

Actors offered money by UK casting agency to take part in 'anti-Qatar event' outside Downing Street



A UK casting agency has been offering actors money to take part in an “anti-Qatar event” outside Downing Street during a meeting between Theresa May and the ruler of the Arab country.

The Independent has seen an email sent to extras offering £20 per person to take part in the supposed protest from 11am until 12.30pm on Tuesday, just before Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani is due to arrive at No 10.

“This is NOT a film or TV production,” casting agency Extra People said in the email to their actors. “The company are

looking for a large group of people to fill space outside Downing Street during the visit of the president of Qatar (sic). This is an ANTI-Qatar event – You will not have to do or say anything, they just want to fill space. You will be finished at 12:30.”

Extra People told *The Independent* it was “contacted by an individual” to “source people” for the event, but refused to reveal the identity of the client.

At 8.15pm, shortly after media reports first began to circulate about the job offer, the agency sent another mass email to its extras saying “on reflection” it would not be involved “in such a project”.

A spokesperson said the agency decided to cancel the project having begun “to understand what the hirer was asking of our artistes and the event involved” after “receiving further information”.

“We quickly made the decision to withdraw our involvement and wish to have no association with the event,” he added.

The planned event comes amid a visit to Britain by Mr al-Thani aimed at promoting Qatar in the face of a year-long blockade by four neighbouring states – Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrain.

They accuse Qatar of funding Islamist terrorism, supporting extremists and fostering ties with Saudi’s arch-rival Iran.

Qatar in turn has accused Saudi Arabia, its biggest neighbour, of “bullying” and risking a new conflict amid the ongoing diplomatic crisis.

On Tuesday, the UAE was ordered by the United Nations’ highest court to immediately allow Qatari families affected by the dispute between the countries to reunite.

The International Court of Justice in The Hague imposed the

measure before it hears the full case filed by Qatar at a later date.

According to Qatar, which filed the suit in June, the UAE has as part of the boycott expelled thousands of Qataris, blocked transport and closed down the offices of the Doha-based Al-Jazeera news channel.

The UAE had argued the case was without merit and should be dismissed.