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Syria

# The current stage of the revolution

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**The relative evolution of the official discourse of the Iranian Government, the inflection of the discourse of Hezbollah and their call for dialogue between the Syrian Government and the opposition with a view to reforms, as well as the diplomatic movements, from Turkey to Qatar, passing by Russia or the Arab League with the latter's Syria initiative, raise many questions about what is happening in Syria.**

Doha was also the scene of several meetings of the Syrian opposition under Qatari patronage, following the visit by the Emir of the Qatar to Iran, aimed at bringing together the different components of the opposition in a single framework, National Council or other, to speak on behalf of the opposition as a whole.

## What is going on?

On the ground the peaceful popular uprising, after six months and despite the enormous sacrifices made in the confrontation with the bloodthirsty dictatorial regime, has not yet brought the latter down. The regime still retains enormous potential for violence and murder. Yet this courageous uprising is continuing and will not stop despite all the means of repression of the ruling clique. It is a permanent revolutionary situation, in the sense that the popular layers can no longer accept being governed as in the past, and that those in power can no longer govern as before, with the middle layers oscillating between these two poles even if they begin to join the first.

The regime has not fallen, not yet, but it is very much weaker, has lost its internal legitimacy and has faced international condemnation for its savage methods. It has not been able - and will not be able - to crush this permanent popular uprising. The reactions of the imperialist countries, the United Nations and other international institutions and regional forces, have never been about overthrowing the regime militarily, they want to do let the situation run while they find an alternative: their critical reactions stem from their difficulty in continuing to remain silent on the massacres of civilians perpetrated by the regime for many months. But in recent weeks, these countries have again gone almost silent.

It should be noted that the so-called international community (the imperialist forces) and regional forces have given and still give the regime a stay of execution which continues to allow it to extinguish the uprising, at the cost of a sea of blood and the suffering of the masses. The Iranian and Russian Governments and their allies have developed a discourse around respecting the right of the people to freedom, but they insist on the need for a dialogue between the regime and the opposition, with these two regimes in the position of mediators in this dialogue. Some currents in the opposition are proposed to work with the latter on this basis. The Qatari efforts will go in the same direction.

It seems clear that the Iranian-Russo-Qatari consensus aims to lead the opposition (and to a lesser extent to reassure the regime which rejects even the most formal concession) into a dialogue to get out of the impasse in which the ruling oligarchy finds itself, to prevent the collapse of the regime, and save the bases of the latter by accepting a few formal changes, including the participation of the opposition in the government.

Meanwhile, the opposition is experiencing a turmoil which led to a redefinition of alliances and multiple proposals for ways out of the crisis. This is understandable, after a long absence of political activity because of the dictatorship, but a mood has invaded its political discourse to the effect that an alliance speaking with one voice (National Council, Transitional Council or otherwise) would be a prerequisite for victory (sic)! The failure of the plethora of councils

appointed has resulted in a certain disappointment in the opposition and revolutionary milieus on the ground. However, that the (reunited) opposition must speak with one voice is primarily a regional and international demand (especially from Turkey and Western countries), but is in no way a condition for the uprising to progress or triumph. It seems also, in the light of the failures in the past, that the realization of an alliance of all political forces is not necessarily possible or necessary.

What would be eminently more useful is a coalition of the actual forces of the revolution on the basis of common principles. It is more important to unify efforts in common struggles on the ground to overthrow the dictatorship than to build new political alliances in countless more television and media oriented congresses and other meetings. The unity of all in a formation which claims to be the sole and legitimate representative of the Syrian people (like the PLO) is neither possible nor necessary. The important thing is knowing who? why? And especially: how? The opposition includes different voices, some calling for dialogue with the regime (albeit with conditions), others in a transitional phase in relation the regime and finally others calling for the downfall of the regime. Also, will this be driven by the Syrian people alone (peacefully or by force of arms)? By a foreign military intervention? Or by a revolutionary strategy for the masses to bring down the regime and build their democratic power? It is the latter that the revolution needs and not who proposes or constitutes such and such a national council.

Thus, the attempts of local coordination (groups that organize struggles) and revolutionaries on the ground in relation to the opposition come from the above mentioned absence of a clear strategy to overcome the dictatorship and the illusions of some that the traditional [liberal] opposition forces can propose one. Yet, after six months of spontaneous uprising, the revolutionaries have understood that this failure will not be satisfied by the forces of the traditional opposition who focus on a non-vital issue, namely that of unification at all costs and how to share power.

In any case, while the regime brutally carries out all kinds of killings and torture against the masses in revolt, while the uprising has still not switched the relationship of forces in favour of the latter, any dialogue with this bloodthirsty ruling clique would be only submission, surrender and a betrayal of the revolution and the sacrifices made by our people.

We call for the unification of the left involved in the revolution (it is still divided into small groups) in a united formation to enable it to have more influence and to be more effective in the current revolutionary process. This left will call for the building from now of a constituent assembly and the bases of a revolutionary popular power from below, through the building of councils or coordinations of workers, peasants, neighbourhoods, soldiers, and so on, to lead the struggle and the daily life of regions, and the accumulation of strikes and forms of civil disobedience up to the mass general strike. It will also call for the formation of a revolutionary people's government, which is the expression of wide popular layers, emanating from these councils and coordinations, to bring down the dictatorial regime and lead the revolutionary process towards its objectives