

[Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Meets with Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani in Doha](#)

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) met with Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani in Doha, following bilateral talks between Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Qatari officials earlier this week as well. MBS' stop in Qatar as a part of his larger Gulf tour is a notable regional diplomatic development, as it marks his first visit to the country since the four-year Saudi-led blockade of Qatar – a crisis which the parties involved took steps toward ending back in January with the signing of a reconciliation deal. Analysts point out that the trip signals a further willingness to continue the repairing of relations between the Gulf neighbors. During the course of the years-long diplomatic rift with Saudi Arabia and others including Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, Qatar strengthened its ties with Turkey. The two nations' bilateral talks this week resulted in multiple investment agreements, but did not include a meeting between Erdogan, the Emir of Qatar, and the Saudi Crown Prince. Turkish President Erdogan had sought to meet with MBS while in Qatar as well, however this did not ultimately come to fruition, with Turkish and Saudi officials saying instead that a future gathering between the two could be scheduled soon. Erdogan and MBS have not met since prominent Saudi dissident and journalist Jamal Khashoggi was murdered inside the Kingdom's consulate in Istanbul – with MBS having been implicated for ordering the heinous killing.

President Erdogan's trip to Qatar was part of the seventh annual Qatar-Turkey Supreme Strategic Committee meeting. The gathering has taken place as Turkey's economy suffers from rapidly rising inflation and the value of its currency continues to plummet. The Qatari Emir agreed to extend a currency swap initiated last year worth \$15 billion. Erdogan also signed 15 investment agreements with Qatar that span financial coordination from media to disaster management. Qatar and Turkey have maintained a close relationship during Saudi Arabia's boycott of both countries. Last year, Saudi Arabia imposed a boycott on Turkish imports after President Erdogan had said that the order to kill Mr. Khashoggi had been issued from the highest levels of the Saudi government. Though he did not specifically cite the Saudi Crown Prince in his statement, a report released earlier this year by the U.S. intelligence community concluded that MBS is responsible for ordering the murder and that a member of his security team was directly involved.

The Saudi Crown Prince's visit to meet the Emir of Qatar is a significant regional and geopolitical development, due to the recent history of extremely strained ties between the two countries. During the Saudi-led boycott of Qatar, the latter refused to shut down its Al Jazeera Media Network and expel Turkey's military forces. The dispute had caused a major diplomatic rift among the Gulf nations and highlighted their divergent foreign policy stances on Iran and other matters. Against the backdrop of the resumption of nuclear discussions between Iran and Western powers as well as the United States' strong connection to Qatar, which hosts the U.S. Central Command and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) summit later this month, the meeting between the Saudi Crown Prince and the Qatari Emir suggests prospects for increased cooperation among the Gulf region countries in the immediate future.

In advance of the annual summit of the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Saudi Crown Prince had scheduled visits to Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates in a string of diplomacy efforts. Now, whether or not attempts are made to improve Saudi-Turkish relations will be worth keeping an eye on, and it remains to be seen if a near future meeting ultimately transpires between MBS and Erdogan.