

*Former diplomat says Palestinian
operation puts Netanyahu in
dilemma*

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Tehran, October 10 (RHC)-- The military operation by the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas has placed the embattled Israeli premier Benjamin Netanyahu in a dilemma of whether to save his own political future or the illegitimate regime itself, says a former Iranian diplomat.

In an interview with the Press TV website, Abolfazl Zohrevand, a former Iranian ambassador to Afghanistan and Italy, said the Al-Aqsa Storm (also known as Al-Aqsa Flood) operation has put Netanyahu and his far-right cabinet between a rock and a hard place.

Hamas stunned the regime in Tel Aviv with a multi-pronged attack early Saturday, launching thousands of missiles into the occupied territories within a span of 20 minutes and at the same time launching a ground attack against Israeli settlements and military bases near the coastal strip.

The Israeli death toll is staggering, with some reports putting it at above 1,000, besides hundreds of others – soldiers and settlers – who are held as prisoners of war by Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

Zohrevand said the Israeli regime can opt for a very tough response to the Palestinian resistance operation but such a response might lead to an existential threat to the regime.

“Israel can’t do much to punish the Palestinians through air strikes. Such strikes usually fail to hit Hamas’s underground infrastructure and only leave high civilian casualties,” he stated.

“Netanyahu has to start a ground invasion of Gaza, like what he did recently with the Jenin camp in the occupied West Bank,” the former diplomat said, referring to the July Israeli raid into the Jenin camp. However, he hastened to add that such an operation could end in a humiliating defeat for the regime.

“If Israel decides to engage in a major operation, we should expect weeks-long clashes in the region. Israel isn’t made for long battles. Also, its military is not well prepared as the whole regime is in a state of chaos. The fact that it was caught completely off guard by the operation is a testimony to this,” Zohrevand stressed in a conversation with the Press TV website.

“On the other hand, Palestinians are prepared for such an invasion and they hold the upper hand as Gaza is their home. Palestinians are now sending a message that enough is enough. They’re highly motivated to fight the regime. So the odds for Israel’s success are not high.” He said the Israeli military action would put the existence of the regime at risk.

“This war can easily spread to the West Bank and other regions. Also, there’s a real possibility that the regime might face a major operation by Lebanon’s Hezbollah. It’s really hard for the regime to handle two fronts. I personally believe the regime won’t start such an operation,” Zohrevand said.

Hamas has already said the operation will be extended to the West Bank.

The Lebanese movement Hezbollah has also staged attacks in solidarity with Palestinians, firing artillery shells and guided missiles at Israeli positions in the occupied Shebaa farms on Sunday.

The former Iranian diplomat noted that Netanyahu might want to accept mediation efforts by Turkey or Egypt and halt its ongoing operation, but that will put his political future in real danger.

“If he decides to stop the Israeli operation, his cabinet won’t last long as it is filled with extremist elements that came to power on a promise of crushing Palestinian resistance and annexing all the Palestinian lands once and forever,” he remarked.

“For Netanyahu, it boils down to a decision whether to save the regime or save his own cabinet or save the regime. He’s in a no-win situation.”

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