

## Silence impossible on Syrian atrocities

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Supporters of the Syrian regime insist that Rami Makhlouf's interview with the New York Times contained an irrefutable threat. Commenting on the uprisings in Syria, Mr Makhlouf, president Bashar al Assad's first cousin and the owner of Syriatel said this: "Without stability here, stability in Israel would be impossible."

In his daily column for the pan-Arab Al Hayat daily, Daoud al Sharyan reflected on this comment: "This wasn't a cry for help; he was threatening that [the Israeli] state would pay a high price in case the West opts to support the protesters in Syria as it did with the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt."

Champions of the regime suggest that Syria is capable of threatening without resorting to war. The recent incidents in the Golan confirm this hypothesis. Damascus is also capable of sparking fire at the Lebanese borders at its convenience.

Mr Makhlouf's opinions backfired on the image of Damascus, by revealing that al Assad's regime has not learnt from the experiences of fallen Arab regimes, and doesn't realise that the world has changed.

It is impossible for the world of politics today to remain silent about the atrocities taking place in Syria against Syrian citizens.

"Leave me alone or I will raise hell." That was the Syrian regime's winning card for decades, but it looks as if it has finally lost its power of persuasion.

Mubarak speech will try to win forgiveness

Egyptians are known for their kindness and generosity of spirit. They are a people who transcend vengeance and acts of violence. For this reason, their revolution was peaceful from start to end, noted the London-based Asharq Al Awsat daily in its editorial.

The judicial proceedings involving the symbols of corruption under the former regime were also remarkably civil and independent. "The deposed president Hosni Mubarak is currently wagering on that very kindness and generosity as he prepares an emotionally-charged speech to the Egyptians asking for forgiveness and expressing remorse for the actions of his government with a promise of returning all the funds he stole from the people to the state treasury."

His wife Susan Mubarak had already rehearsed the same scenario, on a much smaller scale, when she handed over millions in assets in exchange for bail.

The new government in Egypt is under massive pressure not to press ahead with prosecuting the former president and his wife.

"We don't know if the deposed president's address to the people will guarantee him the seal of forgiveness, which would eventually save him from prosecution for the crimes of murder and starvation he and his regime committed against the Egyptian people."

Emotional blackmail must not derail justice. An apology and the return of stolen funds should not acquit the criminal or save him from punishment.

The Palestinian dream takes a step forward

The Palestinian cabinet's decision to postpone local elections until October marks a realistic translation of the recent reconciliation in Cairo between Fateh and Hamas, observed the Emirati Al Bayan daily in its editorial.

The purpose of the delay is to guarantee that local elections could take place simultaneously in Gaza and the West Bank following Cairo's declaration that the once warring parties have agreed on all issues.

"The Arab world in its entirety is wishing that the newly united Palestinian camps will move ahead, especially now that the regional and international circumstances are changing, while the Palestinian Authority gears up to wage a battle to exact international recognition for an independent Palestinian state on the lines of 1967, with East Jerusalem for a capital. Such recognition would give the PA the legal capacity to prosecute Israel as an occupier."

In case the international community recognises Palestine, it would have the legal standing to negotiate with Israel as a member of the UN under occupation, not as a defeated nation that acquiesces to any conditions.

The question here is whether the US and partners will allow this to happen. Reports reveal that President Barack Obama, in his address to the Arab world, will declare his support for an Israeli withdrawal to 1967 lines, but will object to the establishing of an independent Palestinian state without negotiations first.

'Bin Ladenism' is not - and will not be - over

"There is great delusion in thinking that extremism will someday vanish from the world, or disappear with the demise of a party, a movement or a person," opined Michel Kilo, a columnist with the Sharjah-based Al Khaleej newspaper.

Osama bin Laden will not be the last extremist.

The trademark style of extremism he promoted may decline, but if so it will give way to other forms of extremism upheld by neo-extremists, within or outside the al Qa'eda framework, the columnist said.

"Bin Ladenism was an irrational and violent response to an oppressive, corrupt, violent and irrational world - a self-indulgent West and an impotent East unable to react in any effective manner.

"Bin Ladenism was favoured by those who wanted to operate outside - and against - these two setups.

"The Muslim world came out of bin Ladenism more torn and lost than it was before &hellip; but bin Laden's demise does not mean that what he stood for will be erased from the memory of many who saw in him a flicker of justice, one that soon went astray."

\* Digest compiled by Racha Makarem

rmakarem@thenational.ae

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