

Polity IV Country Report 2010: Qatar

<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%;">Score:</td> <td style="width: 15%;">2009</td> <td style="width: 15%;">2010</td> <td style="width: 15%;">Change</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Polity:</td> <td>-10</td> <td>-10</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Democ:</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Autoc:</td> <td>10</td> <td>10</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Durable:</td> <td></td> <td>39</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tentative:</td> <td></td> <td>No</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Score:	2009	2010	Change	Polity:	-10	-10	0	Democ:	0	0	0	Autoc:	10	10	0	Durable:		39		Tentative:		No		
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Durable:		39																							
Tentative:		No																							
SCODE	QAT	CCODE	694	Date of Report	1 June 2011																				
Polity IV Component Variables																									
XRREG	XRCOMP	XROPEN	XCONST	PARREG	PARCOMP																				
3	1	1	1	4	1																				
Date of Most Recent Polity Transition (3 or more point change)																									
End Date			Begin Date																						
			3 September 1971 (Ind.)																						
Polity Fragmentation: No																									
Constitution	1970																								
Executive(s)	Emir Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani; ascended to the monarchy, 27 June 1995																								
Legislature	Unicameral: Consultative Assembly (35 seats; appointed by the emir; no elections)																								
Judiciary	Ministry of Justice																								

Narrative Description:¹

Executive Recruitment: *Ascription (1)*

Qatar is a hereditary monarchy that has been ruled by the al-Thani family since 1916. In 1972 Sheikh Khalifa overthrew his cousin in a bloodless palace coup and declared himself emir. Emir Khalifa was subsequently overthrown by his son, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, in another bloodless palace coup in June 1995. Leading branches of the al-Thani family and most tribal leaders in the country supported this executive transfer. Less than one year after assuming office, the new emir was confronted by a failed coup attempt by members of the armed forces and the police. In 2001 a cousin of the Emir and eighteen other people were condemned to death for their role in the failed 1996 coup. Twenty others were sentenced to life in prison for their role in the coup attempt.

Executive Constraints: *Unlimited Authority (1)*

The emir (along with his appointed Council of Ministers) wields absolute power in Qatar. Political authority in Qatar is based on a hybrid of traditional Bedouin codes and modern bureaucratic institutions. While it is widely recognized that an emir must gain the consensus of the ruling al-Thani family and other

¹ The research described in this report was sponsored by the Political Instability Task Force (PITF). The PITF is funded by the Central Intelligence Agency. The views expressed herein are the authors' alone and do not represent the views of the US Government.

leading families in Qatar to rule effectively, there are no legal constraints on executive action. The judiciary is subject to executive control and the legislature serves only a consultative function. Laws are enacted through emiri decrees. While the Consultative Assembly can pass judgment on proposed laws, they cannot modify them or initiate any laws on their own.

In 1999 the Emir convened a constitutional committee to draft a new constitution. In June 2004 Qatar issued its first written constitution, introducing a partially-elected legislative body with the power to approve the national budget, draft, discuss and propose legislation for the Emir's approval, and to monitor the performance of cabinet ministers. Under this new constitution while ultimate power would remain in the hands of the emir, nevertheless, it does provide for the formation of an advisory body, two-thirds of which would be elected. The constitution, which received overwhelming support in a 2003 referendum, guarantees freedom of assembly, expression and religion. The constitution was scheduled to come into force in 2007. Legislative elections, originally scheduled for 2008, have yet to be held.

Political Participation: Repressed Competition (1)

As of 2005, over seventy-five percent of the population in Qatar are non-citizens and have no political voice in the government. While the human rights of both citizens and non-citizens are largely protected in Qatar, political parties are outlawed and the freedoms of assembly and association are severely restricted. However, since 1998 the Emir has made some small steps toward political liberalization. Most specifically, Qatar places very few constraints on the press. Home to Al Jazeera, a controversial television station that is aired throughout the Arab world, the press in Qatar is free to criticize the government and air dissenting points of view. Moreover, in March 1999 popular elections for the consultative Central Municipal Council were held and a committee was convened in July 1999 to draft a permanent constitution. The draft constitution promises universal suffrage in these legislative elections.