is willing to provide regional and international support to the Gulf countries. Financial assistance to other Gulf countries is not enough. Qatar should fully use its advantages. Qatar has one of the highest testing rates in the world. It can help other countries to increase testing rates and improve prevention.

Under two crises, the development of Qatar is not going well. However, the challenge is also an opportunity. Qatar may re-establish diplomatic relations with other Gulf countries in this pandemic.

After its freedom, the 2017 Gulf crisis has proven to be a big episode for Qatar, with significant economic, social, and political effects across the region. Resulting in a blockade of Qatar's land, air and sea borders, the crisis has impacted Qatar's humanitarian sector with a multitude of consequences that have called for a re-organization and an adaptation to weather the storm of the crisis. Still, Qatar's role as a humanitarian donor is not under threat, and it may even emerge from the crisis with a more sustainable and resilient humanitarian sector.

### **Purpose of the research**

1. How can the Qatar government improve their country's public image and repair their relationship with the GCC countries by leveraging their support and humanitarian aid for needy countries, the GCC countries in particular, during the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. In May 2020, Qatar has the highest COVID-19 infected cases per capita in the world, is Qatar in the position to support other needy countries with health and humanitarian aid to combat the virus?

### **Significance of the research**

### **Literature Review**

In this section, we review the relationships of different countries, namely, China, GCC, and Middle East countries, Nigeria, Yemen, India, and other Asian countries with Qatar's state. In particular, the literature reviewed in this article focusses on the relationships of above-stated countries with Qatar, the reason why they have such a relationship, and the humanitarian aid Qatar has provided to these countries, especially during the global pandemic of COVID-19 due to such a relation. Moving forward, we also outline the methods used to locate the literature for the review and discuss the characteristics of the body of research. We then present the discussion and results of the review. Finally, we turn to the limitations of the studies and consider the implications of the research.

#### **The Relation Between Qatar and China**

China and Qatar have maintained diplomatic relations since 1988. Since then, the two countries have respected and supported each other, and their friendly relations have undergone steady development. Even though Qatar has been suffering from the Gulf crisis, its relationship with China has strengthened. China has formalized strategic partnerships with Qatar since 2014. The measures to formalize partnerships include seven significant areas for cooperation with the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI): policy coordination, connectivity, trade and investments, energy cooperation, financial cooperation, military ties, tourism, and cultural ties (Chaziza, 2020). In September 2017, both countries signed a tourism cooperation agreement. Qatar Airways has opened seven direct passenger routes from Doha to China. Then, the comprehensive visa exemption agreement between China and Qatar officially came into effect.

China was the first country with the COVID-19 outbreak. At the beginning of the outbreak, China lacked medical supplies. In February 2020, Qatar Airways opened a global "greenway" to

donate and deliver 300 tons of anti-epidemic materials to China. Coronavirus has spread all over the world, including Qatar, in a short time. As of today, Qatar has the second-highest confirmed cases in the Arab world after Saudi Arabia. In April 2020, China donated medical supplies to Qatar Charity. We can see that Qatar and China are together to fight against the COVID-19. This coronavirus pandemic has not impacted the relationship between both countries.

Qatar and China have always adhered to each other's policies, which has led to good diplomatic relations. BRI is China's most significant twenty-first-century diplomatic and economic activity. The BRI is not only a strategy to enhance China's commercial, trade, and other financial interests, but also it is designed as policy development to increase its geo-economic and geopolitical influence, and be considered a vehicle to open markets, and expand export overcapacities, generate employment, reduce regional inequalities, promote political stability and security through development as well as prosperity and to restore Chinese spheres of influence in the Eurasian landmass and beyond (Umbach, 2018). The Qatar National Vision 2030 (QNV2030) is a master vision and roadmap towards Doha becoming a forward-thinking society capable of sustainable development to provide a high standard of living for all citizens by 2030 (Chaziza, 2020). It foresees development in four fields: human development, social development, economic development, and environmental development (General Secretariat for Development Planning, 2008). According to Chaziza (2020), QNV2030 is in line with the concept of development upheld by the Belt and Road vision, primarily in terms of the pursuit of economic, human, social, cultural, and environmental development. Since Qatar and China have consensus in these fields, their cooperation and development can be continued.

The Qatar government realizes that its country is under expansionist threats for the long term. Within this context, Qatar has started seeking ways to invest in stronger ties with the People's



Republic of China (PRC) and other powers, to strengthen its position in an increasingly vulnerable geopolitical balance of power (Chaziza, 2020). Since the Gulf crisis happened, Doha discovered that the more in-deep cooperation with China could help Qatar escape from diplomatic and economic isolation. Meanwhile, according to Chaziza (2020), Beijing found Qatar a critical partner to promote the Belt and Road project, especially with its financial and geographical components, which play a vital role in the creation of China–Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) free-trade zones. Therefore, cooperation between Qatar and China is "win-win" for both countries.

### **The Relation Between Qatar and Nigeria**

Nigeria and Qatar have maintained a good relationship over the decades. Both countries are active members of the United Nations (UN), Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), among many other International Organizations (*Gulf-time*, 2019). The two countries established their diplomatic relations in 2010. The Embassy of the State of Qatar was opened on December 16, 2013, in Abuja, Nigeria. Nigeria also began its Embassy in Doha, Qatar, with the arrival of Ambassador Shuaibu Ahmed in June 2013. Qatar Airways has been flying in and out of Nigeria, even before the Qatar Embassy opened in Nigeria. This is because the relations between the two nations are not new; the diplomatic relations are built on existing ties. An air transport agreement was signed in 2005 and renewed in 2008. The Qatar-Nigerian Business Council was established by the Qatar Chamber by the end of 2013, while in early 2014, the Qatar-Nigeria Business and Investment Forum was held (*Gulf-time*, 2019; *Forefront*, 2017). There are thousands of the Nigerian community living in the state of Qatar. According to official statistics, the Nigerian community's population living in Qatar is about 7,649. They are hardworking professionals, law-abiding, and

well disciplined. They contribute positively to the development and improvement of the bilateral relationship between the two countries. (*Gulf-time*, 2019; *Forefront*, 2017).

Nigeria wants to see an end to the Saudi-led blockade of Qatar, according to Foreign Minister Geoffrey Onyeama., the boycott is causing undue hardship and is "not the way to go". In an interview with Nigeria's Foreign Minister Geoffrey Onyeama, he said: "As a country, we don't have an issue with Al-Jazeera, we have a policy in this country, of freedom of information. We don't believe that as a government interfering with the media, to call for the shutting down of a station, especially one with such a profile as Al-Jazeera, nothing we have seen would lead us to believe that this is the way to go". He also said that he disagreed with the quartet's view that Iran was a pariah state which should be shunned. Qatar has been faulted for maintaining ties with Tehran. Iran is a member of the United Nations, and countries have diplomatic relations with Iran, so doing so does not to our minds mean you are supportive of terrorism. He also rejected Qatar's condemnation for ties to the Muslim Brotherhood, which the Saudi-led alliance claims are backing terrorism. The actions taken by Saudi Arabia and the other states are "very extreme", Qatar is a tiny country and the group against it is much bigger, and there is tremendous pressure being exerted, he said the Gulf states are like brothers and called on them to resolve their differences (Anthony, 2017).

The two countries hold similar views on international and regional issues, believe and advocate for peaceful means of resolving international disputes. Thus, there is an excellent basis for the establishment and sustenance of a stable and warm relationship that is beneficial to the peoples of both nations (*Forefront*, 2017).

### **The Relation Between Qatar and Yemen**

Qatar has a great history of involvement in Yemen, mostly as a mediator during a series of earlier wars between the Houthi movement and the state under the then president, Ali Abdullah Saleh. Mr. Saleh invited Qatar to become a mediator in 2007, and Qatar was viewed as a neutral party, given its good relations with Iran, which has been an ally to the Houthis. Qatar hosted a series of mediation meetings, which brought about a temporary ceasefire in June 2007 and then a fuller peace agreement in February 2008, supported by a Qatari pledge to invest significant sums in rebuilding Saada, the Houthis' home territory. Qatar attempted to step in again as a mediator in the 2011 Arab Spring, as part of a broader Gulf initiative. Joining the Saudi-led coalition against the Houthis, who are now in a pragmatic military alliance with Mr. Saleh against Mr. Hadi's government, in 2015, therefore, marked a significant departure for Qatar from its previously diplomatic approach to Yemen, and was done mostly as a means of Saudi Arabia, following a previous diplomatic dispute in 2014. (*Middle East Eye*, 2017). Sadly, Yemen has also severed links with Qatar, accusing them of supporting the Houthi rebels. Despite that, there is still some support for Qatar in Yemen, adding yet another division to an already fractured nation (Aziz, 2017).

Qatar had played a role in Yemen for several years, constructing hospitals, schools, and housing for the homeless before the current conflict began in 2015 (Aziz, 2017). On June 3, 2017, the Qatar Red Crescent (QRC) announced that it had nearly finished construction of houses for 160 of the most impoverished families in Taiz's Mocha district. The QRC said that the housing had cost \$160,000 and was intended for victims of the war who lived in the neighborhood. The QRC operates in areas under the control of both the Houthis and pro-government forces. In March 2017, it provided the al-Thawra Hospital in Sanaa with medical supplies (*Middle East Eye*, 2017).

Qatar's Fund for Development (QFFD) has pledged to support a UN 2018 Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan, Antonio Guterres, and UN Secretary-General called on states to fund a \$3 billion aid package for Yemen. The Qatari fund will contribute towards supporting basic sectors in health, food, water security, and protection. During the high-level pledging event for the humanitarian crisis in Yemen, Qatar affirms its continued support to the brotherly Yemeni people to alleviate their humanitarian suffering and pledges to contribute \$20 million. (*Middle East Monitor*, 2018). In this global pandemic as well, Qatar Charity provided medical devices and equipment, sanitizers, disinfection and cleaning materials, preventive materials, masks, oxygen cylinders, medical ventilators, autoclaves, microscopes, and sterilization sprinklers to Yemen to combat Coronavirus. The number of beneficiaries is expected to reach 150,000 people, at a total of QR 474,300 (Qatar Charity, 2020).

One of the main casualties in Yemen from the Gulf crisis may be the Islah party, until now one of Qatar's most prominent supporters in the country. The brotherhood is supported by Qatar but designated a terrorist organization by Saudi, the UAE, and Bahrain. With the government's distancing from Qatar, Islah potentially finds itself torn. Some members still support the Yemeni president Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi, but others have ditched him for an alliance with Doha. Mohammed al-Sa'ady, the assistant secretary-general of Islah and the Yemeni minister of planning, welcomed the anti-Qatari move, but other party leaders disagreed. Mohammed al-Maqrami, a representative for Islah's local council in Taiz, does not believe that Qatar was dealing with the Houthis and Tehran. "This was only an accusation by the government to flatter Saudi Arabia, where the Yemeni government and Hadi stay. It is a normal step for a government to take", he said (*The Economist*, 2017).

Then there is the Southern Movement, the loose alliance of groups that want an independent Yemen in the south. It supports neither Hadi nor Qatar but the UAE, which has come out against Doha and which the movement credits as the main liberator of Aden and other southern provinces. The Southern Movement has now fallen in line with the coalition against Doha, leveling the same accusations as its Gulf allies. Maged al-Khateeb, an activist for the Southern Movement, said that it was grateful to the UAE because its impact had been felt on the ground, unlike Qatar's. They accuse Qatar of not reconstructing any buildings. Fadhl al-Rabei, head of Madar Strategic Studies based in Aden, said Qatar handed over more than one million dollars to rebuild Saada. He says no work took place, and it was likely that the money went elsewhere. In May 2017, the movement formed its presidential council as it seeks further autonomy for the prosperous south. Neither the Saudis nor the Yemeni government has yet to produce evidence that Qatar supports the Houthis (*The Economist*, 2017). Despite all this, Yemen has benefitted immensely from humanitarian aid provided by the Qatar government.

### **The Relation Between Qatar and GCC & other Middle East Countries**

The Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, known as the Gulf Cooperation Council is a regional intergovernmental political and economic union consisting of all Arab states of the Persian Gulf except Iraq, namely: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. There have been discussions regarding the future membership of Jordan, Morocco, and Yemen. Qatar's support for the Muslim Brotherhood across the Middle East-North Africa (MENA) region, Hamas and radical Islamists in Libya has led to increasing tensions with other Arab states of the Persian Gulf. These tensions came to a head during a March 2014 meeting of the GCC, after which the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain announced the recall of their ambassadors to Qatar. On June 5, 2017, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and

Egypt had officially cut diplomatic ties with Qatar. Saudi Arabia said it decided to cut diplomatic relations due to Qatar's "embrace of various terrorist and sectarian groups aimed at destabilizing the region", including the Muslim Brotherhood, al-Qaida, ISIL, and Iran-supported groups in Saudi Arabia's eastern province of Qatif. Political researcher Islam Hassan viewed this as a continuation of Qatar's foreign policy rivalry with Saudi Arabia and the UAE. In June 2017, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain banned Qataris and their businesses (*Wikipedia*, n.d.). Oman opposed this Saudi/UAE-led isolation of Qatar and urged resolution of that rift. "Rather than aligning with certain blocks against any of its neighbors, Muscat sees long-term peace and stability in the Gulf and greater Middle East as only possible when all actors are accommodated and engaged respectfully," said Giorgio Cafiero, CEO of Gulf State Analytics, a Washington DC-based geopolitical risk consultancy. Any involvement with Doha in an aid deal won't go down well with Riyadh and Abu Dhabi. Oman-Qatar ties have strengthened since the blockade began in 2017. "There is no doubt that pressures from Saudi Arabia and the Emirates will give Muscat a set of real foreign policy challenges to address," Cafiero said, adding that Oman would be determined not to allow that pressure to compromise its sovereignty and relationships with Doha and Tehran (Bloomberg, 2020).

The coronavirus crisis seems to have provided an opportunity for Qatar to ease neighborly disputes with Saudi, UAE, and Bahrain. Cinzia Bianco, a senior advisor at Gulf State Analytics, emphasized that GCC members "want to prove that they are also active players in humanitarian cooperation with their enemies." If this thinking prevails throughout all Arab Gulf capitals, there remains the possibility that COVID-19 could become the catalyst that prompts the renormalization of ATQ-Qatar relations (Giorgio Cafiero and Leela McClintock, 2020).

Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE began shipping medical supplies to China as early as February; in the months since, the direction of aid has reversed, with China repaying the favor. The UAE, Kuwait, and Qatar have offered aid to Iran, which was hit early and hard by the pandemic (Jonathan Fulton, 2020). Qatar, which has received assistance from Iran during the blockade by its powerful Arab neighbors, announced it is dispatching six tons of medical equipment and supplies to Iran on March 17 (Qatar Charity, 2020). On March 22, Iran's Assistant Minister of Health for International Affairs Jalal Napoli and Doha's Ambassador to Tehran Mohamed ben Hamad al-Hajri received Qatar's second shipment of medical assistance, that included masks, sterilizers, and disinfectant sent via Qatar Airways by the Qatar Fund for Development (*Gulf-times*, 2020). On April 25, Qatar sent 15 tons of necessary medical supplies after a phone call between Rouhani and al Thani. And on April 29, Qatar sent 16 additional tons of medical supplies, its largest delivery to date. Tehran has benefited immensely from closer ties with Qatar during the pandemic (Andrew Hanna, 2020).

On March 24, the Gulf Cooperation Council convened a virtual emergency summit, bringing together finance ministers to discuss unified measures to combat the epidemic. Qatar's participation in the meeting – the first since Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Bahrain imposed a land, air, and sea blockade on the country in 2017 –has raised hopes that the pandemic might provide an opportunity to improve relations between the states. Following the emergency GCC meeting at the end of March to coordinate efforts against COVID-19, Bahrain and Qatar clashed over repatriation flights of Bahraini nationals trapped in Iran paid for by the Qatari government. As the number of coronavirus cases in Bahrain soared in early March, Bahrain shuttered flights to Iran, leaving hundreds of Bahraini Shia pilgrims stranded in the Islamic Republic. Bahrain has no diplomatic ties. Bahraini authorities began slowly repatriating them, with 165 nationals

arriving on an Omani flight on March 19. As the repatriation of the remaining stranded citizens stalled, the Qatari government's communications office stated on March 28, announcing that Bahrain had rejected its offer to 'fly Bahraini citizens on a private charter flight to Bahrain at no cost to the individuals or the government of Bahrain.' The remarks were made as dozens of Bahraini pilgrims arrived in Doha on a Qatar Airways flight from Iran on March 27, at Qatar's invitation, and could not continue to Bahrain. The Qatari Ministry of Public Health offered to conduct coronavirus tests on the transit passengers and provide medical assistance to those who tested positive. Qatar's announcement did not go over well in Manama. Bahrain's Foreign Minister Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa issued a statement on his Twitter account accusing Qatar of interference: "What Qatar has done is reprehensible and requires a clear international position against it. Doha should stop using a humanitarian issue such as the Covid-19 pandemic in its plans and ongoing conspiracies against countries and peoples." He added that Bahrain had arranged select flights directly from Iranian airports to Bahrain in adherence to health and safety procedures and that Tehran's decision to place Bahraini citizens on a commercial flight to Doha placed them at risk, suggesting that Qatar did not comply with measures to preserve the health of the travelers and crews. Bahrain had previously accused Iran of 'biological aggression' by covering up the spread of the virus and failing to stamp the passports of Bahraini travelers visiting the country (Elham Fakhro, 2020).

The Qatar Fund for Development stated that "collective action and global solidarity is indispensable to battle coronavirus. We are working with Qatari national entities to support countries particularly vulnerable to this crisis". The State of Qatar, represented by the Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD), has sent four shipments of urgent medical aid to the sister Republic of Tunisia and People's Democratic Republic of Algeria; and the friendly Republic of Rwanda and



the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal. The QFFD's aid, carried by Qatar Airways, reached a weight of 45 tons for the four countries. It consisted of medical equipment and supplies, such as facemasks and personal protective equipment (QFFD, 2020). As part of its endeavor to defeat coronavirus disease (COVID-19), Qatar Charity has provided aid, including medical and protective equipment, food items, and the necessary support to Yemen, Lebanon, Tunisia, and Palestine. This attempt falls within its humanitarian efforts to help the underprivileged, oppressed, and the needy across the globe, and comes in solidarity with the communities going through disasters. In Lebanon, Qatar Charity worked at securing food aid and cleaning and sterilization materials for needy Lebanese, Syrian, and Palestinian families in Bekaa, Aarsal, and ElKharroub, to alleviate the suffering of the vulnerable. The project valued at QR 350,000 is expected to benefit 1,696 families directly, and 8,480 beneficiaries indirectly. In support of Tunisia's efforts to combat the coronavirus pandemic, Qatar Charity has coordinated with local authorities to distribute urgent medical aid, including masks, medical gloves, sterilizing fluids, protective suits at the cost of QR 380,000. Qatar Charity is currently working, in coordination with the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Health of Tunisia, to provide food and medical aid at the cost of QR 730,000. Qatar Charity's office in the Gaza Strip, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, implemented a project to provide necessary medicines and protective supplies for quarantine centers and hospitals to combat Coronavirus (Qatar Charity, 2020).

Qatar Airways has offered humanitarian assistance to people all over the world wherever possible. Not only has it ensured that importers could maintain supplies of fresh produce and pharmaceuticals through its cargo operations, but it has also donated medical supplies to heavily impacted countries ( Paddy Dowling, 2020). Qatar Airways has signed a formal partnership

agreement with Airlink in which it has pledged to transport 200 tons of humanitarian aid over the next two years, free of charge. As part of the agreement, Airlink, its non-profit partner AFYA Foundation and Qatar Airways, conducted their first mission: transporting more than 64,000lbs of soap to Botswana (Rachelle Harry, 2020). Qatar Airways has also put tremendous efforts to get people home. It is one of the last airlines in the region and even globally to still offer international long-haul services. The carrier has transported over 100,000 people and has seen load factors over 80 percent on some critical routes to the United Kingdom, France, and Germany. Qatar Airways has signed an agreement with the UN refugee agency UNHCR to deliver humanitarian relief and assistance to the displaced globally (Airline News, 2020). Qatar has the highest COVID-19 infected cases per capita globally, but the majority of people infected by Coronavirus are migrant workers, which constitute over 2 million of the Qatar population. In mid-March, Qatari authorities forcibly detained hundreds of Nepali workers under the pretext of testing for COVID-19, only to summarily deport them without allowing them to gather their belongings or collect their pay (Amnesty International, 2020).

It is worth noting that a number of GCC meetings were held with the virtual participation of all member states recently. In a joint effort to identify coronavirus countermeasures, all GCC ministers of finance convened on March 23, ministers of commerce on April 2, and ministers of the interior on April 7 (Emma Soubrier, 2020). In mid-April, all six members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), including Qatar, agreed to establish a network to protect food supplies (Reuter, 2020), proposed by Kuwait. The decision was taken after a virtual meeting of GCC trade and industry ministers to discuss the COVID-19 outbreak's impact on food supply safety (Kuwait News Agency, 2020).

Oman has sought to avoid drawing down its estimated \$17 billion in sovereign wealth reserves, and it is searching for ways to cope with the COVID-19 outbreak without doing so financially. In June 2020, it reportedly sought financial aid from some of the wealthier Gulf states, particularly Qatar (Bloomberg, 2020).

All this suggests that the Gulf states, faced with a formidable common enemy, have decided to (at least temporarily) let go of petty grievances for the sake of the greater good (Theodosia Rossi and Nader Kabbani, 2020). Furthermore, Qatar is attempting to silence its critics by stepping up humanitarian efforts overseas as well as at home. Qatar's emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani has received a thank-you message from UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres for sending urgent aid to Afghanistan and facilitating the deployment of UN staff in Yemen. He said, "The ideal support that Qatar has provided to the United Nations shows the responsibility and solidarity that are most needed to meet the challenges of COVID-19".

### **The Relation Between Qatar and India**

India-Qatar cooperation extends to diverse sectors aided by historically close ties and substantive engagement. India also has significant military relations with Qatar, where they have a maritime defense agreement to suppress threats from extremist elements (Chakraborty, 2017). India is one of the countries which has been affected by GCC's diplomatic crisis. The Indian government referred to the rift as an internal matter involving the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. Nevertheless, the Saudi-led bloc's closure of sea, land and air borders appeared to pose two challenges for India: 1) how to maintain trade relations with Qatar and 2) how to affect the evacuation from Qatar of the massive number of Indian migrant workers should the situation further deteriorate (Saab, Alasrar, and Araz, 2020). India had good relations with Saudi Arabia - the world's biggest exporter of crude oil, UAE - a major oil exporter and Qatar - the biggest

supplier of liquefied natural gas (LNG) and a primary seller of condensate – a low-density liquid fuel and refining product derived from natural gas. So, India had to have a balanced stance for the time unless Indians living in Qatar are affected in a significant way. While maintaining diplomatic neutrality in the crisis, India had numerous reasons to continue its direct trade with and aid Qatar. Notably, India is developing economic ties with Qatar to expand its economy and cultural capital (Chakraborty, 2017).

In the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic, Qatar has sent Qatar Airways Cargos to transport vaccines to India. The SkyCell containers were loaded on Qatar Airways aircraft in Brussels and arrived in Doha. They were stored at the carrier's airside Climate Control Centre for pharmaceuticals, before connecting on the plane to Mumbai the following day. During the interim storage in the cold chamber, SkyCell's hybrid containers were able to recharge themselves, extending their long independent runtime for another 72 hours after arrival in India (Ajoy, 2020).

In the days and weeks following the blockade, cargo ships, and hundreds of planes laden with food from India entered Qatar to ensure there were no critical shortages of food supplies in Qatar. The Qatar blockade has not created any significant impact on their relationship. The meeting under the leadership of Indian Prime minister Narendra Modi and Qatar prince Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani had come out with fruitful results. Qatar had made half of the per-unit price of Liquefied Natural Gas for India. Additionally, Qatar forgave the \$2 billion debt owed by India for non-compliance with previously agreed volumes of gas shipments (Saab, Alasrar, and Araz, 2020). India is the second-highest populated country in the world, with many skilled workers who work in Qatar in many different fields such as infrastructure, oil and gas refineries, and more. Many Indian doctors and engineers are also working in Qatar in reputed

positions. There are many students from India studying in Qatar schools, colleges, and universities. All these people working and studying in Qatar are 25% of the total population. This Indian population is ultimately helping Qatar grow its economy. Qatar has a rich source of Liquefied Natural Gas, whereas India exports grains, lentils, fruits, and vegetables to Qatar. The Arabian emirate is home to around 700,000 Indian expatriates. Most of these ex-pats are unskilled migrant workers who send remittances (to the tune of about \$3 billion annually) back home. Aside from all of the Indian nationals that live in Qatar, Doha and New Delhi also have a symbiotic relationship that would hurt both sides. Despite being an Arabian monarchy that shares so much in common with other GCC members, Qatar became increasingly linked to India and other countries outside the Arabian Peninsula to maintain its prosperity without meeting the quartet's unrealistic demands (Cafiero and Miao, 2017). Qatar and India are in such a position that they need each other's support to develop their economy. Both the countries have equal advantages by maintaining the bilateral relationship in trade, cultural, health, and defense sectors. They have a mutual understanding to maintain brotherhood in all the crises, whether it is Qatar blockade or COVID-19 global pandemic. The Qatar crisis and COVID-19 crisis have only made both the country's relations more substantial and more transparent. Both the countries' governments are working effectively in a positive direction to assist each other in all the possible ways.

### **The Relation Between Qatar and Asian Countries**

Qatar and Asian countries have a good relationship from the past until now. In recent years, Qatar has also been paying many visits to this region to discuss ways to grow mutually respectful ties across various domains, including energy, tourism, infrastructure, and investment. "Although Japan, China, India, and South Korea are Asia's top buyers of Qatari liquefied natural

gas (LNG), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) members have become increasingly valuable partners of Qatar in recent years, collectively holding a share of half of Qatar's market. Doha's top ASEAN export partner is Singapore" (Giorgio Cafiero). Vietnam envoys said, "The relations between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Qatar, nowadays, have reached a very high level and hopefully they will continue to be better in the future in various fields not only in politics and economics but also in socio-cultural cooperation as well. Through ASEAN activities in Doha, ASEAN cultural traditions, including their savory dishes, have become well-known among the Qatari community."

Qatar Airways Cargo is continuing to support global trade and facilitate supply chains across the world amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The airline has introduced an air bridge between Vietnam and France. Through this arrangement, eleven Boeing 777 freighters will operate from Hanoi in the month of May, and four weekly freight-only Boeing 777 passenger aircraft will operate from Ho Chi Minh City until June for its customer, Bollore Logistics. The flights will transport more than 2,000 tons of essential medical items, face masks, and personal protective equipment to support the French Government and French Ministry of Health in the fight against the pandemic (LoadstarEditorial, 2020). Qatar has also made promising commitments to support migrant workers during this unprecedented crisis, including earmarking funds to cover quarantined migrant workers' wages, and setting up a hotline for grievances," said Michael Page, deputy Middle East director at Human Rights Watch. "Now, more than ever, such promises need to be implemented and rights of migrant workers – who helped build Qatar's economy and cared for its families – should be protected (*Human Rights Watch, 2020*)."

Qatar Charity's assistance in the field of comprehensive relief, which covers all the needs of the beneficiaries immediately after the occurrence of disasters and crises, occupied the largest percentage of aid in terms of

beneficiaries and cost. This assistance worth more than 83 million riyals benefited more than one million people in 16 countries going through exceptional circumstances such as Syria, Somalia, Yemen, Sudan, and Myanmar (*Reliefweb, 2020*). It is worth mentioning that, Qatar Charity has also distributed food aid in various Indonesian regions, benefiting 75,000 people in a month, in addition to distributing 64.82 tons of rice to 3,241 people in Banda Aceh. Qatar Charity also provided Eid clothing for 160 orphans in Jakarta and Depok. "Coinciding with the momentum of this holy Ramadan and the COVID 19 pandemic, Qatar Charity Indonesia has distributed 12,500 food packages, especially for poor families and people who have lost their jobs," Karam Zeinhom said. Especially in Jakarta, Qatar Charity distributed 1,200 food packages in a day, started from the beginning of Ramadan," Karam said, adding that the aid is a form of support to Indonesia from Qatar (*Indonesia Window. 2020*). "During the difficult phase of air transportation, Qatar Airways has also successfully provided solutions for those who wished to return home. In the last couple of months, Qatar Airways has been one of a very few airlines that still provide services for Indonesian citizens, not only from Qatar but also from America, Africa, and European countries," Sidehabi noted. The Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia to Qatar, Muhammad Basri Sidehabi, has praised Amir HH Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani for directing to support other countries with medical aid and tremendous efforts made by Qatar to curb the spread of COVID-19. Muhammad Basri Sidehabi, in a statement, conveyed his utmost appreciation to remarkable efforts made by the State of Qatar in handling the pandemic issue of the Coronavirus (Joey Aguilar, 2020). The Malaysian prime minister expressed his appreciation to Qatar for the medical treatment, and assistance provided to help Malaysians affected by Covid-19 in the country. The envoy also thanked the Qatar government for helping the needy

and underprivileged children in different countries around the world affected by Covid-19 (Joey Aguilar, 2020).

There are many elements that can be accounted for the development of this relationship. In order to not be centralized in a gas-based economy, Qatar is always trying to develop its ties with others, especially ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), where it provides high quality yet cheap human resources. After the blockade, Qatar's economy's need for diversification was growing stronger than ever, and far eastern countries were one of the attractive destinations. Also, we know that some countries in ASEAN, such as Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippine, have a high Muslim population. Ayman Adly said, "As the chairman of ACD for 2019, I believe that the ASEAN and GCC, especially Qatar, stand to mutually benefit from each other's prosperity. With the shared interests in cooperation, the relations between ASEAN member countries and Qatar are bound to be further strengthened in the future". If Qatar wants to reopen its economy, it needs a high number of foreign laborers to work for it, and there are thousands of workers from ASEAN. However, these countries are still trying to fight the virus, and healthcare systems are already severely stretched with limited financing and resources. It is hard for lower levels of society to access hospitals, especially intensive care units. In addition, they also need to deal with natural catastrophes and large-scale waves of illegal refugees from nearby countries. The fact that they do not have any insured evidence that their deployed employees don't carry the virus with them into Qatar, that is why they need Qatar's aid to stabilize the outbreak within. No country can fight this war alone, and Qatar is not an exception; it needs to help others to help itself.

In total, despite the research suggesting that Qatar is doing everything possible to support countries vulnerable to this coronavirus crisis, the Qatar government stills need to make some



amends within the country and also how it approaches the countries which are resilient to receive humanitarian aid from Qatar due to previous or current relationships among them.

### **Methodology**

During the pandemic, people mostly focus on the treatment of the patients and the development of vaccines. However, international relations during the epidemic is also necessary to be mentioned, especially for the country that is suffering in crises.

This research is about how Qatar emerges through the COVID-19 pandemic. The researchers mainly discussed the relationship and the interaction between Qatar and other countries. The researchers apply a qualitative and quantitative approach to this study, which includes interviews and data analysis.

Qualitative research is an approach to inquiry that relies on unstructured and non-numerical data.

The researchers conducted interviews with intelligence, ambassadors, and international experts.

Quantitative analysis is the systematic empirical investigation of observable phenomena via statistical, mathematical, or computational techniques. This research would analyze the data of infected cases in Qatar, and then predict the future of Qatar.

### **Procedure**

#### ***Qualitative research***

The goal of this study is to provide ideas about how to resolve crises during the pandemic to Qatar. The research design of this study is not complicated. First of all, the researchers need to know what crises Qatar is facing, and the relationship between Qatar and other countries. The researchers collected information from online. The resources are from a variety of media and official websites. However, these resources are secondary. As qualitative research, the researchers also need primary resources to support this study. Therefore, Dr. Do would have interviews with intelligence, ambassadors, and international experts to realize the real situation

of Qatar. Dr. Do design the interview setting. The questions of the interviews were designed based on the description of the news and the official announcement.

### ***Preparation of data collection***

This study also used a quantitative approach. The primary data for this study is about the infected cases of each country during the pandemic. To ensure the reality of the data, the researcher would collect the information from official websites, such as CDC, John Hopkins, and WHO.

### ***Data analysis***

After the collection, the researchers used charts of the timeline to show the confirmed cases of different countries. The graphs show the infection at different times in various countries. Based on the current data, the researchers predicted the future trend of different countries during the COVID-19 pandemic.

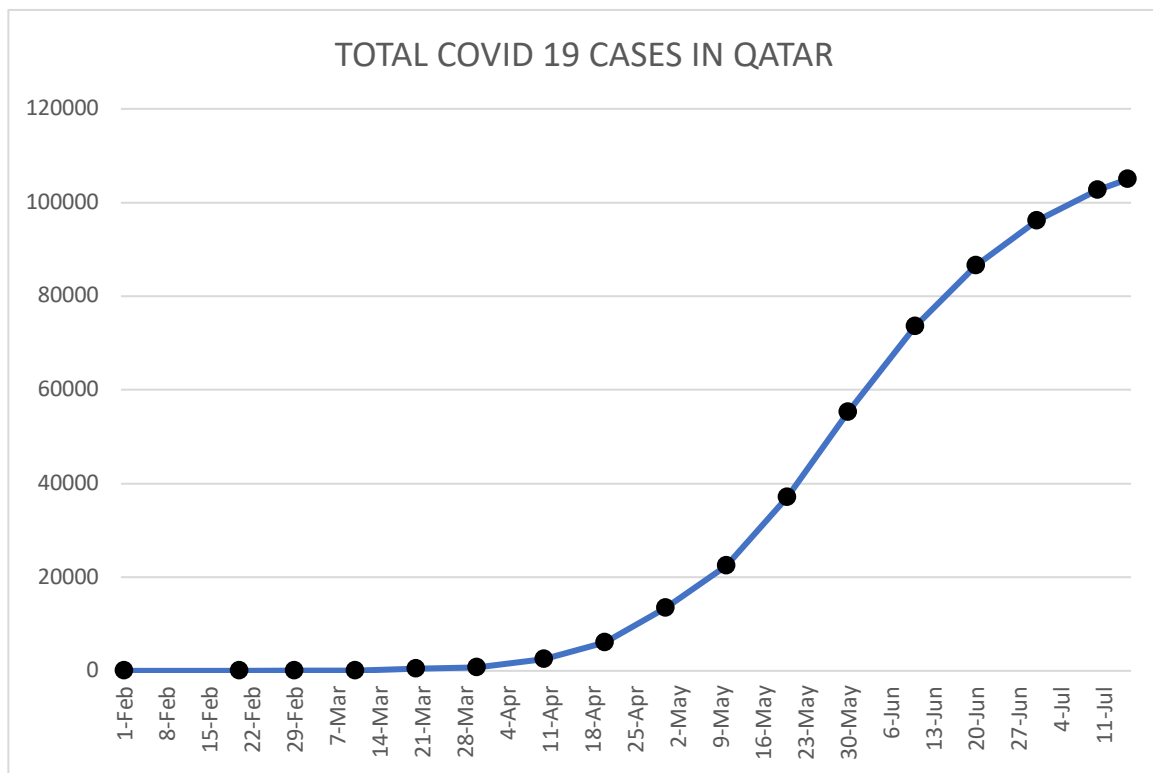


Figure 1. COVID-19 Cases in Qatar

Coronavirus disease is coming up with a significant threat to the world in 2020 since the virus came early in 2019 December in China. Latterly it has affected the world with its consequences of more than 550,000 deaths until today. Qatar is also poorly affected by COVID 19 cases. They have more 102,630 cases as of today (July 10th), which keeps increasing from march ending to date.

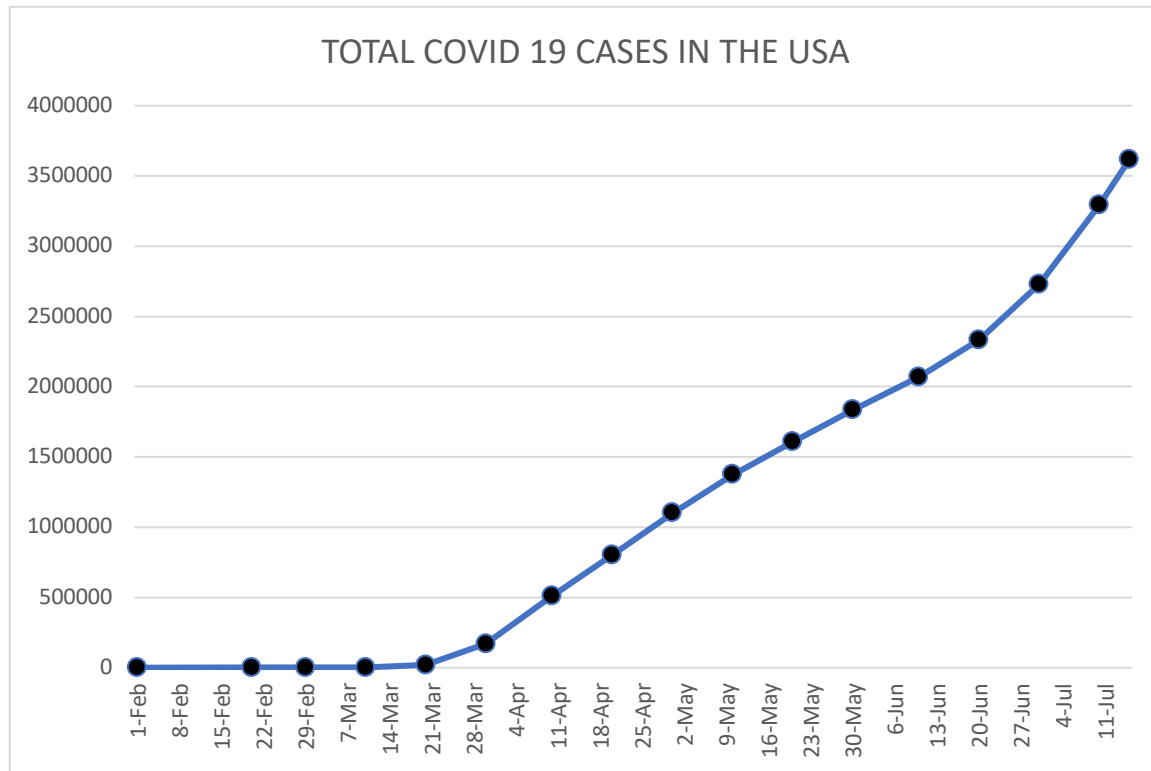


Figure 2. COVID-19 Cases in the USA

Coronavirus has also affected the USA with its devastating effects. There are more than 3,354,702 positive cases until today (July 10th). There are more than 137,393 deaths, which is maximum in numbers from any country in the world.

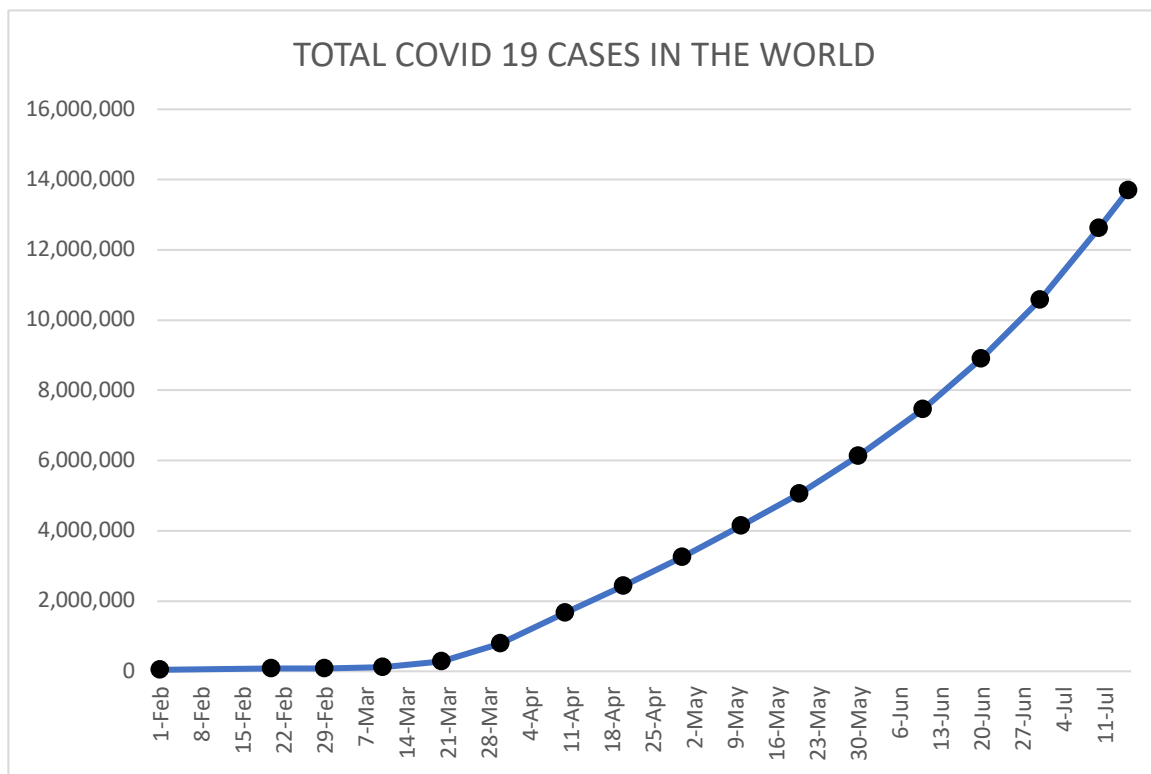


Figure 3. COVID-19 Cases in World

The world is also facing coronavirus consequences, as this global pandemic has infected more than 12,830,632 cases worldwide, and out of it, 566,993 patients have died until today (July 10th).

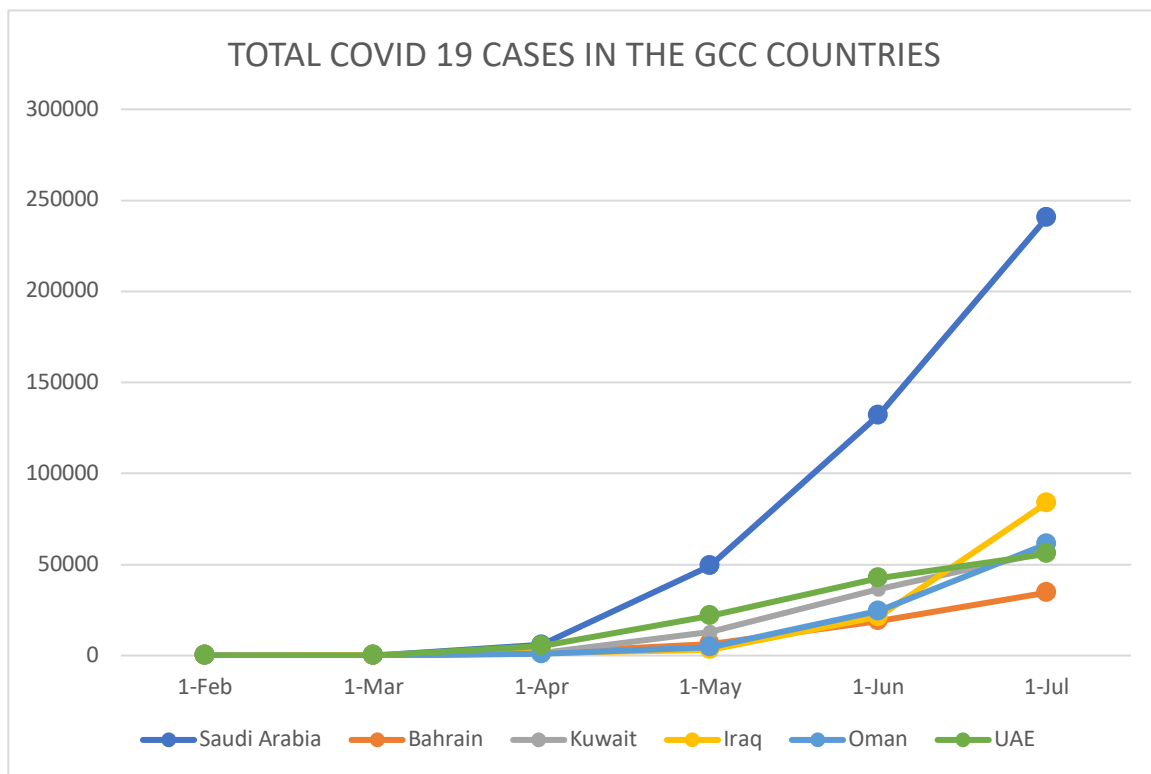


Figure 4. COVID-19 Cases in GCC Countries

Meanwhile, the researchers also used a signpost of changes table to show how Qatar was affected in different parameters, such as COVID 19 cases in Qatar, GCC countries, USA and various parts of the world, Qatar blockade impact on different countries such as China, India, Nigeria, Yemen, GCC role on COVID 19, est.

### The Methodology for Signpost OF Changes

Whether used alone, or in combination with other structured analysis, the process is the same: Identify a set of competing hypotheses or scenarios; Create separate lists of potential activities, statements, or events expected for each hypothesis or scenario; Regularly review and update the indicators list to see which are changing; Identify the most likely or most correct hypotheses or scenarios, based on the number of changed indicators that are observed.

Here, we see the signpost of changes for Qatar in different parameters such as COVID 19 cases in Qatar, GCC countries, USA and different parts of the world. Qatar blockade impact on different countries such as China, India, Nigeria, Yemen; GCC role on COVID 19; Qatar role on COVID 19; Qatar preparation for FIFA world cup 2022; Qatar intelligence.

SIGNPOST OF CHANGES									
TOPIC	INDICATORS	2020				2021			
		I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV
Qatar Blockade Impact	China, Nigeria, India	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	GCC Countries	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
COVID 19 Cases statistics	Qatar	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	USA	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	World	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	GCC	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
GCC role on COVID 19	Humanitarian work for the world	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Qatar role on COVID 19	Humanitarian work for the world	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Qatar preparation	FIFA world cup	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Qatar Intelligence	Report of Government to make informative decisions	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

● Low

● Moderate

● Serious

Figure 4. Signpost of Changes

***COVID 19 cases in Qatar, GCC countries, USA, and different parts of the world.***

Coronavirus disease is coming up with a significant threat to the world in 2020 since the virus came early in 2019 December in China. Latterly it has affected the world with its consequences of more than 550,000 death until today. Qatar is also poorly affected by COVID 19 cases. They have more 102,630 cases as of today (July 10th), which is keep increasing from march ending to date. COVID 19 influence will have the same impact on these countries until the first quarter of 2021, and from the second quarter, the positive case number will gradually come down.

Coronavirus has also affected the USA with its devastating effects. There are more than 3,354,702 positive cases until today (July 10th). There are more than 137,393 deaths, which is maximum in number from any country in the world. Recently the cases are increasing, and these will have a similar impact until the first quarter of 2021, then it will gradually decrease.

The world is also facing coronavirus consequences, as this global pandemic has infected more than 12,830,632 cases worldwide, and out of it, 566,993 patients have died until today (July 10th). By looking at the current scenario, I feel these numbers will start declining from the second quarter of 2021.

GCC countries also have a large number of positive corona patients.

***Qatar blockade impact on different countries such as China, India, Nigeria, Yemen***

Qatar has always maintained a stable relationship with world countries, so blockade has not significantly impacted its relations with other countries. They always wanted to build their connections with others to develop their economy and they achieved it even after the blockade.

Qatar has built relationships in more substantial bases after the GCC crisis and has made its overall



development in all directions. Their relations with the allied countries will not change even in the coming years for the country's growth and prosperity.

### ***Qatar role on COVID 19***

COVID 19 is a global pandemic. Many countries in the world are facing a hard time to fight against this disease. The undeveloped countries and developing countries are finding difficulties to fight against coronavirus disease as they have not enough infrastructure and equipment to deal with it. As an economically capable nation, Qatar has come up very strongly to help those countries who needed help fighting against the COVID 19. They have helped countries like India, China, Iran, Kuwait, Lebanon, France, Spain, Italy, Belgium, Germany, Poland, Australia, the UK, and the US. I feel that they will keep on doing this humanitarian work until this coronavirus disease completely goes away.

### ***GCC role on COVID 19***

After the Qatar blockade, GCC has Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Iraq, Oman, UAE in their group. All these countries are also economically capable of providing humanitarian aid to the world's those affected profoundly due to this pandemic. Out of these countries of GCC, UAE and Saudi Arabia offer many humanitarian aids to developing countries. I feel they will do this work until this pandemic gets over.

### ***Qatar preparation for FIFA world cup 2022***

Qatar is the host for the FIFA world cup 2020, And they are working day and night to complete this high-profile game in their country. They are building world-class football stadiums with centralized air conditioning, roads, and buildings for this event. There are millions of workers working on the construction sites to accomplish this on time. Qatar government has spent billions of dollars to organize the FIFA world cup in Qatar. The work to achieve this goal is at its extreme

peak before COVID 19 hit Qatar. Still, the construction work and other preparations are at moderate concern as the migrant laborers have some difficulties with their employer with pay and other requirements to fight against this global pandemic. In the second quarter of 2021, the work will again reach its extreme peak, and I feel that they will finish this preparation work by December 2021.

### ***Challenges***

One of the challenges for this study is the prediction of future infections. In order to have a precise prediction result, the researchers need to consider about what calculation method is suitable for this study. Linear regression is a common method in statistics. It is easier to describe, and let people understand the analysis of the data; however, the researchers could not ensure the result is right or not. Information collation is another challenge in this study. In order to create a table of a signpost of changes, the researchers need to collect a lot of information and sort out the information in different parameters. These challenges could cause the limitation of this study.

## Discussion

### Results

Rather than focusing on competing goals, GCC countries should focus on a common interest to fight the spread of the virus. It is also in the interest of GCC countries to work together to mitigate the economic impact of the pandemic and lower oil prices. Doing so will require more action along the lines of the recent food supply decision and, ideally, a suspension of the blockade against Qatar. Qatar should provide better protection and support during the pandemic for their own migrant worker populations, who are already suffering disproportionately. By striving to protect vulnerable populations domestically and abroad, Qatar will demonstrate moral leadership, greatly strengthening its international standing. Qatar should continue to the best of its ability to provide medical aid to countries in need, especially those with weaker economies and fewer resources. Although Qatar is facing its own short- and long-term economic challenges, this has not prevented it in the past from generously offering aid and assistance to those in need.

GCC countries, in the past, have worked closely to fight against diseases like Ebola, H1N1, MERS, SRAS, AIDS and previous global health crisis. Once again in these unprecedented times, global efforts are needed in the fight against the coronavirus to stop its spread internationally.

This crisis should bring people together, it should put things into perspective, it should show that coordination is the way forward. But if it goes badly, if it goes wrong, and if governments are looking for external scapegoats to try and deflect attention away from their own policies that don't produce results, then it could also have the opposite effects. ("Gulf Cooperation Council Member States call for collaborative approach to effectively respond to AIDS", 2011)

Qatar is one of the richest countries of the world and has the highest GDP per Capita in the Middle East. In spite of the fact that it has the highest number COVID-19 infected cases per capita, it has the resources and facilities needed to support the vulnerable and needy countries to fight against the coronavirus. Qatar like other GCC countries should continue to provide humanitarian and health aid to not just its allies and friendly countries but also to its traditional foes, especially GCC countries (Giorgio Cafiero and Leela McClintock, 2020).

In my opinion, the Qatar government is doing tremendous work both internationally and domestically, to improve its image after the blockade. Moreover, they have also provided adequate support financially as well as medically to many countries in the COVID 19 global pandemic. However, I feel that when Qatar is facing many coronaviruses, positive case-patients in their country. They should focus more on their citizens and the migrant worker who is having a tough time away from their home countries. They have difficulties purchasing food, necessary medical support and daily essentials for their families due to their unpaid job leave.

On the other hand, as the wealthiest county in the world, Qatar can give the offer to provide support and care to GCC members if they are required to treat the COVID 19. By asking the GCC members, Qatar can take steps forward towards reunion with GCC again if all GCC countries are ready to accept.

At present, Qatar has the highest COVID 19 infected cases per capita in the world. And the vast majority of the people in the country are struggling in one another way. Therefore, I believe Qatar in the present position should not support other needy countries with humanitarian aids to combat the virus. Qatar should use their financial funds to develop emergency hospital facilities, special ICU wards for infected patients, and allocation of money for housing and food for the billions of migrant workers. In the current scenario, Qatar should emphasize more on the research of new

medicine and vaccines to cure the COVID-19 pandemic by investing significant funds in this direction. They should take the invention of modern drugs and vaccines as an opportunity to serve the world and improve their image globally and among the GCC countries.

### ***What Qatar and China Will Achieve If They Cooperate?***

Saudi Arab led several Gulf countries had implemented a diplomatic isolation policy to Qatar since 2017. Even though the situation is changing in a good way, Qatar is still in a long term to make a connection with these countries. These Gulf countries said Qatar supported terrorism under the pretext of humanitarian aid. If Qatar clarifies the facts and becomes more transparent in future humanitarian aid, can these countries re-accept and have diplomatic relations with Qatar? Obviously, the answer is “NO.” Saudi Arab posed expansionist threats to Qatar, repeatedly in the 19th century and well into the 20th century (Ulrichsen, 2020). The Qatar government realizes that its country is under expansionist threats for the long term. Within this context, Qatar has started seeking ways to invest in stronger ties with the People’s Republic of China (PRC), as well as with other powers, to strengthen its position in an increasingly vulnerable geopolitical balance of power (Chaziza, 2020). Since the Gulf crisis happened, Doha discovered that the more in-deep cooperation with China could help Qatar to escape from diplomatic and economic isolation. Meanwhile, according to Chaziza (2020), Beijing found Qatar a critical partner to promote the Belt and Road project, especially with its economic and geographical components, which play a vital role in the creation of China–Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) free-trade zones. Therefore, cooperation between Qatar and China is “win-win” for each other.

### ***Does the Pandemic Affect the Partnership?***

Although several countries questioned China during this pandemic, the partnership between Qatar and China is not affected. As mentioned, Qatar donated some medical materials to China in February 2020. Qatar also expressed appreciation and supported China's epidemic prevention. On February 11th, President Xi held a phone call with Emir Tamim of Qatar. Emir Tamim believes that China has the ability and confidence to overcome the epidemic as soon as possible, overcome the difficulties ahead, and wish China success. The China government did the same thing to Qatar when the outbreak was in Qatar. Because of the cooperation with China, even Qatar is the second-highest confirmed cases country in the Gulf region; its mortality rate is the lowest. From this pandemic, we can see "human development in Qatar" is at the core of Qatar's home and foreign policy. The public image of Qatar is responsible and friendly. At least, the Chinese people think like that. The partnership is not affected by the pandemic. China and Qatar fight together against the virus.

**Why would certain needy countries resent receiving aid from Qatar or developing countries in general?**

There are explanations why certain countries resent receiving aid from Qatar. By a way of illustration, the South East Asia region mostly is under the effect of China, favors other countries over it can cause trouble to them. They are might scare that Qatar could use this aid as a tool to make some political activities in the future. For example, they can offer to set up a military base or industrial complex, which can leave them no choice but refuse aid to not to make China irritated. Secondly, those countries who receive aid will likely lose their independence of economic over time. It takes off the ability to develop themselves through cooperation and trade within the country by relying on international companies and therefore, make the economy

vulnerable and easy to collapse if the aid is stopped. A local business will find it hard to grow under the weight of foreign-based products. For instance, during this era, the mask is a must for people to keep their health safe. Mass production is necessary for the country to protect their people and it is a good chance for domestic commerce to step forward. However, when foreign aid is offered, they flood the country's market with free masks and agricultural goods, people who already sell them would get bankrupted in a matter of time. Imperialism is also a reason behind the curtain, many countries in Southeast Asian had been dominated by outsiders by hundreds of years. They are considered when it comes to overseas aid. Usually, the actual function of publicized aid is to subsidize and facilitate the operations of the corporation from the given aid countries. Aid is used by these governments and their agencies to ensure that needy countries will adopt policies that favored the interests of alien banks or companies. These institutions demand privatizations to sell off the public assets of recipients to them and then control the import or export of capital.

Foreign aid indeed takes a lot of people out of the current bad situation. However, foreign aid can easily turn to a double-edged sword when the governments lose their consciousness just only a moment. "An analysis of the economic growth in Asia over the past decades, which has received little foreign aid in comparison to Africa, is a good starting point. Reports from the World Bank show that out of the 700 million people who were pulled out of poverty between 1981 and 2010, 627 million of them were in China. That leaves us with 73 million throughout the rest of the world. In other words, 89.6% were from China, giving us a clear indication that foreign aid isn't the answer. As Jeffrey Sachs, I thought that foreign aid was the way forward when it comes to eliminating extreme poverty but since the 2000s the "big push" theory has been subject to heated debate highlighting the negative consequences of aid which seem to have left

developing countries in a worse place than before.” (Juliette Lyons). We know that this is a difficult time for the world to keep everything together and foreign aid, especially humanitarian aid is essential to rebuild the economic system but only if we know how to operate wisely in certain areas such as the healthcare and transport system.

It is difficult to foresee the outcome of foreign aids that Qatar supports to needy countries. Nevertheless, as the world is suffering from the COVID-19 virus, they undoubtedly need helps from outside. Since most of them are developing countries and their special geographies limit their people to access to closest medical centers. Qatar should give them a hand in this moment, for these countries and for Qatar in the future.

### **What About the Future?**

There is an old saying that nations have no permanent friends or enemies; they only have permanent interests. At present, Qatar is tied with China because they have interests in each other. People may ask about the future. About the Gulf crisis, China prefers to take a non-intervention position and allows it to remain neutral in the most inter-regional dispute, and take advantage of the strategic and economic opportunities available. Nobody wants the Gulf crisis to escalate into war. The commercial cooperation between China and the Arab Quartet (Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain, and Egypt) that imposed the sanctions on Qatar also rose significantly (Chaziza, 2020). Hopefully, Qatar can make good use of the opportunity to rebuild relationships with the Arab Quartet.



### **Limitations and Delimitations**

The goal of this study is to answer two research questions which are about how to improve Qatar's public image and repair the relationship with GCC countries. To answer the research questions, the researchers analyzed the relationship between Qatar and other countries, and the data related to COVID-19. Regarding this aspect, this study did give a conclusion to the readers; however, is it meant that this research is perfect without any limitations? There is no ideal research. Each study has its limitations. This research is no exception. There are several obvious limitations to this study.

This study combined qualitative and quantitative approach. For the part of the quantitative, the researcher collected the data of the infected cases of each country. The timeline of Qatar shows that what reactions Qatar did during the pandemic, and it implied that the epidemic of Qatar is under control. However, in the part of the forecast, the researchers only used linear regression to predict the future trend of the COVID-19 in Qatar. Even though the linear regression was able to give a result of the increasing trend of the COVID-19, the result was not precise because the linear regression only considered "time" as one variable. At the beginning of the pandemic, the number of infected cases is in the increasing trend, but the trend may change after a period. The researchers are supposed to use a suitable math model for prediction.

Meanwhile, the table of the signpost of changes shows that the changes in Qatar in six different aspects. The researchers analyzed the situation of the first two quarters of 2020 and then predicted the rest of 2020 and 2021. The figure just gives a hint to readers to think about the development of Qatar. Therefore, this research is more like a hypothesis about the future of Qatar. This study can provide the governor of Qatar to consider how to improve Qatar's public image and walk out of the diplomatic crisis.

This study was conducted during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic. Even though the researchers concluded that Qatar could improve its public image and repair relationship with GCC countries by providing humanitarian aid to the states in need, this conclusion does not apply to other situations. Meanwhile, although Qatar is one of the countries of the lowest death rates, Qatar still has the highest COVID-19 infected cases per capita in the world. It means Qatar cannot always provide humanitarian aid to other countries. The Qatar government needs to ensure the health of Qatari citizens first. Humanitarian assistance is an approach to help Qatar to get rid of the diplomatic crisis, but it is not the only one.

Moreover, this paper focuses on the analysis of how Qatar helps some countries in need, but it ignores the study of the national issue. For example, Qatar has the highest COVID-19 infected cases per capita in the world. Still, the majority of people infected by Coronavirus are migrant workers, which constitute over 2 million of the Qatar population. In mid-March, Qatari authorities forcibly detained hundreds of Nepali workers under the pretext of testing for COVID-19, only to summarily deport them without allowing them to gather their belongings or collect their pay (Amnesty International, 2020). The purpose of this study is to help Qatar to improve its public image. The international relationship is essential to a country, but it is more significant to solve national issues. If the researchers want to conduct future research, these limitations can be the points for them to consider.

### Timeline and cycle of changes

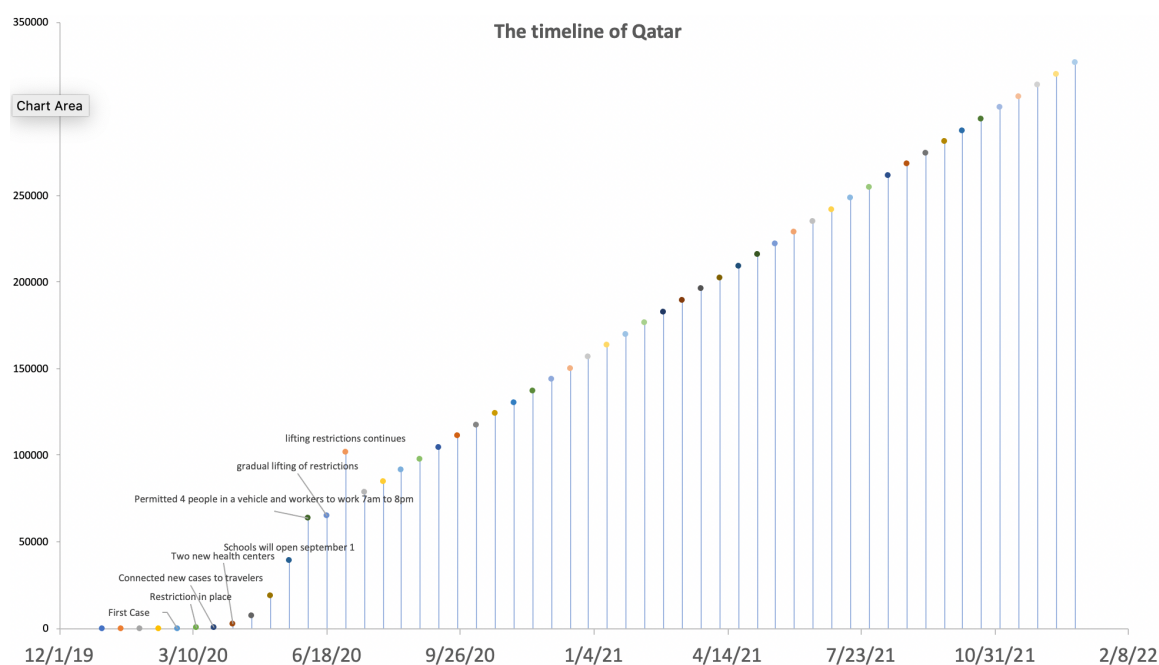


Figure 6. The timeline of Qatar

Today, Qatar has the highest Covid-19 cases per-capita, the first case of Covid-19 in Qatar was confirmed on 27 February 2020, the patient was a 36-year-old Qatari male who had been evacuated out of Iran on a government-chartered plane (The Peninsular Qatar, 2020). On March 9, Qatar announced a closure of all schools and universities until further notice (Aljazeera, 2020) and placed a travel ban on 15 countries: Bangladesh China, Egypt, India, Iran, Italy, Lebanon, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Syria, and Thailand (Tawfiq, 2020). By March 12, 2020, Qatar had 262 cases.

On March 13, the Ministry of Public Health announced the confirmation of 58 new cases of the disease, bringing the total to 320. That same day, the CEO of Qatar Airways, Akbar Al Baker, stirred controversy by claiming that there was no scientific evidence proving that coronavirus

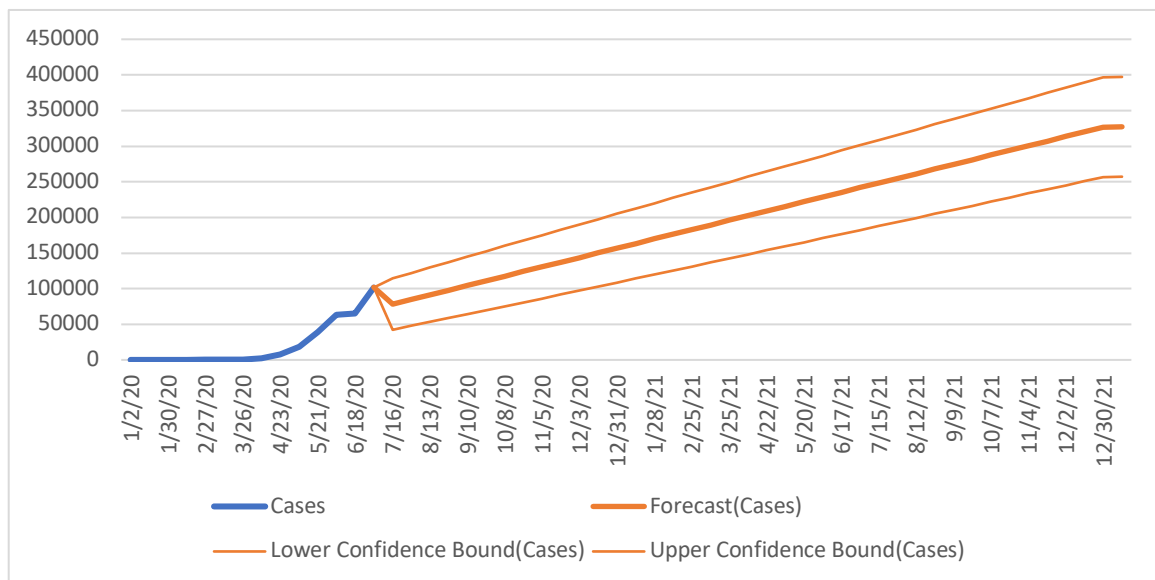
can be transmitted during the incubation period (Ben, 2020). On March 14, Qatar expanded its travel ban to include three new countries: Germany, Spain, and France. On March 16, 2020, the Ministry of Public Health announced the recovery of four people from the disease at a press conference. Eight new coronavirus cases are reported, bringing the total to 460 on 19 March. Two of the new cases were Qataris, who had been to Europe, while the others were migrant workers. Most of the reported cases were linked to migrant workers, although the government had not reported nationalities. Preparations for the 2022 FIFA World Cup continued schedule (Ghaida, 2020). On March 20, The Ministry of Municipality and Environment closed all parks and public beaches to try to curb the spread of coronavirus (The Peninsular Qatar, 2020). On March 23, the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) sought volunteers to support Qatar's response to the Covid-19 outbreak. A spokesperson for the Supreme Committee for Crisis Management, HE Lolwah Rashid AlKhater, said: "We are looking for volunteers to help Qatar's healthcare sector as the number of Covid-19 cases increases and creates a strain on resources. We need to stand together as a community and work to support Qatar's public and private sectors during these trying times." (Gulf Times, 2020). That same day, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in a circular said it had decided to temporarily close all restaurants, cafes, food outlets, and food trucks in the following locations from March 23 until further notice: Sports clubs, Lusail Marina, food trucks area, Doha Corniche, Al Khor Corniche, and Aspire Park (Gulf times, 2020). Also, on that day, the Ministry of Public Health announced new cases; some of the new cases of infection are related to the travelers who came recently to the State of Qatar, and others belong to people in contact with infected cases. The newly infected cases are in isolation, and they are receiving medical care. The Ministry of Public Health continues to conduct checks for all citizens traveling from abroad, as well as all contacts of infected cases. The total number of

people tested for COVID-19 by the Ministry of Public Health has now reached more than 12,000. The Ministry of Public Health urges all agencies and individuals to follow preventive measures and adhere to the requirements of home isolation to ensure their safety and that of their community, and not to go out unless necessary. On March 26, Spokesperson of the Supreme Committee for Crisis Management H E Lolwah bint Rashid bin Mohammed Al Khater announced 12 new cases of coronavirus in Qatar. Total recovery cases are now at 43, with two new cases. The Spokesperson stated the new cases are in complete isolation. The total number of COVID-19 tests done in Qatar now stands at 13681, and the total number of cases is 549 (The Peninsular Qatar, 2020).

On March 28, Qatar reported its first death case from the novel coronavirus, in addition to 28 new infections, bringing the total of confirmed cases to 590, according to the Ministry of Public Health and two more recoveries, taking the tally to 45 cured patients. The ministry revealed that it had tested more than 16,582 people for Covid-19. (Serdar & Hamdi, 2020). On April 8, the MoPH announced that Primary Health Care Cooperation would be designating two health centers, one in Umm Salal and one in Gharrafat Al Rayyan, for screening, testing, and quarantining COVID-19 patients (MOPH, 2020). On May 18, the MoPH announced the registration of 1,365 new confirmed cases of COVID-19 and the recovery of 529 more patients in Qatar. The Ministry of Education has announced that the schools will open on September 1, 2020, and the retests of the students of Classes 1st-12th) for the previous academic year 2019-20 would be conducted from August 23, 2020, to August 31, 2020. (The Peninsular Qatar, 2020). As of May 29, the total affected cases in the country are 52,907 and recovered as of today are 20,604. On June 3, The cabinet has decided to allow four people inside a vehicle from Thursday, June 4, and families are exempted (The Peninsular Qatar). The Ministry of Commerce and

Industry (MoCI) announce the permitted working hours for the private sector is also changed from 7 am until 8 pm (Qatar Tribune, 2020)

The Assistant Foreign Minister and Spokesperson of the Supreme Committee for Crisis Management Lolwah Rashid Al Khater give an update in a press conference to ease COVID-19 restrictions from the country in four phases. The gradual lifting of restrictions will be based on striking a balance between health risks and social and economic benefits. The first phase will begin on June 15, the second phase on July 1, 3rd, and 4th phase will be in August and September respectively (The Peninsular Qatar, 2020). As of July 2, 2020, Qatar had about 101,553 COVID-19 cases; this is serious because, even though the cases are increasing, they are still opening the country.





### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

This research paper is aimed to identify the role of Qatar in the world field in this specific time when the COVID-19 pandemic does not show any sign to stop. In addition, it also answers the question of how Qatar's government can improve its public image and repair its relationship with GCC countries. Upon analysis of collected data, it can be concluded that Qatar is doing a great job at helping other needy countries as well as regaining the trust of its former association GCC. Even though they have the highest COVID-19 infected cases per capita in the world, they still support others by sending advanced healthcare equipment and offering humanitarian services like transportation.

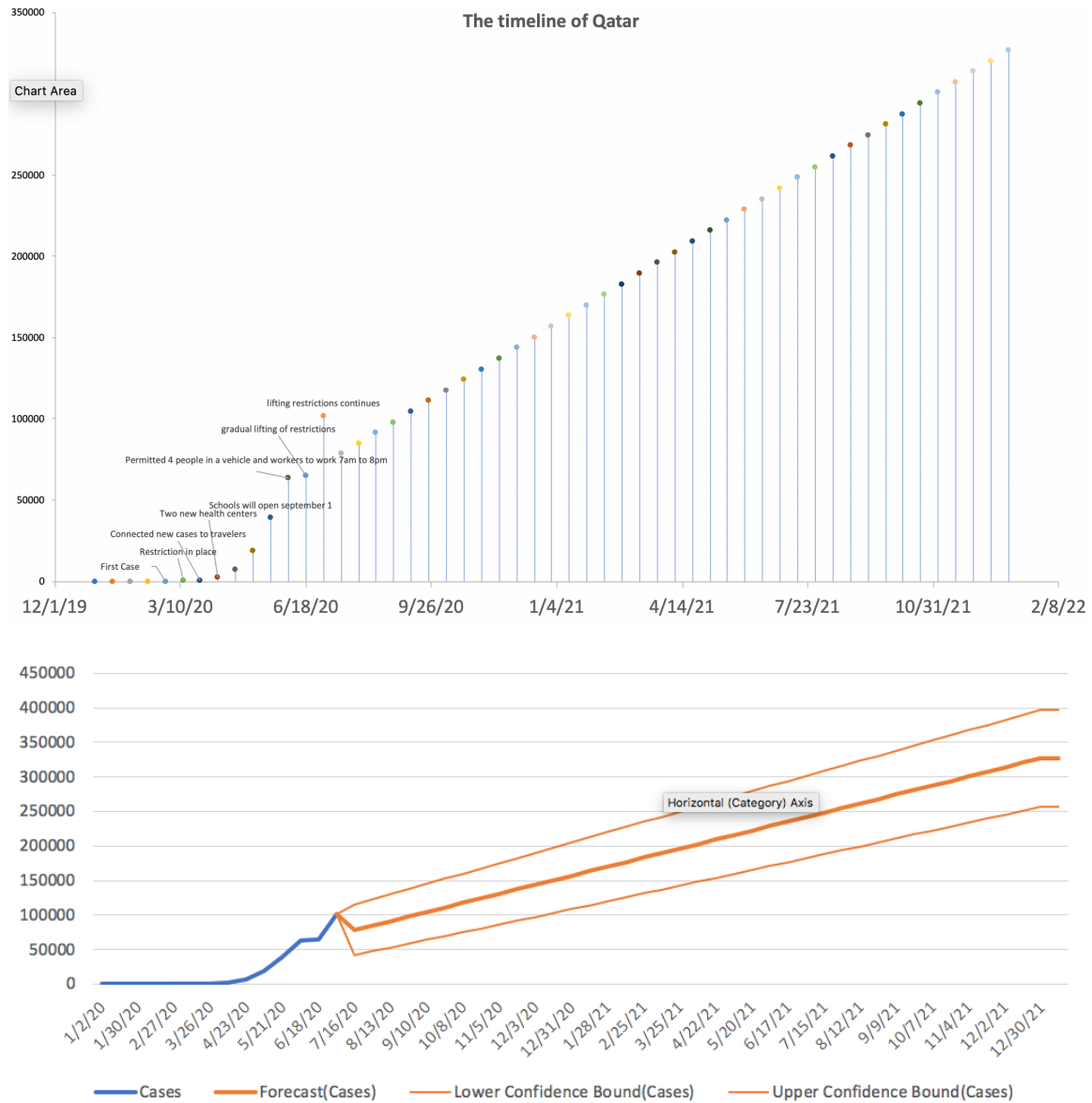
In the duration of this research, which took a total of 6 weeks, it was analyzed that Qatar is able to keep good relationships with countries all over the world. China, Nigeria, India, ASEAN still play a significant role in its long-term plan to diversify the economy. Furthermore, the virus proves that there is no border or no limitation that it could not reach, a truly global catastrophe, if it can affect one country, it can easily spread to neighboring countries. There is not much difference between sending aid overseas and investing it at home and Qatar is utilizing the advantage of the healthcare system to keep its region stable in the time of the outbreak. However, the consequences of the pandemic are inevitable, it is forecasted that it will take at least a year for all operations to go back to normal and Qatar may need more time to recover as well as. Due to the effect of the blockade, Qatar can have limitations when increasing financial support for GCC. Lower class citizens and migrant workers need more attention in necessary goods purchase and shelters.



The U.S is an excellent example for Qatar to follow if they want to assist others efficiently.

Through decades, U.S has proved its leadership in global health and humanitarian assistance. In their history with MERS, H1N1, SARS, and the recent Ebola outbreak, their engagement was always in quick action. It took them only a short period to reach out to their partners in Europe, Asian, Africa, and the Middle East and maintain the international trade pathways or advancing their investments in infrastructure facilities. There are several ways for Qatar to take into action, such as leveling the transportation system, E-commerce promotion. With the development of transport and the urgency in improving the speed of goods delivery in domestic industries or the trade between nations in developing countries, Qatar is one of the best places providing good merchandise for these needs. The advantage of their location can accelerate delivery time for countries that require medical equipment such as masks and ventilators or health staff. Also, E-commerce is a crucial solution for the economy at this moment between countries in its region. There should be an agreement to make sure that every nation has the privilege to access the marketing system. It ensures that economic factors can take advantage of online shopping or communicate efficiently at low cost and high-security Internet. With a high financial condition, they could develop their dominance in this field all over the region. The experience in transportation can serve as a guideline for others to follow and build the necessary delivery network. This will help small business from other countries has a chance to survive, and economic will benefit from it

## APPENDIX A



## APPENDIX B

<b>SIGNPOST OF CHANGES</b>									
TOPIC	INDICATORS	2020				2021			
		I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV
Qatar Blockade Impact	China, Nigeria, India	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	GCC Countries	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
COVID 19 Cases statistics	Qatar	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	USA	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	World	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	GCC	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
GCC role on COVID 19	Humanitarian work for the world	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Qatar role on COVID 19	Humanitarian work for the world	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Qatar preparation	FIFA world cup	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Qatar Intelligence		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

● light

● medium

● Extreme

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[idUSKCN21Y1M2?utm\\_campaign=Brookings%2520Doha%2520Center&utm\\_source=hs\\_email&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_content=86394597](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-gulf-food/gulf-arab-states-to-create-food-supply-safety-network-over-coronavirus-outbreak-kuwait-news-agency-idUSKCN21Y1M2?utm_campaign=Brookings%2520Doha%2520Center&utm_source=hs_email&utm_medium=email&utm_content=86394597)

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