

Israel benefits from ‘fragmenting Syria’: *Envoy*

International Desk

INTERVIEW

Iran's Ambassador to Lebanon, referring to the recent developments in Syria and the aggressions of the Zionist regime against this country, emphasizes that neither the United States nor the Zionist regime is welcoming a unified Syria.

Mojtaba Amani participated in a special program on Iranian national television on March 8, where he shed light on the regional developments, including those in Syria and Lebanon. The parts of the conversation that pertain to Syria are as follows:



The illustration shows Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (L) and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan competing over Syrian lands.
● JAMES FERGUSON/FINANCIAL TIMES

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There has always been a kind of institutionalized violence in Syria, even before the developments related to the Arab revolutions. This violence is now being used, unfortunately, in a way that the killing of people is akin to hunters going to the desert and wilderness just to kill their prey. This will force the victims to take arms and see this path as a better option than sitting at home and being killed.

What is currently happening in Syria? We are witnessing intense conflicts, the ongoing aggressions of the occupying Zionist regime on Syrian soil, and the rulers who have remained silent in the face of these aggressions and various issues related to the Zionist regime.

It was clear that after the fall of Bashar al-Assad and the ruling establishment in Syria, we would face such a situation. However, what Ahmed al-Sharaa established in Syria showed signs of a government that could maintain control over all regions of Syria, except for areas officially occupied by the Zionists and those under the control of American-backed forces, namely the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

But gradually, the situation has evolved in such a way that organized killings against various tribes have emerged, which is extremely dangerous and will have an impact on the region, especially in Lebanon, which borders Syria. What we see now, at the beginning of al-Jolani's or Ahmed al-Sharaa's rise to power, was an order to avoid filming any violent scenes. However, the intensity of the violence they employed was not as severe compared to what has happened in recent days, the images of which are being circulated. These images are such that they can encourage others to engage in the killings and violence that have generally been observed in Syria over the past 13 years. This violence has now escalated significantly and is very dangerous as some groups are emboldened to confront, for example, the Alawites or a segment of the

Sunnis or target the Druze. It should also be noted that all these tribes, sects, and religions — Sunnis, Christians, Druze, Alawites, and Shias — that exist in Syria are also present in Lebanon, and these concerns are being transferred to Lebanon. This is the impact we are seeing, and so far, Ahmed al-Sharaa has not been able to uphold the security he promised or stop the cycle of violence.

You mentioned something happening on the ground, which is the infiltration of the Zionist regime into Syrian territory. According to reports published, for example, in the Yedioth Ahronoth newspaper, Tel Aviv has briefed Washington and asked it to support its new military strategy in Lebanon, Syria, and Gaza, out-

lining various objectives in passing and indicating that it does not intend to withdraw from southern Syria. What is the Zionist regime seeking in Syrian territory?

This is a question that, in my opinion, still holds ambiguity. There is a principle that the Zionist regime covets all the lands of its neighboring countries and has repeatedly attacked and occupied them. Whenever it sees weakness, it tries to advance this agenda and establish its occupation and dominance. This has been done several times throughout the history of this illegitimate regime, from 1948 to the present, in Lebanon, parts of Jordan, and parts of Egypt, from which it withdrew later. It has now occupied parts of Syria and has not withdrawn, taking advantage of the opportunity to

do two important things.

First, it destroyed all of Syria's military infrastructure, and second, it occupied strategic areas and announced that it does not intend to withdraw anytime soon. This aligns with the territorial ambitions of the Zionist regime. But now, in my opinion, what the Zionist regime urgently needs is to present a victorious image. Although both the Gaza war and the war with Lebanon were concluded with agreements, there are clauses in these agreements that are against the Zionist regime. So, it has not achieved its objectives. It has used this opportunity to somewhat polish its defeated image in the face of Hezbollah in Lebanon and Gaza, to claim victory, and this is the second aspect that, in my opinion, the Israelis are pursuing.



➤ Mojtaba Amani

There are also discussions about cutting off Syria's connection with Lebanon, and in their view, this land route leads to further arming of Hezbollah. However, with the rise of a group in Syria that has not shown much favor towards Iran, Hezbollah, and Shias, this possibility does not seem to be very significant. Certainly, the Zionist regime has grand ambitions for expansion in the region, and these are parts of that plan. We are talking about Israel repairing its image. Through these moves and occupations, it is trying to repair its image from one that was defeated in the hands of Gaza and Hezbollah.

You said that we have the same Syrian tribes and sects in Lebanon as well. You also mentioned the plans, tactics, and scenarios of the occupying Zionist regime. Could these conflicts expand, and could we witness a longer war? Is there a possibility or likelihood of Syria's fragmentation given the scale of the conflicts we are seeing?

Syria has long been a country with the potential for fragmentation. Perhaps one of the reasons a secular establishment was in place during the era of Hafez al-Assad and Bashar al-Assad was to prevent the creation of more sects and religions that would separate and fragment Syria. The Zionist regime also benefits from fragmenting Syr-



➤ Syrian army forces fire a missile against fighters allegedly linked to Syria's ousted leader Bashar al-Assad on March 7, 2025.
● MOAWIA ATRASH/PICTURE ALLIANCE