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Middle East-North Africa: Peoples face counter-revolution and imperialism

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This is a look back at the year 2018, which began with a revolt in Iran, against the high cost of living, social inequalities, corruption and the authoritarianism of the regime of the Mullahs and with demonstrations bloodily repressed, like those currently taking place in Sudan. [1] The insurrectional process that opened in the Middle East-North Africa region in the winter of 2010-2011 is far from complete, although it is clear, and the year 2018 has unfortunately again illustrated it, that the counter-revolutionary forces, supported by their imperialist allies, are still on the offensive.

The year 2018 confirmed that the uprising that began at the end of 2010 was anything but an epiphenomenon. Since then, all the structures of regional domination have not ceased to waver, and all the indications are that there will be no turning back. A breach has been opened, in which the peoples of the region have been successively engulfed. And despite the violence of the repression, they refuse to resign themselves.

From Morocco to Iraq, from Rojava to Sudan, from Palestine to Tunisia, the revolt is growing, for the simple reason that the conditions that precipitated the uprising of the winter of 2010-2011 have not changed, except in the sense of simply getting worse.

"I am going to immolate myself by fire"

"You forget the unemployed and you hire those who have resources and money. There are people who have nothing. There are marginalized and impoverished regions. [...] I will demonstrate alone. I am going to immolate myself by fire. I will immolate myself. If someone finds a job thanks to me, then it will not be for nothing " In a video recorded on December 24, Tunisian journalist Abdel Razzaq Zorgui (32 years old) announced his intention to kill himself, the only way in his opinion to be heard in the face of a government offering no prospect to youth and repressing and/or delegitimizing any challenge. The young journalist then set himself on fire, a symbol in the country from which the uprising of 2010-2011 began, following the self-immolation of a young street vendor who had his goods and tools confiscated by the police of the dictator Ben Ali. A symbol of the fact that, eight years later, nothing or almost nothing has changed.

The same observation could be made in most countries of the region, starting with Egypt, another cradle of the regional uprising, in which the dictator Sissi brutally represses all opposition, and where social inequalities continue to grow as the government applies the IMF's economic precepts.

In Syria, the "victory" of Bashar al-Assad is hardly an illusion: the crushing of the Syrian revolt took place at the cost of hundreds of thousands of dead and millions of refugees and displaced persons. One of the dignified representatives of the regime, the head of the intelligence services of the Air Force, Jamil al-Hassan, said this summer: "A Syria with 10 million reliable people, obedient to its leaders, is better than a Syria with 30 million vandals. [...] After eight years, Syria will not accept the presence of cancerous cells, they will be completely eradicated". In other words, in the long run, and even in the medium term, nothing is settled.

Rebuilding international solidarity

It is therefore enough to take a step back to realize that those who want to believe in a possible return to stability by brute force are severely mistaken, and that they show a guilty and criminal contempt towards the peoples of the region. Foreign interference, the reinforcement of authoritarianism and the Cold War climate between Iran and Saudi Arabia are indeed symptoms of a deepening of the regional crisis opened by the uprisings of the winter of 2010-2011.

In Turkey, the authoritarian nationalism of Erdogan fails to mask the strong social contradictions that are undermining the regime, whose most recent example is the strike of construction workers on the site of the third Istanbul airport and the solidarity they benefited from in the face of the fierce repression of the regime. Moreover, the Kurdish forces of Rojava continue to be destabilizing for the plans of Erdogan and his allies, even though the announced withdrawal of US forces suggests the worst for the Kurds, tossed about at the whim of imperialism.

In Iraq, a country devastated by the 2003 invasion, the ensuing civil war and the neglect of corrupt and religion-based authorities, large-scale mobilizations have developed, such as in Basra, where mass demonstrations against poverty and the distribution of wealth have escalated into riots this year, including the burning of the consulate of Iran, still considered to be the "master of the game" in Iraq.

In Yemen, the bloody war waged by the Saudi-led coalition, which has led to an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe, is a tragic example of the inability of the regional powers to regain control of a country, a situation that has eluded them, de facto, since 2010-2011.

The picture is bleak, but that should not undermine, but rather reconfirm, our internationalist determination.

In Syria as elsewhere, the factors that led to the uprisings of 2010-2011 are still present and, although we should not fall into the mechanistic view that the same causes always lead to the same effects, there is no doubt that the peoples of the region have not said their last word.

And one thing is certain: international solidarity, even if it is not necessarily fashionable, including on the left, is one of the urgencies of the day, all the more so in an imperialist country like France, whose responsibilities are immense, among other things and in particular because of its role as weapons supplier for all the butchers in the region,

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[1] See "[Overthrow the regime and prepare the future](#)"