

## **The Intifada of a Unique Nature**

**By Ali Asad Rizvi\***

The recent Intifada began after a stream of Zionists stormed the Shaykh Jarrah neighborhood in East Jerusalem on an anticipated Supreme Court of Israel's decision to potentially displace six Palestinian families. An invasion of Zionist settlers into the Palestinian homes during the Holy Nights of Ramadhan and later, the Israeli forces storming Al-Aqsa Mosque triggered a massive public uprising "Intifada" against the Zionist Regime. Protests hit the West Bank and Gaza, while anger towards the occupied forces intensified. Soon afterwards, the Israeli Defense Forces otherwise known as Israeli Occupation Forces stormed the Palestinian cities and a war was waged against Gaza-the heart of active military resistance against Israel.

But this time around, the Intifada and Resistance were unique in many ways. This meant a large-scale coordinated movement against Israel from within the occupied territories and abroad. Multiple factions of the Palestinian diaspora, within the occupied land, who otherwise differ on political issues were seen being absorbed by an organic Palestinian opinion of reclaiming their land. Whether it be militaristic approach – the rationale for Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, or a non-militaristic approach from Al-Fatah and Palestinian Authorities were up-scaled by the blatant violation of International Law by Israeli military. Hamas' military wing Al-Qassam Brigade and Palestinian Islamic Jihad announced their gratitude for the unequivocal support of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the departments of military, intelligence, logistics, and finances. The unveiling of advanced missile technology and missiles named after Late Iranian General Qasem Soleimani-often termed as the "Backbone of Resistance in West Asia" particularly in Palestine was rather felt with disgust by the Israeli military and officials. Israel was struck with surprise when multitudes of new missiles which were unveiled in phases during the recent 11-day war. The introduction of suicide drones and penetrable iron-dome missiles shocked the Israeli Establishment. Following these developments, the narrative within Israel seemed to shift towards pursuing a ceasefire. The Israeli public especially the anti-Zionist element within the population protested against Israeli aggression. On the other hand, media sources closer to Israeli military establishment tried to hide Israeli embarrassment by calling the move against Palestinians simply driven by the right-wing Likud-led government. The Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu who has been facing corruption charges seemed to utilize the war-mongering strategy to his benefit but failed once again to unite the Israeli public on a single front. This is an extension of the political turmoil within the self-proclaimed state where the previous four elections in less than a two years have not resulted in the formation of a stable government.

Internationally, conscious people across the globe flocked to the streets in the Muslim as well as the Western world. People in the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, France, and South Africa, while populations in Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Turkey, Lebanon and Yemen filled the streets. In the Western world, this included marches, protests, sit-ins at monuments and places of national importance. The US President, Joe Biden was confronted in the Muslim and Arab capitals. Dearborn, Michigan, where tens of thousands expanding across miles called out the President and outrightly defended the use of weaponry by the Palestinians. Similarly, tens of thousands of people demonstrated on the streets of London, UK, and outside numerous Israeli companies calling for an end to the British support to Israel. Meanwhile, Austria's blatant support of Israel meant replacing Israel's flag with the Palestinian flag, and physical confrontations with banned terrorist organizations such as Jewish Defense League in Toronto, Canada. Demonstrations in Turkey were aimed at unveiling the hypocrisy of Erdogan's

government of backstabbing Palestinian struggle by allowing an functional Israeli embassy in Ankara and having diplomatic and trade relations worth more than 4 billion US dollars annually. Anti-Zionist Christians and Jews joined the protests in great numbers and expressed their disgust towards Israeli atrocities. Overall, the use of unapologetic verbiage and resistance chants for a complete reinstatement of Palestine was never so prevalent in previous protests amidst Intifadas. The willingness to challenge the American Empire and hegemony within the Middle East aka West Asia was the crux of most protests within North America.

The economic blow to the Israeli regime is reported to be US\$3.7 billion with severe infrastructural blows to the cities of Ashkelon, Haifa, and Tel Aviv as well as Ben Gurion and Ramon Airports, Oil Pipelines and Gas Platforms. An increase in missile range, naval submarine bombs and suicide drones exposed an Israeli intelligence failure amidst blockade while unrest within cities of Israel forced local administration, imposition of curfews and unsuccessful assassination attempts of the Palestinian leadership. Moreover, social media awareness and songs by pro-Palestinians, and strike back against unilateral excessive censorship platforms like Facebook set a decline to its ratings and revenue. All-in-all, there has been a greater push from the activists on the Palestinian side with a focus on the linguistics element of preventing numbing of the general public by not normalizing the exchange of missiles as a conflict. The narrative of a safe Israel has then become a myth with the ongoing process of hundreds of thousands of Jews who have left or are fleeing the Zionist state, some out of fear of Palestinians regaining the land while others have questioned and negated the mere idea of a racist state for the Jews.

Meanwhile, the storming of the Al-Aqsa Mosque was resisted while Palestinian residents of the Shaykh Jarrah neighborhood remained steadfast. Throughout this, the Palestinian cause became the center of all conversations across the globe. Moreover, the spirit of Resistance was further restored at all levels including border clashes in Jordan, missile strikes from Palestinian groups in Lebanon, a revival of militaristic struggle in the West Bank by the previously dismantled and inactive military groups. Furthermore, Resistance organizations such as Hezbollah (Lebanon), Al-Nujaba, Katain Hezbollah and Ashab Ahlul Haq (Iraq), Ansarullah (Yemen) expressed readiness to intervene in the battle.

\*Ali Asad Rizvi is a visiting fellow with Islamabad Policy Institute.