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# Academia Open



*By Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo*

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# Qatari Support for Syrian Refugee Camps (2011–2018): Dukungan Qatar bagi Kamp Pengungsi Suriah (2011–2018)

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## Abstract

**General Background** Regional crises in the Middle East have reshaped diplomatic interactions and foreign policy strategies among key actors. **Specific Background** This study examines Qatari foreign policy within the context of the Syrian and Yemeni crises, focusing on its diplomatic roles and regional engagement. **Knowledge Gap** Existing studies have not sufficiently clarified how Qatar balances mediation and direct involvement within complex regional conflicts. **Aims** This research aims to analyze the evolution of Qatari foreign policy and its positioning in regional crises. **Results** The findings show that Qatar adopts flexible diplomatic strategies, combining mediation efforts with active political engagement to respond to shifting regional dynamics. **Novelty** The study provides an integrated analysis of Qatar's foreign policy behavior across multiple crises, highlighting its adaptive and multi-dimensional approach. **Implications** The results suggest that small-state diplomacy can play a significant role in regional conflict management through strategic flexibility and diversified engagement.

**Keywords:** Qatari Foreign Policy, Regional Crises, Middle East Politics, Diplomacy, Strategic Behavior

### Key Findings Highlights

D1ip. lomatic roles shift between mediation and active engagement  
R2e.gional interactions reflect adaptive policy responses  
C3ri.sis dynamics shape strategic decision making

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## **Qatari Support for Syrian Refugee Camps (2011–2018)**

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to analyze Qatar's humanitarian policy towards the Syrian crisis during the period 2011–2018, as it seeks to understand the nature of the ( transformation in Qatari humanitarian response patterns, and the extent of its connection to the regional and international contexts, and to the structure of humanitarian actors and their institutional tools. The importance of this study stems from the fact that it examines the humanitarian experience of a medium-sized country that was able to play an active role in one of the most complex contemporary humanitarian crises, where the relationship between humanitarian work and humanitarian diplomacy is intertwined, and the limits of overlap between the humanitarian and political dimensions are explored. The study started from the premise that Qatari humanitarian policy was not merely an emergency humanitarian response to a passing humanitarian situation, but rather represented a gradual strategic direction based on employing institutional humanitarian work to mitigate the repercussions of the Syrian crisis, and to enhance the regional and international presence of the State of Qatar within the framework of soft power.

The study also addressed the activities of the most prominent Qatari humanitarian organizations, foremost among them the Qatar Red Crescent Society, Qatar Charity, the Qatar Fund for Development, and other humanitarian organizations and institutions, in terms of their areas of intervention, their work mechanisms, their partnership networks with international organizations, and the size and quality of the aid they provided inside Syrian territory and in the countries hosting refugees. This aid included the sectors of food security, shelter, health care, education, sponsoring orphans, and economic and social empowerment programs, which reflects the comprehensiveness of Qatari humanitarian policy and its shift from emergency relief to development-oriented projects. The study concluded that the Qatari humanitarian response was characterized by key features, represented in the speed of action in the early stages of the crisis, the flexibility in adapting to the complexities of the field environment, working through institutional channels and multi-level partnership networks, as well as its ability to continue despite the political and logistical challenges imposed by regional transformations.

**Keywords:** Qatari humanitarian policy, Syrian crisis, Syrian refugees, Qatari humanitarian organizations, humanitarian diplomacy, soft power, relief work.

### **Introduction**

The Syrian crisis, which erupted in 2011, has represented the most complicated humanitarian crisis of the second decade of the twenty-first century due to the widespread destruction and extensive displacement of millions of civilians internally and externally, the near-total collapse of living conditions, and the destructive impact on state institutions. It forced the international community and key regional actors to grapple with new realities as no area of the globe has been immune to the evolving nature of humanitarian response or the ways in which the separation of humanitarianism from states foreign policy has been threatened. The role played by State of Qatar turned it into a regional actor who had put the humanitarian aspect at the center of its response to the Syrian crisis. During the abovementioned period (2011–2018), it implemented humanitarian-related policy within an integrated framework, based on the tenets of international humanitarian law, and a political vision rooted in the belief that the protection of civilians and the alleviation of their suffering are moral and international responsibilities. This policy was actually operationalized through Qatari charity and humanitarian agencies which represented the most important executive tools for assistance delivery in its different types.

Also highlighted among Qatari humanitarian organizations working to deliver aid to the displaced and afflicted outside and within Syria were the Qatar Red Crescent Society, Qatar Charity, and the Qatar Fund for Development, in addition to strategic partnerships concluded with United Nations agencies and international and regional bodies. These organizations supported the implementation of large-scale relief programs with emergency assistance, health, education and shelter for internally displaced persons inside Syria, food security and resilience for Syrian refugees in host countries and support for host communities. This demonstrates the maturing of Qatari humanitarian policy away from a short-term emergency response, towards a more integrated, long-term humanitarian-development approach.

The Qatari approach to the Syrian crisis illustrates a remarkable degree of coordination and synchronization between civil society humanitarian action and the state official role, since Qatar, through its humanitarian policy devoted to supporting and helping Syrian refugees either inside Syria or in other host countries tried to project itself as a regional and international heavyweight within the context of soft power.

### **First: Direct Government Support**

At the close of 2010 and the start of 2011, various Arab nations experienced mass peaceful protest (Al-Karim, 2019, p. 251), and early 2011 saw extensive protest action in Syria (Abu Mustafa, 2015, p. 37). Internal factors (political, economic, and social) along with external factors related to the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt, set in motion the series of events that gave rise to the Syrian crisis (Rimal, 2023, p.17). The complexities of the Syrian crisis made it one of the most significant global issue of modern time and posed a regional threat as well as an international alarm from the very beginning of the

crisis (Hussein & Al-Kaabi, 2022, p.265). There were diverse regional and international foreign offices about Syria crisis either in support or in opposition (, 2018, 67).

Under Emir Hamad bin Khalifa, who took power in a bloodless coup d'état in 1995, Qatar adopted a wide-ranging humanitarian policy (Sharab, 2014, p. 108). Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa, born in 1957, was an alumnus of the Sandhurst Military Academy in the UK, graduating in 1971. He had come to power in a so-called "white coup " against his father Khalifa bin Hamad in 1995 and abdicated on 25 June 2013 in favour of his son, Tamim bin Hamad (Kaaaid, 2015, 46). Qatar developed excellent specific institutions to handle humanitarian and development works and worked in countries from all over the world (Nuwimi, 2025, p. 148). The Qatari humanitarian and relief sector has never failed to respond to the vulnerable segments of society adversely affected by poverty, crises, and armed conflicts, and even sending aid convoys to communities in the various continent (Al-Khudri 2024, p. 131). The Arab Spring revolutions were violent and resulted in armed conflict, with a sharp drop in economic and social indicators (Kazem & Ghassan, 2018, p. After the militarization of the situation in Syria, the conflict resulted in millions of displaced Syrians under refugee status and a drastic decline in social indices and increased poverty and unemployment rates (Mohammed, 2021, p. 18). The Qatari government is one of several recently granted and approximately 100 million dollars was available in humanitarian assistance to Syria also grants to help in the empowerment programs and the projects in Syria and other Arab Spring countries. This was part of Qatari diplomatic efforts related to the support of stability and alleviating human suffering, and support to those affected (Al-Suwaidi 2023, 124).

Qatar participated in several donor conferences dedicated to Syria. The third International Donors' Conference was held in Kuwait on 31 March 2015, with the participation of numerous Arab and European countries (Al-Anbaa Kuwaiti Newspaper, Issue 14048, 31 March 2015). The participating states pledged to provide 3.8 billion USD to assist victims of the humanitarian crisis in Syria and to cover the expenses of refugees in host countries (Al-Sharq Al-Awsat Newspaper, 2015).

Foreign aid is considered one of the most important instruments of Qatari foreign policy (Al-Shayeb, 2018, p. 71). Qatar pledged to provide 100 million USD (Al-Jasour, 2023, p. 1421). Doha also proposed an initiative to establish a fund dedicated to education and vocational training for Syrian refugees and displaced persons, in parallel with United Nations initiatives and ongoing international efforts in this field. It called upon states, organizations, and regional and international bodies to cooperate with this initiative, which is based on a dual education system combining school-based education with institutional training through the establishment of schools within refugee camps in coordination with host countries (Al-Raya Qatari Newspaper, 2015).

A Syria donor conference was also held in London on 5 February 2016 (Al-Jarida Kuwaiti Newspaper, Issue 2946, 5 February 2015). More than 70 countries participated, including Qatar. The participating states pledged to provide 11 billion USD to support the humanitarian crisis in Syria, in addition to providing assistance to Syrian refugees in host countries (Al-Khaleej Emirati Newspaper, 2016).

Another donor conference for Syria was held in Brussels on 4 April 2017, with the participation of more than 60 countries. The participating states pledged more than 8 billion USD to support Syrian refugees, and Qatar, for its part, pledged to provide 100 million USD (Al-Watan Qatari Newspaper, 2017).

## **Second: Qatari Support through Organizations**

### **.1 Support for Syrian Displaced Persons Inside Syrian Territory**

The Qatar Red Crescent Society, established in 1978, is the first voluntary charitable organization in Qatar. Its program aims to assist and empower vulnerable individuals and communities without bias or discrimination. It specializes in providing various relief and development services locally and internationally through a wide network of professional staff and volunteers. It is an active member of the international humanitarian movement, which includes several regional and international organizations (Al-Sharabi, 2021, p. 89).

The Eid Charity Foundation was established in 1995 and is one of the Qatari humanitarian organizations concerned with serving people inside and outside Qatar. It provides relief and humanitarian assistance, supports educational, health, and religious facilities, and offers aid to patients, the poor, and those in need. It also contributes to the development of poor communities through small and medium development projects, including the construction of schools, hospitals, mosques, and other charitable projects (<https://manhom.com/>).

The Qatar Red Crescent Society launched a relief campaign on 21 February 2012 to support populations affected by unrest in Syria. It allocated 500,000 USD from its emergency relief fund to support international response efforts for the campaign (Al-Raya Qatari Newspaper, 2012). Eid Charity Foundation also distributed sacrificial meat to needy families inside Syria on 21 November 2012, in response to the suffering, hardship, displacement, and killing faced by the Syrian people. The organization's Qurbani (sacrificial meat) project outside Qatar is given significant importance due to its impact on vulnerable families (Al-Raya Qatari Newspaper, 2012).

RAAF Foundation also participated in humanitarian campaigns to support and assist Syrian displaced persons and refugees. It was established in 1969 and is considered one of the Qatari charitable organizations. Its main objectives include promoting humanitarian values, achieving social solidarity, assisting those in need, strengthening ethics, and developing charitable work. (<https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/> .) The RAAF Foundation managed to send several trucks carrying food and medical supplies from Turkey to displaced persons inside Syria on 25 October 2012. The organisation had

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partnered with several Turkish humanitarian agencies to transfer these aid shipments to the distribution zones of the Turkish frontier areas. The RAAF Foundation also highlighted the need to also provide families with livelihood support, establish temporary and well-equipped housing and provide medical services to patients and the wounded (Al-Raya Qatari Newspaper, 2012).

Qatar Red Crescent Society has also signed an agreement with the established Al-Faisal Without Borders Foundation, established in 2011. The latter has the goal of supporting sustainable development and enabling people in both Qatari and overseas communities. It also intends to execute and establish programs in the educational, social, developmental, health, humanitarian, and charitable domains together with public benefit projects and charitable organizations (<https://www.alfaisalfoundation.org>).

The MoU signed between the two parties on 1 January 2013 led to a joint project to provide emergency relief to people affected by events in northern and eastern Syria with a budget of approximately 1.5 million USD. The agreement was meant to provide emergency assistance via relief activities including shelters, and food and medical services, as well as the provision of housing for IDPs and surgery for the wounded, the establishment of hospitals and drug, food and electric heaters for displaced persons (Al-Arab Qatari Newspaper 2013).

On 16 July 2013, the Eid Charity Foundation announced the allocation of over half a million US dollars to support medical work within Syria. Within this budget funded field hospitals, warehouses with pharmaceuticals, first-aid kits, orthopedic surgical supplies, and ambulances. A number of operating rooms were also fitted with medical equipment, surgery tools, and furniture. On top of that, the fund also assisted 500 medical personnel and opened 15 field hospitals for treating the wounded and injured (Al-Raya Qatari Newspaper, 2013).

Qatar Red Crescent Society Members with the Third Aid shipment to Syrian displaced persons in inside camps of Syria, 14/01/2014 The shipment consisted of 100 tons of relief aid, including medical equipment, clothing, blankets, medicines and medical supplies, with the support of the Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They provided shelter, food, heating supplies, and health support to up to 22,000 displaced persons and provided them in addition to vital living pieces, which helped the organization to accommodate many displacement cases (al-Sharq Qatari Newspaper, 2014).

RAAF Foundation opened a residential village for displaced Syrians in the Aleppo countryside in April 2014 for more than 1 Million USD. It includes 100 complete residential units, along with houses, a school, a mosque, a central kitchen, child play area, a general electricity generator for the village and a water well to service the village. The project helped 100 Syrian families who fled from the bombardment of barrel bombs of the Syrian regime (Al-Sharq Qatari Newspaper, 2014) to have a shelter. Qatar Charity also took part in relief campaigns for Syrian displaced persons and refugees. Founded in 1992 as an NGO, its programs are focused on children affected by crises and disasters. It has undertaken many humanitarian projects in multiple sectors, such as education, health, water supply, economic empowerment, and social welfare (<https://www.qcharity.org/ar/qa>).

Qatar Charity implements an agricultural project for the residents of rural Aleppo, rural Idlib and the Syrian coast-29 april 2015 It would be noted that the organization said, "This is a qualitative and unprecedented relief effort." This project was about 150,000 USD. Its aimed to help these regions to overcome the hunger the population is suffering of, and also intended to stimulate farmers to return to their work in the fields which would provide jobs to employed persons, including Internally displaced persons inside Syria (Al-Raya Qatari Newspaper, 2015).

A project that included printing and distributing school books, announced by Qatar Charity on 16 September 2015, aimed to provide school textbooks for 200,000 students education inside the Syria. KNDS financed the project, which amounted to almost 1 million USD, thus 840,000 textbooks for the revised Syrian curriculum were provided in all subject areas. The organization sought to mitigate the general humanitarian crisis in Syria, and the education crisis in particular, as millions of Syrian pupils were deprived of their right to education due to displacement and instability, along with its catastrophic repercussions (Al-Raya Qatari Newspaper, 2015).

Qatar Charity also signed an agreement with Al-Asmakh (Afif) Charitable Foundation for having previously contributed for the sake of the displaced Syrian persons and refugees. Established in 2012, the foundation seeks to be a part of the development of poor communities and aid the needy in the most important areas of life – education, health, in addition to humanitarian aid, based on a unique vision of charitable and humanitarian action (<https://afif.qa/about/>). Twenty Jan 2016, SARC signed an agreement with the Yaouk Centre whereby several relief projects were implemented for the Residents of the Syrian town of Madaya with the cost exceeding half a million USD. Under the deal, vital food supplies were sent to residents of the town of Madaya, which has more than 40,000 inhabitants and was facing a catastrophic famine. It also meant to reduce the financial and psychological pressure on the people under siege (Al-Sharq Qatari Newspaper, 2016).

Qatar Red Crescent Society provided on 4 mayo 2016 over 30000 liters, needed for the electricity generators to work at the surgical hospital in Aqrabat town in rural Idlib. This helped over 100,000 people alongside another 70,000 IDPs in the province. SCO also supplied medicines and medical supplies and covered all operational expenses for the facility in which three-month-old Omar received care, which specializes in orthopedic and reconstructive surgery. It also backed the Kafr Naha health center, which receives many casualties as it is close to the front lines in western Aleppo rural. It provided important medical supplies for operating and emergency departments, including surgical sutures, urinary catheters, nasogastric tubes and glucose and saline solutions, for the center (Al-Raya Qatari Newspaper, 2016).

On 9 May 2017, Qatar Charity executed a project to provide bakeries in Syria with 200 tons of flour, ensuring bread for the

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displaced inside the Syrian territories for a full three months. This project reached around 600,000 beneficiaries. This was in a drive to distribute bread in affected areas, to support the Syrian people, to alleviate their suffering, to provide food security and to alleviate the suffering of the Syrian people and especially the vulnerable families (Al-Sharq Qatari Newspaper, 2017).

In 2017/12/10, Qatar Charity launched an emergency campaign to support Eastern Ghouta with the title "Ghouta Under Siege". Phase one of the campaign included the distribution of 3,000 food baskets to serve 15,000 people that were greatly affected, as continuous steps to support the Syrian people in light of the humanitarian crisis and famine status to some areas (Lusail Newspaper, 2017).

As well as participating in relief campaigns and support for displaced Syrians, the Qatar Fund for Development also contributed to. It is a Qatari public institution established in the year 2002; to implementation and coordinate the foreign development assistance projects carried out by the State of Qatar. In a bid to that end, the fund aims to foster human development through initiatives around education, health, and economic empowerment (<https://www.unhcr.org>).

On 2 January 2018, the Qatar Fund for Development announced on completion of a major project supporting activities in northern Syria, at a cost of more than 175035.563 SDR (USD). It involved the rehabilitation and maintenance of the concrete canal extending 5 kilometers, securing and rehabilitation of the main and Secondary Gates, rehabilitation of the existing project electrical network, rehabilitation of the existing pumps, Supply of Well Accessories; and Supply two Electric Generators for Pumping with installation, also supply of fuel for running pumps for supplementary irrigation of wheat crops. It helped thousands of families that rely on food aid to become self-sufficient (Al-Raya Qatari Newspaper, 2018).

As part of the agreement signed by the Qatar Fund for Development on 20 May 2018 with the Qatar Red Crescent Society, the Fund will give a grant of 12 million USD towards the benefit of the Syrian people; internally displaced Syrian persons as well as in neighboring countries where Syrian refugees. This was also part of the UN plan to respond to the Syrian people with humanitarian needs. These included health sector projects which were represented by operating healthcare centers, mental health services, building earthen shelters, rehabilitation of homes and key roads, and other humanitarian interventions (Al-Raya Qatari Newspaper, 2018).

## 2. Rehabilitation of the Syrian Displaced in Lebanon

Qatar Red Crescent Society stated distributing humanitarian aid to Syrian refugees in Lebanese camps on 21, February 2012. Among the aid were for food and medical supplies. In addition, the team assessed the immediate needs for these refugees, which include prioritizing emergency medical services and hospitals and expanding the capacity to treat the hundreds of injured individuals arriving each hour. Ambulances, first-aid kits, as well as medical supplies such as gloves, syringes, needles, surgical sutures and others were also needed at these hospitals, it said. The organization announced that it sent two ambulances to Lebanon and helped around 200 Syrian refugee families in Lebanon (Al-Raya Qatari Newspaper, 2012).

Qatar Red Crescent Society On the 7th of July 2012, Qatar Red Crescent Society organized a Relief workers Psychosocial support training course in Tripoli, Lebanon under the umbrella of the projects that Qatar Red Crescent Society in providing assistance to the Syrian population. It told about psychological support in crises, wars and disasters. Subjects were allocated to two branches of child support and injured persons respectively. This included both psychological care, the effect of trauma on children, and treatment approaches (Al-Raya Qatari Newspaper, 2012).

Syrian Students in Public and Private Schools in Lebanon date of publication: 5 Jan 2013 The Qatari government, through its organizations, is offering assistance to Syrian students in public and private schools in Lebanon. Such support included the preparation of classrooms, the provision of school supplies, the distribution of clothing and footwear to Syrian students and the payment of teachers' salaries. Meanwhile the Lebanese government lauded Qatar humanitarian assistance offered to Syrian refugees in Lebanon, as well as Syrian families thanked these Qatari initiatives (Al-Raya Qatari newspaper, 2013).

The 3rd of Feb 2013, the Afif (Al-Asmakh) Charitable Foundation initiated a relief campaign to support the Syrian refugees in Lebanon, which exceeded 300,000 persons. The organization raised over USD 3 million and set to procure food products, winter wear, and blankets for redistribution to Syrian refugees in camps in Lebanon (Al-Raya Qatari Newspaper, 2013).

In the Eid Charity Foundation, relief projects for Syrian refugees in several Lebanese governorates were launched on 10-03-2013, for an amount exceeding 1.5 million USD. These projects, in addition to the housing costs provided for many of the Syrian families, provided them with food supplies, infant milk, medical supplies, mattresses, blankets, heating oil, and many other relief-related items (Al-Raya Qatari Newspaper, 2013).

Qatari relief teams keep distributing humanitarian aid to Syrian refugees in Lebanon under the initiative of Emir Hamad bin Khalifa on 4 July 2013. In addition, it established a permanent bakery centre in the city of Tripoli distributing daily portions of bread to Syrian refugees in the poorer neighbourhoods. This centre provided for the daily essentials of around 800 families. Syrian refugees thanked and appreciated the efforts of Qatari relief teams in offering humanitarian assistance (Al-Raya Qatari newspaper, 2013). On the other hand, as part of the Eid al-Fitr holiday, Qatari relief teams started on Wednesday, 6 August 2013, a campaign to distribute clothes and shoes for free to Syrian refugees in Lebanon. The campaign focused on 50,000 displaced Syrian refugees in Bekaa Valley villages to supply some basic relief in food and clothing over this period. Such a project was especially needed due to the severe psychological and living-conditions the refugees were used to (Al-Raya Qatari Newspaper, 2013).

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The Afif Charitable Foundation distributed urgent and immediate assistance to Syrian refugees on the Lebanese–Syrian border on 14 July 2014. This included food, mattresses, blankets, and other emergency relief material. Distributions were conducted in partnership with charitable organizations in Lebanon (Al-Sharq Qatari Newspaper, 2014).

In collaboration with local organizations in Lebanon, RAAF Foundation launched an emergency response between 8 January 2015 and the following week due to the extremely cold weather experienced following a severe cold wave that affected the Eastern Mediterranean area in January 2015 and the Syrian refugee camps in Lebanon. The campaign had served about 25,000 Syrian refugees, mostly children, women and elderly, according to the report of the Foundation. Such support included heating fuel, plastic tarpaulins to cover tents, foodstuff, mattresses, carpets, kits for winter clothing for children and for the support of two medical clinics (Al-Raya Qatari Newspaper, 2015).

In Part of its projects to ease the suffering of the Syrian people, Qatar Charity was responsible, on 2 January 2016 for the cost of treating wounded and injured Syrians at Al-Bashaer Hospital in the city of Tripoli, Lebanon. It said it also equipped the center with all required medical equipment and provided specialized medical and administrative staff. The approximate cost of this project was 250,000 USD (Al-Sharq Qatari Newspaper, 2016)

On February 11th, 2016, the Afif Charitable Foundation opened two schools for Syrian refugee students in the Akkar area of northern Lebanon, sponsoring 880 students and 22 teachers. These were included within the long-term strategy of the foundation to sustain and finance schools (Al-Raya Qatari Newspaper, 2016).

Agreement signed between Qatar Red Crescent Society and Kuwait Red Crescent Society on 30 June 2017 The Kuwaiti entity also moved to the field of support and assistance to the Syrian refugees, in which it is working to provide emergency relief and the provision of urgent first aid to victims of disasters and public crises, to contribute to humanitarian and social services, to combat epidemics, to prevent diseases and to improve health conditions through medical and social services (Al-Azmi 2023, 53–54).

Under the agreement, work was to be continued on the water treatment station and sponsorship of kidney dialysis patients in the Bekaa Governorate in eastern Lebanon, between the two parties. The project is a testament to the continued humanitarian, medical, and relief efforts of Qatar and Kuwait Red Crescent societies (Al-Raya Qatari Newspaper, 2017). In line with its seasonal campaign titled "Winter of the Affected," Qatar Charity has responded to the emergency need to compensate the victims of a fire that broke out in one of the Syrian refugee camps in Akkar, Lebanon on 26 March 2018, by distributing immediate relief assistance. In order to help relieve their humanitarian suffering, the aid included food assistance, shelter services and heating supplies to 100 affected families. Moreover, the intervention offered social, humanitarian, and psychological support and expressed solidarity with the affected families. Thirty Tents (Al-Raya Qatari Newspaper, 2018) were also built as part of the project.

### 3- Aid for Syrian Internally Displaced Persons in Turkey

Islamic Da'wah Organization regarded among the charity foundations in Qatar who participating in supporting and helping the Syrian refugees. It was established in 1980. Its strategic goals include the propagation of Islam, the values of coexistence and tolerance, in addition to supporting and assisting those in need, promoting local initiatives in development and construction). • (<https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia> )

On July 19, 2012 Islamic Da'wah Organization arranged a visit to refugee camps in Turkey where it offered humanitarian assistance to the refugee population, including supplying them food and clothes. The assistance consisted of essentials such as food and medical supplies. The organization thanked the Turkish government for caring for and accommodating Syrian refugees living in its territories or at the border with Syria, and called for treatment opportunities for the wounded. It also mentioned, some of Syrian wounded need to be treated urgently outside the country, especially with serious injuries that requires special medical treatment available mostly in European countries (Al-Raya Qatari Newspaper, 2012)

In another initiative, the Qatar Volunteer Center played significant role in providing support for Syrian refugees and assisting them in the process of building new lives for themselves in Qatar. Founded in 2001, it is one of the centers operating under The Qatari Ministry of Culture. It aims to regulate and promote voluntary work in the country, to promote the essence of volunteering in community development, to coordinate with civil society institutions as well as the private and academic sectors. (<https://voluntary.qa/ar/%D> ).

On 13th January 2013, The Qatar Volunteer Center delivered aid to Syrian refugees at the Turkish–Syrian border. This relief comprised winter clothes, food commodities, and health essentials. According to the center, these donations resulted from contributions from citizens in Qatari territory (Al-Arab Qatari Newspaper, 2013). In a statement published on 11 February 2013, the State of Qatar declared that it would initiate a medical relief campaign to help with sick, injured, and wounded Syrians at camps in Turkey. This campaign was planned by Qatar Red Crescent Society, in coordination with humanitarian organizations operating in Turkey. That consisted from a team of exploration doctors, plus large consignments of drugs, medical instruments and surgical needs (Qatari Web page Al-Raya, 2013.).

Qatar Charity 27 October 2013 — Qatar Charity has launched a project today for the distribution of school books to Syrian students in schools related to them in Turkey. One of the organization's main activities included printing and distributing new curricula for every grade level. In total, 2 million copies of books had been printed reaching around 30000 students of different levels. The project, which cost around 1 million USD, was designed to help Syrian students and their families cope with hardship and to prevent children and youth from losing their education (Al-Raya Qatari Newspaper, 2013).

DOHA: Eid Charity Foundation on Sunday extended aid to 200 Syrian families in the Turkish–Syrian border on the occasion of the Prophet Mohammad's (peace be upon him) birthday, as part of the care packages provided for Syrian refugees wrapped in the warmth of the season. Most of the aid was food, especially flour, and winter clothes. The total value was about MM USD (Al-Raya Qatari Newspaper 2014).

The Qatar Red Crescent Society held two training courses in Turkey on 3 January 2016 to develop relief workers roles in working to aid those affected by the Syrian crisis. Targeted the Training of Child Malnutrition Treatment Abbreviation: (Al-Raya Qatari Newspaper, 2016) . On 9 October 2016, a convoy being operated by RAAF Foundation participated in a flour distribution mission worth around 1 million dollars. Over the course of two months, the project sought to deliver bread for about 55,000 refugees daily. The convoy included 106 trucks loaded with over 3,200 tons of flour and it was sent to charitable bakeries operating for Syrian refugees inside Turkey. The convoy set out from the Humanitarian Operations Coordination Centre for the Syrian people based in the Turkish city of Reyhanlı (Al-Sharq Qatari Newspaper, 2016)

Afif Charitable Foundation distributed 700 food baskets to refugees in Syrian camps on the Turkish borders on 5 April 2017. More than 4,200 refugees benefited. Inside each basket were the essentials. The foundation also provided five ambulances for the transportation of sick and injured Syrians to institutions and organizations concerned. The campaign, which aims to ease the suffering of Syrians and help them escape their difficult life conditions, was one of the foundation's projects for the whole year (Al-Sharq Qatari Newspaper, 2017).

#### **4 – Aid for Syrian Refugees in Jordan**

Over the period 13 May 2012 onwards RAAF Foundation organised seven convoys of humanitarian assistance, which was delivered to around 10,000 Syrian refugee families in camps in Jordan. The support consisted of medical, food, gas cylinder, detergent, etc. It built also 20 caravans for 20 families of Syrian people, constructed tanks in the sewage network, and had given distributing tankers of potable water. The name of the campaign was “Our Levant is Calling” (Al-Raya Qatari Newspaper, 2012).

On July 19, 2012 a delegation from Islamic Da'wah Organization visited Syrian refugee camps on the Jordanian territory where humanitarian assistance, foodstuffs and medicine were provided. It also handed out 2,500 fans and fridges and gave an estimated 275,000 – USD – of financial assistance. It needed to be clarified that there were paralytic and spinal injury cases among some Syrian wounded who required urgent treatment outside Syria and some were sent to Germany for treatment ( Al-Raya Qatari Newspaper, 2012).

RAAF Foundation, 25 October 2012, to support Syrian refugees in Jordan, RAAF Foundation cooperated in reliving campaign and launched convoys of humanitarian, medical and food assistance. These stories come from the period in early 2013 when the number of Syrian refugees in Jordan was closing in around 200,000. A foundation delegation also made a tour of the Zaatari Refugee Camp in Jordan and saw the conditions in which the refugees are living and oversaw the distribution of 20 big trucks of aid. The foundation noted that the immediate needs of refugees were estimated at 250 USD monthly for housing rental and 160 USD for food assistance (Al-Raya Qatari Newspaper, 2012).

Due to extreme weather in the Zaatari camp hosts, including subzero temperatures in winter, RAAF Foundation supplied caravans for building accomodation for residents on 23 January 2013. b) It set up caravans for sanitation facilities, mosques and schools for boys and girls, while many units have been changed to kitchens for food preparation. Through these caravans, the foundation provided mobile field hospitals, ambulances, and medical and logistics supplies, as well as furnished the caravans with bedding, blankets, hygiene kits, and other sanitation materials (Al-Raya Qatari Newspaper, 2013).

In response, on 21 April 2013, RAAF Foundation initiated a relief convoy of 18 large trucks loaded with food provisions, blankets, and infant milk. The assistance was released for displaced Syrians scattered in a number of Jordanian governorates. The foundation also undertook the obligation to treat Syrian patients and treating the wounded people due to the shelling led by Syrian regime forces (Al-Arab Qatari Newspaper, 2013).

On 22 January 2014, a total of 220 caravans were distributed by Afif Charitable Foundation for Syrian refugees at Zaatari Camp. These caravans replaced dilapidated tents that could not withstand the bitter cold and were fitted with modern safety and security features, the foundation said. They were furnished with heating devices and blankets (Al-Raya Qatari Newspaper, 2014).

As per the news published on 15 August 2015, Qatari relief teams announced that they would extend the program set to treat Syrian wounded persons in Jordan until the end of September, also the number of wounded people growing due to the Syrian crisis. The Qatar Red Crescent Society also signed agreements with a number of Jordanian hospitals and specialized medical centers to receive Syrian injured, as well as kidney patients. Seventy surgeries were included under this initiative, which helped 513 injured (Al-Sharq Qatari Newspaper, 2015).

Qatar Charity had distributed 5,000 food baskets to the Syrian refugee families in Jordan on 19 June 2016 in cooperation with some local charitable organisations. The initiative targeted refugees with essential needs to reduce the hardship experienced by refugee families during the holy month of Ramadan (Al-Arab Qatari Newspaper, 2016).

A delegation from RAAF Foundation, which includes Ninwa Al- Khawam, Deputy Director, and Karam Ali, Field Manager, visited Azraq Camp in Jordan on 20 December 2016 and measured the condition of Syrian refugees and assessed their

needs. Instead of tents, the foundation had previously provided hundreds of caravans. Delegation observed that the camp needed more resources to be able to function, particularly as it was situated in the desert, where temperatures at night during the winter drop below freezing. It was opened for refugees after tents got overcrowded in Zaatari Camp. It also comprises a number of formal schools for 15,000 students, staffed by teachers who are from Jordan, over which there are basic services like water and electricity (Al-Sharq Qatari Newspaper, 2016).

**Qatar Comprehensive Medical Center in Zaatari Camp:** On 29 January 2018, Qatar Charity opened Qatar Comprehensive Medical Center in Zaatari Camp in the presence of Jordanian officials in cooperation with a number of local charitable organizations. The centre is designed to address medical needs and complements healthcare facilities. The Health Center is among the largest health centers in the camp and offers services such as general medicine, a pharmacy and a laboratory for Syrian refugees, 40 medical and technical staff work at the centre (Al-Raya Qatari Newspaper 2018).

## Conclusion

1. Qatar's humanitarian policy regarding its activities that aim to help Syrian refugees in and out of Syria can be broken down to some stages. Stage 1 (2011–2013) — a phase of urgent humanitarian response propelled by falling humanitarian conditions, the widening displacement and refugee flows. This phase was characterized by work to ensure provision of essential requirements to populations in need within Syria and in neighbouring nations.
2. During the second stage (2014–2016), Qatar humanizes its humanitarian action via its humanitarian organizations and institutions. During this time, programs expanded in geographic scale, thematic areas, and coordination with international organizations. Support for education, health service provision, and economic and social empowerment programs were indicative of these relief activities during this phase.
3. The third stage (2017–2018) reflected the resilience of Qatar's humanitarian principle as a mechanism for the continued support and aid to Syrian refugees in poor regional dynamics, especially the consequences of the Gulf crisis and the blockade that fell on Qatar. However, Qatari humanitarian work entered a wider strategic horizon more extensive than the political contingencies surrounding it.
4. The backbone of Qatar's humanitarian policy has been Qatari humanitarian organizations and institutions, led by the Qatar Red Crescent Society; Qatar Charity; the Qatar Fund for Development; Afif Charitable Foundation; and others. Qatar managed to access significant numbers of internally displaced Syrians and refugees inside Syria and in host states via their field networks and international partnerships. They were not only covering for emergency and in-kind support but also to scaling more durable projects that sustained the fabric of the Syrian population and mitigated the effects of the fragmentation and division caused by the war. As a result, humanitarian work turned into one of the tools of regional and international presence and a title of soft power.
5. Yet, this policy met multiple challenges some of which were represented in the complexity of the security environment within Syria, the multiplicity and politicization of humanitarian corridors, the difficulty of access to some areas, not to mention logistical and financial pressures imposed by regional transformations.

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