

Egypt to ban entry to Qataris over coronavirus

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Egypt's government said Wednesday it will ban Qatari nationals from entry over fears of coronavirus after the oil-rich Gulf state took similar measures against people coming from Egypt.

"A ban is to be imposed on Qatari citizens arriving through transit points, including those carrying a valid residency in Egypt," a statement by Egypt's cabinet said.

Doha on Sunday imposed a temporary ban on visitors coming from Egypt, after France said that several people returning from the country had been diagnosed with the new coronavirus.

Egypt's decision, to be enforced starting March 6 until further notice, serves "the reciprocity principle" following Qatar's move, the cabinet statement said.

Qatar is home to a large Egyptian diaspora—around 300,000, from a [total population](#) of 2.75 million.

On Tuesday, Qatar's [health ministry](#) said there were eight coronavirus cases in the country.

A day earlier, Egypt said it had detected a second case of the virus, shortly after the first person infected, a Chinese national, recovered.

The coronavirus originated in China last year and has so far killed over 3,200 people worldwide and infected over 94,000.

For years, Qatari authorities have sought skilled Egyptian migrants to staff a range of sectors, from oil and gas to teaching and the health system.

There have been no direct flights between the two nations since June 2017, after Egypt and several other Arab countries cut ties with Qatar, accusing Doha of supporting "terrorism" and being too close to Iran.

Tensions between Egypt and Qatar have been high since the 2013

military ouster of Islamist president Mohamed Morsi, whom Qatar supported.

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