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Intifada far off

Hani al-Masri

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<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4356306,00.html> ^[1]

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Article Author(s): Hani al-Masri

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Over the past few weeks an extensive discussion has been held regarding the possibility that the protest against the occupation in the West Bank^[2] will escalate into a full-blown intifada. Israel^[3] has contributed greatly to this discussion. The heads of the security services in Israel instructed forces to do whatever is necessary to prevent the outbreak of another intifada, which will bring an end to calm and pleasant reality of the occupation in the West Bank.

To this end, the Israeli government has transferred to the Palestinian Authority^[4] the tax revenues it had confiscated, instructed the army to avoid excessive oppression and killing and urged the Palestinian leadership to prevent the situation from deteriorating.

Israel fears another intifada, be it an armed uprising or a popular one, because it would expose its true face as a racist and conquering force. Such an intifada would unite the Palestinian people, its political forces and leadership. An uprising would shore up Arab and international support for the Palestinian cause and prompt regional and international forces to prevent further escalation.

But an intifada has yet to erupt for the following reasons:

First of all, due to the political and geographical division, the Palestinians concentrate all of their energy on internal struggles, sectoral interests and competition between the various factions. This was evident over the past few weeks when Hamas called to expand the protest while the PA urged restraint. Therefore, an end to internal Palestinian division is one of the conditions for the eruption of a popular uprising. Such an intifada may not be initiated by the key Palestinian movements, but without them it will not be continuous and will not lead to victory.

Secondly, the lack of a Palestinian strategy reduces the likelihood of an intifada. The strategy of negotiating with Israel reached a dead end years ago. The armed resistance strategy has also been suspended. The Palestinian leadership went to the UN, but it does not have a new general strategy. Hamas^[5] strategy of "tahadiya after tahadiya" (calm after calm) is not long-lasting and cannot lead to victory.

Moreover, the leadership, mainly in Ramallah, fears that an intifada may spin out of control and lead to the collapse of the Palestinian Authority. This is why it preferred the tactic of controllable popular protests.

In addition, the current socioeconomic situation, which encourages the culture of consumption, blocks elements of resistance and protest. The way of life in the West Bank and Gaza, and particularly in Ramallah, has created a gap between the leaders and the people. It has also created individuals and groups, within and outside the Authority, who are against an intifada because it would not serve their interests. They will object to an uprising or refrain from supporting it.

The fifth reason is that the Palestinian people are suffering from the repercussions of the loss of the uniting national project and the petrification of their national institutions, as well as the erosion of these institutions' legitimacy. This led to the spread of individualism, nepotism, corruption, sectionalism and to the loss of the people's faith in the institutions.

Another reason is that, seemingly, the Palestinian people will think a million times before launching an intifada, as they cannot ignore the fact that the casualties and suffering during an intifada are always greater than the achievements. If we add this insight to the corruption in the PA, we can understand why the simple and poor citizen would say: "I am not going to sacrifice myself or my sons so that the fruits of this sacrifice will be enjoyed by those who are not willing to sacrifice themselves or their sons."

An intifada will erupt only when the people will have hope, or reach a state of utter despair. Currently there is not a lot of hope, but we are not in a state of total despair either. This is why, for now, all we are seeing are seasonal and local waves of protest.

No one knows when the next intifada will break out. But, sooner or later, it will.

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