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Iran

“War supports reactionary, capitalist and fascist forces and destroys lives, hopes and nature”

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The Roja Collective is an independent feminist, anti-capitalist and internationalist collective created in France following the Jina uprising in Iran in 2022, made up of women, queer people and members of the exiled diaspora. Elias Vola asked them for their opinion on the situation in the Middle East and in particular in Iran.

What is the history of your collective, what are its political objectives and your practice of international solidarity?

We come from a variety of backgrounds: artists, activists, migrants, exiles. The global echo of the 2022 revolt — especially supported by Kurdish, Baluchi, Iranian, and Afghan women — has brought us together again, and awakened in us a deep anger against patriarchal, capitalist, and authoritarian regimes, whether religious, liberal, or colonial. We are a feminist, anti-capitalist and internationalist collective.

We believe that all forms of oppression are interconnected: the repression of women, colonized peoples, workers and migrants is part of a global order of domination and exploitation. That is why we actively participate in intertwined struggles: for freedom in Iran, against police violence, alongside radical popular demands in France, against Zionist colonialism in Palestine, for the rights of migrants and against the rise of fascism in Europe.

Our mode of action is based on the creation of self-organized spaces — such as solidarity canteens and cultural meetings — to weave internationalist social ties, open spaces for radical discussion and connect struggles.

We collaborate with other collectives in the diaspora — feminists, Kurds, Afghans, Palestinians and so on — and intervene both in the street and in spaces of reflection through committed texts, actions of memory of popular resistance, and militant artistic practices. We are inspired by popular education, radical care, and stories of the struggles of oppressed peoples.

Since its creation, Roja has organized several solidarity canteens for Palestine, Afghanistan, Afghan migrants, Kurdistan, and in solidarity with political prisoners in Iran; participated in demonstrations against the pension reform in France, for Palestine, for May 1st, Pride, March 8th and in street actions, rallies and demonstrations against war, against the death penalty, and on the occasion of the anniversary of the Jin, Jiyan, Azadî (Woman, Life, Freedom) uprising.

How do you analyse the 12-day Israeli military aggression and how did you position yourself?

The proxy war had been going on almost since the establishment of the Islamic Republic in Iran after the revolution in 1979. In 2024, direct confrontations also occurred between the two states. Taking into account the global geopolitical situation and the nature of the two regimes, this escalation and a more intense, prolonged confrontation with more dramatic consequences for civilians, was foreseeable. This threat is still present.

We strongly condemn this military aggression by Israel. These attacks have been carried out with the aim of consolidating geopolitical and economic interests, without any regard for the lives and rights of citizens. They are in line with the racist and militaristic policy of the Israeli government. However, we will not allow this condemnation to be instrumentalized for the benefit of the Islamic Republic of Iran, a regime that systematically represses large sections of society, including women, LGBTQIA+ people, political opponents, minoritized social groups (Baluch, Kurds,

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Afghan immigrants and so on) and minoritized confessional/non-confessional groups (Baha'is, Christians, Jews, Sunnis, Zoroastrians and so on). The regime is also implementing a confused, ineffective and confrontational strategy with regard to the Palestinian issue.

Our anti-war position has not changed: war does not allow the peoples of the region to advance towards progressive paths in order to lay the foundations of societies where tolerance, individual freedoms and intercultural collaboration are established. Experience shows that war supports reactionary, capitalist and fascist forces and destroys lives, hopes and nature. Those who suffer systemic, ethnic or religious oppression can testify to this more than anyone else.

From a military point of view, the Islamic Republic of Iran appears more vulnerable to the probable coming military aggression. Since October 7, 2023, chaos has been growing in the region thanks to the impunity that Israel enjoys through the imperialist powers. This aggression has partly diverted attention from the genocidal situation in Palestine.

The United States and Europe supported Israel, to “do the dirty work,” as Merz put it, to the limit of their interests. Thus, on the eighth day of this conflict, the heads of French, German and British diplomacy proposed “a full offer of negotiations.” In these “negotiations,” the peoples are absent according to a logic centred on maintaining the hegemony of the dominant powers.

How do you see the prospects for popular resistance in the region and in Iran?

In Iran, popular resistance is encountering more difficulties because the regime is applying more of its repressive fascist policy to the population: mass arrests of “collaborators” and “spies,” up to the arrests of Internet users, rather young, who expressed anti-regime sentiments. The situation of prisoners has also worsened. The air strike on Evin prison on 23 June caused the death of several detainees and the displacement of prisoners, who have been monitored since then in degraded conditions. In 2024, Iran recorded a record number of executions: at least 975 people, according to NGOs such as Iran Human Rights and Together Against the Death Penalty. According to official Iranian sources, at least 6 people accused of cooperating with the Zionist regime were executed immediately after the ceasefire.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, which still displays an anti-Zionist posture in “defence of the oppressed,” has taken advantage of this critical situation to assert itself and has tried to divert public opinion from economic crises, internal repression and its ineffectiveness by reinforcing a pro-Iranian and pro-Persian xenophobic nationalism. For example, among those arrested were Afghans who, as immigrants perceived as a threat to Iran's security, became scapegoats. They are presented as offenders who put pressure on social services, housing and employment.

What are the priority tasks to strengthen international solidarity with the peoples of Iran and the region?

We believe that solidarity is not only built through statements or slogans. It must be concrete and manifest itself in action: through real alliances, collective actions, the sharing of resources and knowledge. In our view, there are several urgent tasks that need to be done. First of all, to decolonize views and practices, particularly in the Western left. Without listening to the voices of the Global South, diasporas and exiles, no real solidarity is possible.

Second, to support self-organized networks on the ground, whether in Iran, Palestine, camps, cities, or prisons — with financial, logistical, and media resources.

Finally, to create bridges between the struggles between exiles and local people; between feminists and between

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diasporic collectives and collectives rooted in the territories.

It is also necessary to relentlessly denounce the imperialist and neocolonial policies of Western states, while resisting the authoritarian recuperations carried out by so-called “anti-Western” states, and of course to nurture our collective strength through culture, memory, the transmission of experiences and liberating joys.

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*Translated by **International Viewpoint** from [l'Anticapitaliste](#).*

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