

2. Doha Strike – International Relations

India strongly condemned an Israeli strike in Doha, calling it a violation of Qatar's sovereignty, a significant departure from its past muted responses. This interest-based reaction reflects Qatar's crucial role in India's energy security and diaspora welfare, highlighting the complex balancing act in its West Asia policy.

1. India's Unprecedented Condemnation

The Statement – On September 16, 2025, at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, India delivered an unusually strong condemnation of Israel's recent bombing in Doha, Qatar.

Core Message – The strike was termed a "violation of sovereignty" and a significant threat to "regional and global peace, stability, and security."

Significance – This sharp reaction marks a departure from India's typically muted or ambivalent positions on past Israeli military actions in other West Asian countries (like Lebanon, Syria, and Iran), prompting analysis of a potential shift in its foreign policy.

2. The Incident – Israeli Strike in Doha

Date of Attack – September 9, 2025.

Target – A house in Doha where senior Hamas leaders were reportedly meeting to discuss a US-led ceasefire proposal.

Action – The strike was carried out by the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF).

Casualties – The bombing resulted in five deaths.

Israel's Justification – Israel defended its actions by accusing Qatar of "harbouring and funding" Hamas operatives, thereby framing the strike as a legitimate counter-terrorism operation.

3. A Shift in Stance – India's Reactions Compared

India's strong condemnation of the Doha strike contrasts sharply with its previous, more cautious responses to similar incidents, indicating a policy driven by specific national interests rather than a uniform principle.

Conflict / Incident Location	India's Reaction	Key Observation
Strike in Qatar (Sept 2025)	Strong & Explicit Condemnation. Invoked "sovereignty" and "territorial integrity" under the UN Charter.	An unprecedentedly strong stance against an Israeli military action, driven by high bilateral stakes with Qatar.
Strikes in Iran (2024–25)	Ambivalent and Inconsistent. Oscillated between cautious concern and flip-flopping in multilateral forums like the SCO.	A non-committal position reflecting the complexities of balancing ties with Iran, Israel, and the US.
Operations in Lebanon (2024)	Muted Response / Tacit Approval. The Indian Army Chief even praised the effectiveness of Israeli operations against Hezbollah.	Indicated an alignment with Israel's security perspective and a prioritization of counter-terrorism rhetoric.
Strikes in Syria & Yemen	Largely Silent or Generic Appeals. Reactions were limited to general calls for dialogue and de-escalation.	These conflicts were treated as distant, with minimal direct impact on India's core interests.
Conflict in Gaza	Conspicuous Silence. India has avoided commenting on the high number of civilian casualties (65,000+ killed).	This silence has strained diplomatic ties with several Arab nations and impacted India's image in the region.

4. Strategic Drivers Behind India's Strong Stance on the Doha Strike

India's policy was not an abstract shift but a calculated diplomatic move rooted in tangible national interests.

The Critical Importance of Qatar –

Energy Security – Qatar is one of India's largest and most reliable suppliers of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), secured through long-term contracts essential for India's energy stability.

Indian Diaspora – Qatar hosts a massive Indian community of over 800,000 workers, who are a key source of foreign remittances. Protecting their welfare is a top priority.

Bilateral Ties – Strong personal rapport exists between Prime Minister Modi and Qatar's Emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, which facilitates high-level cooperation.

Geopolitical Signaling –

Countering the Saudi-Pakistan Pact – The statement was a timely reassurance to Gulf partners of India's solidarity, especially following the signing of a new defense pact between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.

Aligning with Gulf Concerns – Israel's extraterritorial strike alarmed all Gulf monarchies. By condemning it, India aligned itself with the prevailing regional sentiment, reinforcing its role as a trusted partner.

5. Broader Regional Implications

The Doha strike has sent shockwaves through the region, accelerating geopolitical shifts.

For Gulf Countries – The attack has amplified fears of being caught in the crossfire, leading to urgent discussions within the GCC, Arab League, and OIC about establishing a joint regional defense mechanism.

For Israel – It demonstrates a prioritization of immediate military objectives over long-term diplomatic goals, potentially jeopardizing normalization efforts like the Abraham Accords.

For the US – The incident has further eroded its credibility as the primary security guarantor in the Gulf, creating a strategic vacuum and pushing regional states to seek alternative security partners.

6. Implications for India's West Asia Policy

New Delhi must now navigate a more complex and volatile regional landscape.

Challenges –

The Gaza Dilemma – India's continued silence on the high casualty count in Gaza is creating a perception of bias towards Israel and straining relations with the Arab world.

Maintaining Neutrality – India must work harder to maintain its carefully cultivated image as a neutral actor with ties to all sides.

Opportunities –

Reinforcing Trust – This is an opportunity to strengthen trust and strategic dialogue with key Gulf partners (Qatar, UAE, Saudi Arabia) on energy and security.

Championing Sovereignty – By consistently supporting the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, India can bolster its credentials as a responsible global power.

Source – <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/why-did-india-condemn-israels-doha-strike-explained/article70065386.ece>