

## **Qatar's strip-searches of women led to flight block: Australia**

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Sydney : Australia's government said Qatar's strip searches of five Australian women in Doha was one of the factors behind the former's decision to block extra flights by Qatar Airways.

Transport Minister Catherine King said on September 7 that the "invasive" gynaecological examinations carried out at Doha International Airport in 2020 influenced her decision to deny the Qatari airline's request to double its Australian flights.

Qatar authorities carried out the exams on the passengers as part of an investigation into the whereabouts of the mother of a newborn baby discovered in an airport bathroom.

Following the 2020 incident, Qatar's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al

Thani had expressed his "deepest sympathies with the women impacted by the search at the airport" and renewed the Gulf state's apology to them.

"The incident is considered a violation of Qatar's laws and values," he said at the time, adding that the officials involved had been referred to the public prosecutor.