Markus Neubauer
Privilege Club Member
Limassol, Cyprus

Mr. Hamad Ali Al-Khater
Group Chief Executive Officer
Qatar Airways Group
Qatar Airways Tower, Airport Road
Doha, State of Qatar

6 June 2026

Re: Privilege Club tier qualification — a small matter of arithmetic

Dear Mr. Al-Khater,

I write regarding an extended exchange with your Privilege Club team concerning tier qualification following the recent regional disruption. I should say at the outset that I hold no quarrel whatsoever with Qatar Airways' decision to cancel flights through affected airspace earlier this year. With the security situation as it was, that was unambiguously the correct call, and your duty of care to crew and passengers rightly came first. Nothing in this letter disputes it.

My concern lies entirely with what has followed. Two sectors I had booked, paid for, and fully intended to fly — both marketed and operated by Qatar Airways — were cancelled by the airline and rerouted onto partner metal. Your team has now confirmed, in writing, that those cancelled sectors do not count toward the minimum Qatar Airways sector requirement for tier qualification, and that no exemption or waiver applies. I accept that this is your policy. Under ordinary circumstances I would even defend it: an airline is entitled to ask that its status holders actually fly its aircraft. These were not ordinary circumstances. The reason the metal did not move was the airline's own safety decision, not any choice of mine.

There is, however, a more immediate matter I would respectfully bring to your attention, because it speaks to the quality of the information your members are receiving. In the most recent reply, your team informed me that I am "currently required to earn an additional 40 Qpoints" to qualify for Gold. I would gently invite you to open my account, as your colleagues invited me to. It shows a balance of 321 Qpoints. Your own revised Gold threshold, under the temporary reduction, is 270. The application's own dashboard states, in plain text, "+0 Qpoints to Gold."

I am therefore not 40 Qpoints short of the requirement. I am 51 Qpoints beyond it. I have read the email several times and I confess I cannot reconstruct the calculation by which a surplus of 51 became a shortfall of 40. I raise this not to be difficult, but because if a member who has comfortably exceeded the threshold is being told in formal correspondence that he has not, one wonders how many others are receiving similarly creative figures — and acting on them.

As it happens, the arithmetic is academic, because the Qpoints were never the binding constraint; the four-sector requirement was. So I have done the only thing your policy left open to me. I have booked a fresh return journey to Tokyo, departing today, for no purpose other than to satisfy the sector count — a fortnight after returning from Tokyo the first time. I shall shortly be a contented Gold member, having flown the better part of twenty thousand kilometres for no reason beyond making a number advance in your system. I intend to enjoy the status thoroughly for the full twelve months it is valid.

In parallel, I have opened a Finnair Plus account, to which my future Oneworld flying will be directed. A programme that credits the sectors its own airline cancels holds a certain appeal that I trust you can understand.

I would be grateful if this letter were distributed internally as a formal escalation, to whichever departments own loyalty policy, member communications, and the quality of the figures your agents are quoting. I appreciate that this may take some time. On the current evidence, your contact centre's average handling time for a written query comfortably exceeds a week — which produces a small irony I cannot resist pointing out. By the time anyone reads this, the matter will have resolved itself: my currently booked Qatar Airways flights will have delivered the four sectors, and I shall already be Gold. The escalation will arrive to find its own subject obsolete. There is, I think, no neater illustration of the problem.

I wish you and your colleagues well, and I hope sincerely that the situation in the region resolves swiftly and peacefully — for reasons that matter a great deal more than loyalty tiers. I would offer only one observation. Over the coming weeks, as more members work out for themselves what "customer commitment" means in practice when a Qatar Airways sector is cancelled by Qatar Airways, this particular policy may prove harder to keep quiet than it has been. I have no doubt the airline will repair its revenue stream regardless; it has always managed to, even in years of handsome profit when the bonuses appear to flow in a single, executive direction. It will simply have to do so without me.

With genuine thanks for the one honest answer I eventually received, and with all good wishes,

Yours faithfully,

Markus Neubauer