

Rwandan President Paul Kagame on Sunday, July 12, 2026, sent a message of condolence to the State of Qatar following the death of former Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani at 74, the architect of his country's spectacular transformation and a pioneer of an unprecedented abdication in the Gulf.

"My deepest condolences to my brother, His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, his family and the people of Qatar on the passing of His Highness the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani." President Kagame posted a condolence message X.

The Rwandan Head of State stated that "His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani will be remembered as a visionary leader who transformed Qatar into the remarkable nation it is today. His legacy of service to his people and commitment to friendship and cooperation among nations will endure for generations."

"At this difficult time, the people of Rwanda and I stand with His Highness Sheikh @TamimBinHamad and our Qatari brothers and sisters," he added.

The Qatar inherited by the current Emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, had already been profoundly reshaped by his father. His passing marks the end of an era for a state that, in less than two decades, he elevated from a small desert principality to a global diplomatic and energy power.

The former ruler, who deposed his father, Sheikh Khalifa, in a bloodless palace coup in 1995, inherited a small, marginalized emirate with nearly empty coffers and turned it into a major player on the regional and international stage.

During his reign from 1995 to 2013, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani transformed the country into one of the world's leading exporters of liquefied natural gas (LNG), expanding production and export infrastructure and laying the foundations for Qatar's immense sovereign wealth and growing influence in global energy markets.

His leadership also saw the launch of Al Jazeera, the successful bid to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup, and major infrastructure investments that turned Doha into a global hub for business and transportation.

Beyond economic reforms, Sheikh Hamad pursued an independent foreign policy that positioned Qatar as a regional mediator.

In 2013, Sheikh Hamad became one of the few Gulf leaders to abdicate voluntarily,

handing power to his son and current Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, in a move aimed at ensuring a smooth transition. This succession helped preserve the political stability of a country whose ruling family has experienced periods of internal rivalry.

Sheikh Hamad's legacy remains closely tied to Qatar's rise as a major energy exporter, global investor, and influential diplomatic actor, with the policies introduced during his reign continuing to shape the country's economic and geopolitical strategy today.

Qatar has declared four days of national mourning beginning this Monday, with activities in public administrations and institutions suspended and flags flown at half-staff.