Egypt plays second fiddle to Qatar on Hamas mediation

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"Globes" examines why Egypt is taking a back seat in Israel-Hamas talks and its determination not to accept Gazan refugees.

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Tel Aviv University Department of Arabic and Middle Eastern Affairs Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) senior researcher and lecturer Dr. Ofer Winter, an expert on Egypt, says, "Egypt is involved in mediation efforts with Hamas but this time, unlike in the past, it is not leading them by itself but doing it with Qatar, with each of the countries fulfilling a complementary role."

He explains that there are several factors for this dynamic. "Firstly, unlike in previous rounds of fighting between Israel and Hamas, the US is deeply involved in the current war and has major leverage pressures on Qatar, and the motivation to use them so that the latter will assist in the mediation process and the release of hostages, some of whom have US citizenship. "Secondly, following the October 7 massacre, Qatar found itself under severe international criticism for hosting the Hamas leadership and funding the movement, and it is possible that for this reason it has an interest in expanding its involvement in the mediation process, to improve its damaged image, and this is happening somewhat at Egypt's expense. Thirdly, it is possible that Hamas, which this time came to the negotiations with Israel from a position of strength, with many hostages in its hands, was able to force a deeper Qatari involvement in the mediation process and push aside Egypt somewhat."

Dr. Winter explains, "While Israel prefers the mediation of Egypt, which is hostile to the Muslim Brotherhood and acts with suspicion towards its Hamas proxy, Hamas prefers its Qatari patron. Qatar is perceived in Hamas's eyes as a more convenient and reliable mediator than Egypt, and is expected to assist in its survival.

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For full interview:

https://en.globes.co.il/en/article-egypt-plays-second-fiddle-to-qatar-on-hamas-mediation-1001463254