Leader Meets with Syrian President and Delegation - 30 /May/ 2024

In a meeting today (Thursday) with Mr. Bashar al-Assad, the President of Syria, and his accompanying delegation, Ayatollah Imam Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, stated that resistance is Syria's distinguished identity. He added that Syria's special position in the region is also due to this, and this important characteristic must be preserved.

Expressing gratitude for Mr Bashar al-Assad's visit to Tehran to offer condolences to the Iranian people, the Leader of the Revolution highlighted Mr Raisi's prominent role in strengthening Iran-Syria relations. He also said that Mr Amir-Abdullahian had paid special attention to this area.

Ayatollah Imam Khamenei considered strengthening Iran-Syria relations important, considering both countries as pillars of the Axis of Resistance. He said, "**Syria's distinguished identity, which is one of resistance, was established during the era of the late Hafiz al-Assad with the founding of the Front of Resistance and Steadfastness, and this identity has always contributed to Syria's national unity**."

He emphasised the need to preserve this identity. He said, "The West and their followers in the region waged a war against Syria intending to overthrow the country's political system and isolate and eliminate Syria from regional influence, but they did not succeed. Their aim now is to exclude Syria from regional influence using other methods, including making promises they do not intend to fulfil." The Leader of the Islamic Revolution praised Bashar al-Assad's firm stance and said, "Everyone must recognise the special merit of the Syrian government, which is its resistance."

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Commenting on the political and economic pressure that the United States and Europe have imposed on Iran and Syria, Ayatollah Khamenei said, "**We must navigate these conditions by increasing cooperation and organising it systematically**."

He recalled the beloved late Mr Raisi's readiness to increase Iran-Syria cooperation in various fields and said, " Mr Mukhber, with his presidential authority, continues along the same path as (the late) president, and we hope that everything will proceed in the best possible way."

The Leader also criticised the positions and inaction of some countries in the region regarding Gaza. Referring to the recent Arab leaders' summit in Manama, he said, "Many shortcomings were observed regarding Palestine and Gaza in this meeting, but some countries also acted positively."

Ayatollah Khamenei said the Islamic Republic's outlook on the future was positive, saying, "Hopefully, all of us can fulfil our duties and reach this bright future."

In the meeting, Mr. Bashar al-Assad, the President of Syria, expressed condolences to the Supreme Leader and the government and people of Iran. Addressing Ayatollah Khamenei, he said, "The relations between Iran and Syria are strategic and guided by Your Excellency, and at the forefront of implementing these guidelines were Mr Raisi and Mr. Amir-Abdullahian."

Speaking about Mr Raisi's humble, wise, and ethical character, the Syrian president described him as a prominent example of the Islamic Revolution's positions and slogans. He said, "Mr Raisi has had a significant impact in shaping

the role of the Islamic Republic in regional affairs and on the Palestinian issue, as well as deepening Iran-Syria relations over the past three years."

Mr Bashar al-Assad also spoke about the resistance in the region, saying, "After more than 50 years, the line of the resistance in the region has progressed and is now adopting an ideological and political approach."

The President of Syria emphasised that Syria's position has always been that any retreat in the face of the West will lead to their advance. He said, "A few years ago, I said that the cost of resistance is less than the cost of compromise, and now this has become very clear and obvious to the people of Syria. Recent events in Gaza and the victories of the resistance have also proven this for the people of the region and have shown that resistance is pivotal."

Mr Bashar al-Assad expressed his gratitude and appreciation to the Leader of the Revolution for his prominent and important role in supporting the resistance and Syria in all areas.

After Mr Bashar al-Assad's remarks, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution said, "Your remarks had many important points, but the point that stood out to me is the emphasis you placed on the idea that 'whenever we retreat, the other side advances.' There is no doubt about this matter; this has been our slogan and belief for over 40 years."