

“IRAN, THE GULF STATES AND THE PALESTINIAN”
SUMMARY OF A
‘MIDDLE EAST INSTITUTE’ (MEI) WEBINAR



19 OCTOBER 2022



OVERVIEW

The Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) is currently being confronted with serious domestic issues and major protests. The deep public anger is not just about the regime’s domestic policies but also resentment against its regional agenda, such as its interventions in the Arab world.

Since 1979, the Islamists in Tehran have invested heavily in a domestically unpopular policy of supporting Palestinian causes. However, the success of these policies has been both contentious and sensitive.

In light of Ayatollah Khamenei’s uncompromising persistence that “Armed resistance is the only path forward for all Palestinians’ a MEI webinar moderated by Alex Vatanka(*Director, Iran Program at MEI*), along with a panel of Arab academics looked at the nature of Iranian support provided to the Palestinians especially with regards to positions adopted by a number of Gulf States following the Abraham Accords and examined whether Iran and its ‘Axis of Resistance’ was in fact an enabler or a spoiler of the Palestinian cause.

KEY COMMENTS FROM THE PANELLISTS

1. **ZAKIA AQRA** (*Ph.D. Candidate & Research Associate, Centre for Mediterranean, Middle East and Islamic Studies*)
 - On the subject of Palestinian attitudes towards Iranian protesters at this time, it was important to note that the turmoil in Iran has taken place at a time when there has been a period of violence within the Palestinian territories as well.
 - Nonetheless, there have been expressions of sympathy and solidarity for the protesters given that such points of reference do in a way bring Middle East societies closer together.

2. **IBRAHIM FRAIHAT** (*Dean & Associate Professor in International Conflict Resolution, Doha Institute for Graduate Studies; Non-Resident Fellow, Deakin University’s Middle East Studies Forum*)

- At a time when the streets of Iran are going through a period of unprecedented protests, it is important to take note of the following two factors in appreciating Palestinian reactions:
 - 1. The Middle East region is today highly polarizes especially over issues such as the Arab Spring and the course for change and freedom. – something in which the IRI has played a critical, most particularly in Syria.
 - 2. As such, what is going on in Iran is itself a reflection of these polarizations- i.e., those who support the cause for change and evolution along with those who support the IRI and the status quo and allege that what is happening in the streets of Iran is nothing more than a US inspired conspiracy.
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3. **MOHAMMAD BAHAROON** (*Director General, Dubai Public Policy Research Center*)

- The current protests in Iran are seen as something with that is anti-religion.
- As such, they provoke mixed emotions in the Arab streets and do not make leader headlines in Arab newspapers and media.
- However, attached to what is happening an after taste of the Arab Spring given that people have not forgotten what happened in the aftermath of the Arab Spring.
- Based on such reflections, there is concern and condemnation for any act of killing which people can identify with though action against matters such matters as Hejab which is accepted in more conservative Arab communities is not someth

