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10 years on, January revolution dreams stand still!

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Ten years have passed since the eruption of Egypt's January Revolution that inspired several change movements in the region. On this occasion, it is important to highlight the national role that was played by the young people of Tahrir Square, the children of this glorious revolution, despite all attempts to distort them.

Despite the crises and severe suffering that all those that chanted the revolution's unified slogan, i.e. "Bread, Freedom, Human Dignity", have been exposed to, we must emphasize the urgent need to complete the Egyptian revolution.

No one can forget the calls for mobilization, demonstration and marching towards the Tahrir Square on 25 January 2011, as such movements were purely popular, made by youth belonging to all sects, including the April 6 Youth Movement, the Kifaya Movement, the Muslim Brotherhood youth, as well as groups of independent youth.

Also, social networking sites, especially Facebook and Twitter, played a major role in mobilizing protesters and calling for revolting against the Hosni Mubarak regime. The most famous of those calling for the revolution were the "We Are All Khaled Said" Facebook page and the "Rassd Network", before most political forces announced their participation in demonstrations until the goals and demands of the revolution would be met.

No one can forget the revolutionary scene outside Cairo, where large crowds gathered in major squares of various governorates, such as the of the Qaed Ibrahim Square in Alexandria, the Arbaeen Square in Suez, the Orabi Square in Zagazig, the Manfaz and Omar Makram squares in Assiut, the Shouneh Square in Mahalla, and the Shohada Square in Port Said, the Thawra Square in Mansoura, and others.

Big losers

Given that the January Revolution is not yet complete, there are many losses that worsen over time; but the revolution youth themselves are considered the big losers out of this, with respect to the revolution consequences and the state that it has reached, whether before or after the military coup.

The revolutionary youth were not allowed an opportunity to form political parties that would express them and enable them to fairly compete with the popular political entities at the time; in addition to the polarization that intensified in the political and revolutionary scene, manifested in the various alliances that were formed starting from the promotion for the 19 March 2011 referendum on constitutional amendments, through the 28 Nov. 2011 – 11 Jan. 2012 parliamentary elections and the 23-24 May and 16-17 June 2012 presidential elections, up to the brutal military coup that afflicted everyone.

The post-coup period constituted the biggest nightmare for the youth of January revolution after those who rejected and resisted it became an easy target for the regime that seized power after overthrowing the first democratically elected civilian president in the history of Egypt.

Some of these young men were forced to flee abroad or disappear at home, while others were subjected to killing, arrest and enforced disappearance. However, some youth surrendered to the status quo; and even some were forced to cooperate with the security services that they had revolted against in Tahrir Square.

Have the revolutionary youth abandoned their demands?

We cannot talk about this point in detail, especially after many changes have occurred on revolutionary youth segments, starting from the moment of Hosni Mubarak's stepping down until this moment, as what happened during the ten years that followed the January revolution have been extremely painful.

However, with the advent of the anniversary of the January revolution every year, controversy flares up and seasonal accusations escalate between the various revolutionary forces about who was the cause of the revolution's loss, and who collaborated with the military regime to overthrow the first elected government, where each party claims to be the owner of the revolution.

The regime still realizes that it has not yet fully conquered and subjugated the youth. Despite the tight security grip imposed on everyone and the horrific violations that have not ended, the regime fears any youth gatherings, even if in cafes.

Two months after the July 2013 coup, the security forces launched massive campaigns against downtown cafes with the aim of subjecting them to the military authorities, as a number of them were closed on the grounds of irregularities and lack of licenses, which was denied by the coffee shop owners at the time. This repression prompted cafes to abandon their political and cultural role, as they were credited with forming the political awareness of the youth, whether before the 2011 revolution or before the 2013 military coup.

Dreams stand still

Despite the failures that the revolution suffered due to the incursion of the counter-revolution forces, chiefly the army and the police; the regional and international interventions that supported the counterrevolution to eliminate the nascent revolution; submission and surrender of some revolutionaries to the forces of tyranny as a result of the security services' suppression, including killing, arrest and torture, and the economic pressures and the ensuing unemployment, marginalization, poverty and unprecedented social repercussions on Egyptian society – however the dreams of the January Revolution have not died, but they rather stand still ten years after its outbreak.

It can be said that the spirit of January revolution is still existing in the hearts of Egyptians, where streets and squares are longing for whoever revives the hopes for change once more. In fact, this is manifested in the repeated calls for demonstrations over the past years; and despite the difficulty, danger and randomness of these calls, everyone is surprised by the turnout and response of demonstrators seeking to complete the demands of the January revolution.

A weak regime

The Egyptian regime faced the January Revolution and the demonstrations that followed demanding change, from their early moments, with brutal repression, including killings and arrests, rejecting any bid for social and political change, which exhausted the country in economic and security crises and a clear state of political weakness, which prompted pushed the Egyptian deep state, the army in particular, to resort to dictatorial regimes that hate revolutions, mainly the Emirati and Saudi regimes, which played the most prominent regional role in supporting the military coup and encouraging Sisi to oppress the revolutionaries and opponents.

This support provided by the UAE and Saudi Arabia was not free of charge. The role played by the UAE has enabled it to control many economic enterprises in Egypt. Sisi also ceded the Egyptian islands of Tiran and Sanafir to Saudi Arabia. The Sisi regime also sought to secure political support from Israel through engaging in full security coordination with Tel Aviv, and encouraging efforts by some Gulf and regional countries to normalize their relations with Israel, with the aim of obtaining support from the United States and the West and securing an external protection umbrella for the regime to prevent any internal social transformations that might lead to political change in the end.

The repressive measures adopted by the Egyptian regime against protests and demonstrations have caused many crises at home, and were a major cause of the deterioration and erosion of Egypt's regional position in favor of other countries, most notably the UAE.

Revolutions against dictatorial regimes and corruption are an inherent right of peoples, especially if the abuse of rights and dignity has reached an extent that cannot be tolerated, as it is the case in Egypt now. The idea of pursuing achievement of the January revolution demands is still strongly present in Egyptians despite the regime's repression; and moving again to complete the revolution and fulfill its objectives is inevitable, but it is only a matter of time.

The only solution to the Egyptian crises is to complete the demands of the January Revolution, even after ten years. Reviewing revolutions throughout history confirms that such challenges and difficulties were recurrent. The French Revolution, for example, inspired the whole of Europe with respect to rights and public freedoms, despite the challenges it had gone through. Also, the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 had implicated Russia in a phase of civil war, infighting and assassinations, until it later succeeded.

Despite the sufferings and challenges that Egyptian revolutionaries of all sects and ages have faced, they should not allow announcing death of the January revolution; as uprisings and revolutions may delay in achieving their goals, but they never die.