

Anas Habib: From Locking the Embassy to Unlocking the Movement for Gaza



“A young Egyptian man shutting down his country’s embassy in The Hague to protest his government’s stance on the war on Gaza” at first glance, this headline seemed like a fleeting story from about a month ago. Some initially questioned its impact what can one person’s voice accomplish? Yet astonishingly, that voice has echoed across many places, its ripple spreading, and the effectiveness has become unmistakable.

Many joined the cause, staging protests in front of Egyptian and other embassies in more than 25 cities. Some locked them down; others simply demonstrated. “The snowball started rolling,” says the originator of the act.

Observers attribute several developments on the ground to this mobilization: President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi spoke about the war and the brutality of the occupation in an unprecedented tone, the occupiers allowed some aid and goods into Gaza. The famine has not ended, nor has the war but something has undeniably changed.

In this interview, the Egyptian youth Anas Habib talks to NoonPost about himself, his movement, and individual action as a concept...

Injustice as a Personal Cause

Anas defines himself simply: “An Egyptian young man who, like any Egyptian, carries the Palestinian cause. For us, Palestine—especially Gaza—is immensely important. Though I haven’t been there, I was raised believing it is our land, inseparable from us. Palestinians are part of us, and we are part of them—they are our family, we love them, and they love us. Beyond that, there is a bond of religion and brotherhood—we cannot abandon this land.”

Central to his upbringing was a large portrait of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin — founder of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas — that hung at his home’s entrance. “I would see it every time I left or entered the house, every time I went to school, the gym, anywhere.”

At age 15, Anas was arrested in Egypt and spent two years in detention, during which he completed his secondary education. After his release, an event that changed his life was the killing of his friend during an anti-coup protest in 2014. He has lived in the Netherlands for six years.

That arrest and his friend’s death left a profound imprint, especially because he experienced both as a child. “My friend’s death hit me very hard,” he says. “Despite my young age, I became determined to fight his right must not be forgotten. But as a child, I didn’t know how, so I joined protests without expecting results. My political awareness was incomplete, and I didn’t know how to effect change.”

He continues: “Then came the arrest and the clear injustice—accusations pinned on a minor under 16. I realized the brutality of those in power. My view of rulers and life changed.”

“With age and reading the Qur’an, I came to understand Islam forbids injustice. I felt, as a Muslim, I must oppose injustice and love justice for anyone—even at my own expense.”

He links all this to the ongoing Gaza catastrophe: “This is a continuing phase that began earlier with imprisonment, and then exile. The flood—the current crisis—rekindled something that was dormant, if not all of it.”

The Spark of a Protest

For nearly two years, Anas joined demonstrations in support of Gaza. He was arrested twice, his home targeted twice. Feelings of helplessness mounted—until he locked the embassy.

Describing his mindset before the action: “In the Netherlands, where I live, all temptations exist even permissible ones. I played football, worked out, and as a content creator, I used to film and share interviews.

But after the massacre began, I would stop before even posting a nature photo what good is that when killings continue? When people die, the world conspires against them, and my own government participates. This caused psychological pain—life lost all meaning, no joy, no flavor, all thoughts weighed me down.”

He added: “There were times I couldn’t write about the genocide. I was depressed. I avoided Gaza-related images. I tried everything, but nothing changed. What could I do, thousands of miles away? I thought: even if I give my soul to God, that’s fine—what matters is doing something meaningful.”

“It’s problematic if an individual doesn’t feel these thoughts as a Muslim, as a human.”

Against the backdrop of starvation and pressure on Gazans to accept any deal, he resolved to act alone—no waiting for others. He chose the Egyptian embassy in the Netherlands. He posted his intent on social media—vague, without planning details.

He called his brother, who warned of arrest, but Anas didn’t hesitate. They met the next day outside the embassy in The Hague. His brother asked: “What will you do?” Anas replied: “I don’t know. I brought flour and eggs—I haven’t decided how to use them.”

His brother suggested chaining himself to the door. Anas’s mind sparked: “Why chain myself when I can lock them in? I’ll do to them what they do to Gaza.” He immediately bought padlocks and proceeded.

Livestreaming on Facebook, he locked both embassy doors. Soon, people visiting for embassy services arrived. Some defended the regime’s stance. He engaged them, using sarcasm to tie the lock to Gaza’s siege.

He had prayed, “O Lord, guide me,” and claims he had no plan—but was astonished by how things unfolded. “It came together by divine grace. I didn’t understand what was happening—the conversations, how quick the reactions, how smooth the words came to me. It was divine facilitation—God knows my anguish and that I couldn’t continue life as it was.”

He spontaneously uttered “locked from their side” (mā’qāḥ min ḥindihum)—a phrase mirroring the regime’s excuse for Rafah’s closure. He used it ironically: “See how the siege is upset?”

His ironic banter reflects Egyptian culture: “We’re a people of jokes. Sarcasm often conveys more than seriousness.”

Why the Egyptian Embassy?

Many regime supporters said protest should target the ‘enemy in Tel Aviv’. Anas

once thought so too. But when his method yielded tangible results, he was convinced.

“I always believed protests should happen before Israeli embassies: burning flags, etc. I did many such demonstrations for Gaza over two years. But when we changed our approach, we saw aid entering the strip.”

He even visited the Israeli embassy—hard to locate, no flags flown.

His protest aimed first at clearing his conscience. The response exceeded his expectations—many wanted to do “something real.”

Protests spread—across Egyptian and Arab embassies, some were locked.

Aid and goods reached Gaza via land crossings or limited air drops—small quantities. Still, something entered after the long siege.

During that period, Sisi delivered speeches in noticeably different tones, emphasizing opening Rafah and facilitating aid.

Individual Action: Effective and Legal

On individual action, Anas believes it’s wide-ranging, legally viable in many countries, and highly effective.

“My view changed completely. I used to ask: will it make any difference? But I found it truly does—with God’s will.”

He draws parallels to Prophet Ibrahim: fear of God, taking earthly measures, smart planning, and presenting the argument.

Legally, he recognizes risks—fines, arrest, or worse—but sees the cost of standing for justice as worth it.

“Be wise: in Europe, check if action endangers your citizenship or residency. If not—go for it. Most political protests, such as throwing paint on embassies, carry minimal penalties.”

“Western legal space allows impactful individual protest. The worst might be a night in jail or a fine, which can be raised through donations.”

In Arab countries, consequences can be dire—detention, torture, even death. He cited activists’ fate in Egypt as cautionary examples.

He believes the solution is a revolutionary movement creating a snowball effect no regime can suppress.

The cost extends beyond legal risks—it affects work, relationships, family time. He considers it a “price of right.” No price compares to Gaza’s suffering.

Why This Action Resonated

Many individual actions have occurred since the genocide began—but none expanded like this one. What made this different?

“It’s impossible to claim that locking the Egyptian embassy earlier would have produced the same results today. These actions are links in a chain: one person’s act is continued by another. Aided by divine will—and preceded by others’ free actions.”

Witnessing results motivates him greatly—even if it simply brings solace to Gazans, that’s enough to continue.

He frequently invokes “an apology to your Lord” (min al-Qur’an): we must plant the sapling even if we don’t live to see its fruit.

“Do your part with whatever knowledge, means, and obligation God has given you. Then others will build on it.”

If that principle prevailed—no one would be silenced. Everyone would act, transformation would follow.

How Long Will He Continue?

“I have devoted myself to this cause. I cannot live normally while our regime betrays Gaza and Egypt—has sold us, squandered resources, bankrolled the occupation through gas deals, and oppressed Egyptians, including prisoners. This won’t stop—at least until Egypt is liberated. Once freed, freeing other nations becomes inevitable. Egypt is the scale’s pivot. Despite appearing weak, when rid of this regime, our country’s strengths—its history, resources, population—will rise again.”