

The Future of the Axis of Resistance Amid the Repercussions of Operation al-Aqsa Flood

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Iran and the rest of the Axis of Resistance were caught off guard by the 7/10/2023 attack. Although they welcomed and praised it, the attack presented them with complex challenges and delicate obligations—perhaps the most perilous since the axis first took shape. This explains their approach of “deliberate participation,” carefully calibrating the scale and timing of their involvement in the battle. Nevertheless, they ultimately took a clear stance, adopting a supportive role for the Palestinian resistance at varying levels.

First: Determinants of the Position

Several key factors shaped the Axis of Resistance’s stance on Operation al-Aqsa Flood, leading it to limit its role to political support rather than full-scale engagement in the confrontation:

1. The element of surprise, the lack of prior coordination for the battle, and the absence of preparedness to handle its repercussions and the challenges it posed to the rest of the Axis.
2. The Axis parties’ desire to support the Palestinian resistance in sustaining the confrontation without exposing themselves to repercussions that would be difficult or impossible to withstand through full participation.
3. The internal political dynamics and economic conditions of the Axis of Resistance parties have played a crucial role in shaping their involvement in the confrontation. In Iran, the ongoing economic crisis and tensions between reformist and conservative factions have influenced decision-making. In Lebanon, most opposition parties opposed Hizbullah’s participation and pressured it to withdraw. Similarly, the Iraqi government and certain political factions urged resistance groups to halt their involvement, fearing strong Israeli and US reactions. Meanwhile, in Yemen, widespread popular and social support has encouraged Ansar Allah (Houthis) to escalate its participation in the conflict.



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4. Iran was eager for a ceasefire as soon as possible to prevent a broader and more direct regional confrontation with Israel and the US, particularly in light of the strong US support for Israel. The US also threatened to respond to any direct Iranian involvement in the confrontation, which played a significant role in shaping Iran's calculations.
5. The weak Arab and Islamic position, which was limited to condemning the Israeli aggression and refusing to go beyond it to take effective practical positions.

Second: The Interaction of Axis Parties with the Operation

The parties of the Axis of Resistance responded to Operation Al-Aqsa Flood in the following manner:

1. Iran relied on its allies for field support in Gaza Strip (GS), while focusing on providing political, media and diplomatic backing to the Palestinian resistance. Its direct role mainly involved efforts to halt the Israeli aggression. However, after Israel attacked the Iranian embassy compound in Damascus on 1/4/2024, the confrontation escalated to direct military clashes, with Iran retaliating on 14/4/2024. This led to a limited Israeli response on 19/4/2024. In retaliation for the assassination of Hamas political bureau chief Isma'il Haniyyah by Mossad agents in Tehran on 13/7/2024, Iran launched a missile attack on Israeli targets on 1/10/2024, prompting another Israeli response on 26/10/2024.
2. Hizbullah joined Operation al-Aqsa Flood on its second day, 8/10/2023, with the Lebanese front being the quickest to engage in the confrontation. Hizbullah's involvement escalated until 23/9/2024, when Israel launched Operation Northern Arrows, altering the rules of engagement between the two sides. This led to a ground invasion of southern Lebanon on 30/9/2024, before both sides reached a ceasefire agreement on 27/11/2024, effectively ending Hizbullah's participation in Operation al-Aqsa Flood before its conclusion.
3. The Yemeni Ansar Allah movement has been involved in the battle since 19/10/2024. On 14/11/2023, it declared the beginning of a new phase targeting Israel, vowing to strike ships heading to Israel through the Red Sea until the war on GS ceased. Its participation continued through to the fifth phase, which culminated in the bombing of Tel Aviv on 16/12/2024, using a hypersonic ballistic missile of the "Palestine 2" type.

Ansar Allah's participation in the confrontation was highly effective, as it imposed a naval blockade on Israel, compelling it to find alternatives for securing its food supplies via a land bridge crossing several Arab countries. The movement continued its active involvement in the war until the ceasefire in GS on 19/1/2024.

4. The participation of Iraqi factions in supporting Operation al-Aqsa Flood began on 18/10/2023, when the "Tashkil al-Waritheen" organization claimed responsibility for targeting a military base in the Kurdistan region of northern Iraq. A few days later, the "Islamic Resistance in Iraq" emerged as an umbrella organization for the involvement of Iraqi factions in the battle.

These factions focused their attacks on US bases in Iraq and Syria, as well as Israeli targets. One of the most prominent operations occurred on 28/1/2024, when a drone attack on Tower 22, a US military site in northern Jordan, killed three soldiers and wounded at least 34.

However, due to rising tensions in Iraq from US and Israeli threats, the Iraqi factions halted their participation. The last statement claiming responsibility for an attack on Israeli targets was issued on 21/11/2024.

5. The Syrian front did not actively participate in Operation al-Aqsa Flood. It became evident that the Bashar al-Assad regime held a different stance on supporting the Palestinian resistance, particularly regarding the use of Syrian territory by other resistance groups to engage in the war.

Third: The Impact of Operation al-Aqsa Flood on the Axis of Resistance

The Axis of Resistance's involvement in supporting Operation al-Aqsa Flood has resulted in several key repercussions, the most notable of which are:

1. Raising the morale of the Palestinian resistance and bolstering its popular support has helped exhaust the occupation by keeping it engaged in intensified the strain on the Israeli forces and their supporting parties.
2. The support served as a practical translation and embodiment of the concept of Unity of the Arenas, shifting it from a theoretical idea to a tangible reality in practice.
3. The participation of the Support Fronts has helped reduce sectarian polarization in the region.

4. Iran's regional influence has declined due to the damage inflicted on some Axis of Resistance factions and following the fall of the Syrian regime. Furthermore, Iran's inability to fulfill its threats of retaliation for the Israeli attack on 26/10/2024, has weakened its deterrence capabilities.
5. The repercussions of participating in the war caused significant damage to Hizbullah's capabilities and status within the Lebanese political landscape. Its secretary-general, along with many military and political leaders, were assassinated, and the group faced severe security strikes. Moreover, hundreds of thousands of its supporters were displaced, and more than fifty villages in southern Lebanon were destroyed. The Iraqi resistance factions also faced severe restrictions on their activities, while vital Yemeni installations were heavily damaged by Israeli and Western strikes.

Fourth: The Future of the Axis of Resistance Amid the War's Repercussions

Several factors significantly shape the future of the Axis of Resistance, with the most important being those that have the greatest weight, influence and effectiveness at the regional level:

1. The internal political dynamics in Iran, characterized by tensions between conservatives and reformists, are influenced by the country's economic situation and the repercussions of Operation al-Aqsa Flood. Additionally, the stance of the Donald Trump administration on managing relations with Iran, particularly in terms of openness and containment, remains a key factor, especially regarding the nuclear issue.
2. The Trump administration's policies toward the Palestine issue, the extent to which it is serious and successful in carrying out its threats to displace the residents of GS and take control of it, as well as its position on implementing the "Deal of the Century" and the plan to annex large areas of the West Bank (WB) to Israeli sovereignty.
3. The developments surrounding Operation al-Aqsa Flood, the implementation of the three-phase ceasefire agreement in GS, the possibility of renewed fighting in GS, and the escalation of Israeli military actions in WB.
4. Hizbullah's ability to recover and restore its military capabilities after the war, along with developments in Lebanon's political and field situation, particularly

regarding Israel's withdrawal, as well as the evolving relationship between Hezbollah and other Lebanese parties.

5. Developments in Iraq's internal political scene, the future of Iran-Iraq relations, and their impact on the role of Iraqi resistance factions within the country.
6. Developments in Syria, particularly their impact on Hezbollah's supply routes and the Syrian government's stance on the Israeli occupation.
7. Developments in Israel's internal political situation and the stability of Benjamin Netanyahu's government.

Given the current information and indicators, it is likely that the Axis of Resistance will adapt to the challenges posed by the repercussions of Operation al-Aqsa Flood, despite the damage it has sustained. It is expected to maintain a significant role at the regional level, focusing on strengthening its presence and overcoming setbacks in the near future. This will involve leveraging the achievements of the war and restoring its damaged capabilities.

Hamas's strong field, political and media performance in its confrontation with Israel has led to an expected increase in its influence and centrality within the resistance axis. Furthermore, its success in securing a balanced and reciprocal ceasefire agreement—one that did not require concessions regarding the weapons and existence of the resistance—further solidifies its position within the axis.

It is also expected that the concept of “unity of arenas” will be evaluated both theoretically and practically, with a focus on shifting towards a model that more closely reflects the “integration of arenas,” drawing lessons learned and addressing existing shortcomings.

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