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*[Note: Using editorials as an indicator, this series presents views, understanding and attitude of the Urdu periodicals in India towards various developments concerning the Middle East. The selection of an item does not mean the endorsement or concurrence with their accuracy or views. Editor, MEI@ND]*



Roznama Rashtriya Sahara (National Sahara Daily), Delhi

Editorial, 25 April 2014, Friday

### 1. PLO-Hamas Unity Talks

The decision by the warring Palestinian groups to start talks in pursuing reconciliation and unity is a welcome move. It will be some time before it can be said if it helps in strengthening the Palestinian struggle and realizes the dream of an independent state of Palestine. However, the reaction from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reflects Israeli discomfort at the prospects of a united Palestinian struggle. Reacting to the news of meeting between Fatah and Hamas, Netanyahu said that Mahmud Abbas should chose between Israel and Hamas to pursue talks. A meeting was organized between Hamas and PLO recently in the Gaza Strip. The two had fallen out in 2007, and since then all efforts at reconciliation and unity government have failed. There was a time that two groups had engaged in fighting. However, this had started to affect the Palestinian cause as it weakened the resistance against Israel. Abbas is understood to have a soft approach towards Israel and the United States while Hamas is known to be a hard-line organization that calls for armed struggle against Israel. Therefore, Hamas has been termed in the West and by Israel as a terrorist organization. The statement issued by Netanyahu was aimed at warning Abbas of retribution, and this is a mere tactics to weaken Palestinian struggle. Although the talks are a good indication, much hope should not be attached to them because the differences between Hamas and PLO are huge. Even Palestinians themselves are not very hopeful of a deal. It is argued, however, that any

deal between the two groups will strengthen Abbas's hands, particularly in his negotiations with Israel. It would be difficult for Israel to accept such a proposition because it pursues a policy of dividing the opposition. More importantly, Hamas has an extremist position on Israeli occupation and it completely rejects any reconciliation with the occupation power, which makes it more problematic for Israel.

Nevertheless, Fatah and Hamas seems committed to pursue reconciliation at this stage saying that we are one people and have a common ground of resistance against occupation. The two want an end to Israeli occupation and formation of an independent state of Palestine. Both groups have said that they want to end their differences so as to form a unity government with one political agenda and one system. It remains to be seen when and how the talks reach a logical conclusion.

**Source:** <http://roznamasahara.samaylive.com/Details.aspx?id=91391&boxid=2611546>



**Roznama Rashtriya Sahara (National Sahara Daily), Delhi**

**Editorial, 26 April 2014, Saturday**

## **2. Deal between Fatah and Hamas**

**F**inally, Fatah and Hamas, two rival Palestinian factions, have signed unity agreement. This is not the first time though that the two groups have decided to sign a deal; they had agreed to come together soon after the death of Yasser Arafat but it did not last long. The reason was that the two were looking for exclusive leadership of the Palestinians, and wanted to prove that they hold more influence among the people. The two, however, had to reconcile with the fact that they have a limited influence among the Palestinians, while Hamas holds sway in the Gaza Strip, and Fatah is more popular in the West Bank. Thus, the situation is slightly clearer this time. Moreover, people have been able to see through the Israeli designs of keeping the Palestinians divided and make the possibility of a Palestinian state look impossible. In most part of the Western world Hamas was considered a terrorist organization but people have now understood that Hamas's activities are a militant response to violent Israeli oppression of the Palestinian people. The way Israel has oppressed the people of Gaza Strip and has continued with the construction of Jewish settlements in the occupied areas of East Jerusalem and West Bank has changed the perception of the conflict in the West. Thus, people have started to increasingly support Palestine, which is reflected from the acceptance of Palestinian membership in most of the sister organizations of the UN. The two-state solution has become a real possibility more than ever now. The only roadblock to Palestinian entry into the UN remains a US veto. But the US under Obama has started to change its position and it will not be long when Palestine would be a member of the UN.

There is another reason working for the deal between Hamas and Fatah. They understand that the infighting among Palestinians can be a bigger roadblock than the US veto. At some point the question will arise as to who will be the representative of the Palestinians in the UN, Fatah or Hamas. This would have become a real problem but with the reconciliation deal the situation will not arise. A deal between Hamas and Fatah is a welcome development and it

can lead to resolution of many internal issues. According to the deal, there would be elections within six months. The world has welcomed the deal, particularly by the Muslim countries. Israel, however, is not happy and understandably so. They have failed on many counts; one they could not prove to the world that Hamas is a terrorist organization; and second, they have not been able to influence American opinion. The UN Secretary of State has been trying to revive the peace process between Israel and Palestine but has not gained much success. John Kerry has implicitly blamed Israel for the failure. Israel had taken a position that there is no point of talking to some Palestinian representatives who cannot influence other factions but this has become irrelevant after the deal. Israel has back to back failed in influencing American foreign policy decisions; earlier the US went ahead with an interim deal with Iran and agreed to withdraw some of the economic sanctions, and now this deal between Hamas and Fatah has dealt a double blow. Israel is now concerned with its waning influence in the world.

**Source:** <http://roznamasahara.samaylive.com/Details.aspx?id=91259&boxid=2311343>



**Hindustan Express (Daily Hindustan Express), New Delhi**

**Editorial, 30 April 2014, Wednesday**

### **3. Turmoil and Ordeal in Egypt**

**T**he Islamists are going through a phase of ordeal in Egypt. Muslim Brotherhood has been prosecuted in Egypt for the last 60 years; several thousands of their members have been killed. The founders of Muslim Brotherhood Hassan al-Banna and Syed Qutb attained martyrdom. The same situation has recurred now; a local court in Egypt has convicted Muslim Brotherhood leader Mohammad Badi and 682 of its supporters with death penalty. The country is already under turmoil due to the ouster of Mohammed Morsi and now this decision can push it into civil-war. These people have been convicted of indulging in violent protest and sedition during a sit-in organized by the Muslim Brotherhood to protest the ousting of Morsi on 14 August 2013. In fact, many Brotherhood supporters had been killed in police action. Most of these people are out on bail or have become underground. The same court had awarded death penalty to another 529, later the penalty was converted into life imprisonment for 492 of them.

The court who ordered the conviction did not hear any defence argument and took a decision in ten minutes. Not all of them, however, will be put to gallows because according to the Egyptian constitution the decision is sent for review to the Grand Mufti and the final decision is taken after that. The convicts can then appeal in higher courts but chances of respite is remote because it is the military that is ruling the country and it can influence the decision of the higher courts as well. The military earlier had supported the people against Mubarak and made way for Muslim Brotherhood that came to power through democratic elections. Soon, however, the military felt insecure and overthrew the elected president. A major reason for such a move has been the anti-Israel characteristic of the Morsi government; thus, it conspired with the military to oust him from power. The military now is trying to suppress

the Brotherhood and making all kind of efforts to torture its members and supporters. Muslim Brotherhood which has suffered at the hands of previous rulers is again under fire and it may prove to be another long phase of ordeal for the Islamists in Egypt.

**Source:**

[http://dailyhindustanexpress.com/gujashtah\\_shumare/april2014/30\\_04\\_2014/epaper/page\\_5\\_large.htm](http://dailyhindustanexpress.com/gujashtah_shumare/april2014/30_04_2014/epaper/page_5_large.htm)



**Roznama Rashtriya Sahara (National Sahara Daily), Delhi**

**Editorial, 30 April 2014, Saturday**

#### **4. Egyptian Situation and Presidential Election**

**I**nstability prevails in Egypt after the overthrow of Morsi and military's hold on power. The attitude of all the neighbouring Muslim countries towards the Muslim Brotherhood is disappointing. The military has taken over all institutions in the country and is using it to suppress the Brotherhood. Military has appropriated power and using it to terminate any opposition while the so called international powers, the upholders of democracy, have chose to remain silent.

In these circumstances, the upcoming elections will remain a formality, particularly when Field Marshal Sisi has declared his candidature. In any eventuality, he would win the elections. Sisi in a recent address to one of the national business organizations said that people should come out and vote in large numbers. He also argued that the Islamists have harmed Egypt's tourism industry. He said that religious debates and anticipations have harmed the prospects of Egyptian tourism industry. Notably, the Muslim Brotherhood and its allied Islamist organizations have declared it to be an illegal election and thus have called for its boycott. Sisi's call for large scale participation in elections should be seen in this context, as he wants to give an impression that Egyptians are satisfied with the current disposition. It would, however, be an indirect rule of the military. The way military has influenced the working of the judiciary is a telling example of coming days in Egypt.

A few days back a lower court has ordered death penalty for another 682 supporters of Muslim Brotherhood, while confirming the conviction of other 37 who were awarded capital punishment earlier. In current circumstances, people are frightened and do not wish to appear to be supporter of the Brotherhood and may not participate in the elections. Thus, if the voter turnout remains low, it will send a strong message against the military rule, which has led to the appeal by Sisi to the voters to come out and vote him to power.

**Source:** <http://roznamasahara.samaylive.com/Details.aspx?id=91964&boxid=2179515>

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