

# Poor Syria

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The United Nations estimates that 60 thousand people had already died in Syria's civil war. A war in which the rebels are supported by Saudi Arabia, discreetly by the Western powers, and with growing determination by the Islamic governments and terrorist groups of Sunni orientation, including Al-Qaeda. In the name of what? "Of democracy", they tell us. But is it worth to kill 60 thousand individuals in order to overthrow a secularist dictatorship that for more than 50 years ensures political stability in Syria? And what is the probability that a true democratic government will be established in Syria?

I begin by answering the last question. As we are seeing in Libya, it is unlikely that, in the event that Bashar al-Assad is deposed, Syria will have a democracy. As in Libya, and contrary to what happened in Egypt and in Tunisia, there was no popular rebellion, but Sunni tribal or sectarian elites took advantage of the Arab Spring that was taking place in other countries in order to overthrow an Alawite government – an ethnic-religious group related to the Shiites.

Nothing indicates that Syria is ripe for democracy; the purpose of the ongoing civil war is not democracy. For Sunni Islamists, including Saudi Arabia, it is a way of extending their power to another country; it is a way of compensating for the loss of Iraq which, before the war undertaken by the United States, was governed by Sunnis, and afterwards was dominated by the Shiite majority. For the West it is a way of overthrowing a nationalist government that has always been independent from France, from Great Britain and from the United States.

When the hostilities began, most of the Western media began to demand armed intervention. France and Great Britain supported the idea, but the United States, scarred by the political (besides human) disaster of the Iraq war, proved to be less enthusiastic, and China and Russia vetoed the proposal. In order to justify intervention, the rebels denounced the massacres of civilians committed by the government against an unarmed opposition. However, when the facts were checked more carefully, it was clear that there was a civil war with armed rebels, and that the massacres were being carried out by both sides.

It was also demonstrated that Syria's authoritarian regime had a far greater support of the middle classes than expected, because it maintained the public order and protected the Christian religious minorities. This may be surprising for an Islamic regime (which by definition does not recognize the separation

between religion and the State), but it is a normal feature of a secularist Muslim regime such as the regime of the Syrian Baath Party.

The West was also startled by the resistance of the Syrian government to the attack of a powerful coalition of domestic and foreign forces in which it also took part. But the fact is not surprising if we consider that the Syrian regime continues to be supported by its people, by Iran and by Russia. In fact, this is another bloody chapter of the fight between Sunnis and Shiites, and of the Western imperialism's strategy of domination over the sad and troubled Middle East. The victim is the Syrian people.