

**SAYYID AMMAR AL-HAKIM: “No leniency, no bargaining, with terrorists, and no leniency in safeguarding citizens’ lives.”**



No bargaining on our people’s blood, no leniency in protecting innocent citizens’ lives. During last week, we witnessed a series of horrific and bloody explosions that claimed the lives of hundreds of citizens, martyrs and wounded, in seven Iraqi governorates. Those who plant explosives for our countrymen in order to cut their guts and shed their blood in this terrifying way send us a message, and we have to answer this message. Their message says that they can never drink enough of our blood, and they demand more, not knowing any way to express this dark vision except by killing, blood-shedding and destruction. We answer them, we respond to their message, and say that no matter what the differences and crisscrossing inside the Iraqi home may be, here and there, Iraqis are fully united before you, before your dark way of thinking, before your assaults of man and of the Iraqi blood. We are fully united before terrorism, united with our hands, hearts and minds, and we will undertake all stances and measures as Iraqis in all our mosaics, names and labels to stand in the face of terrorism and to put an end to the suffering of our people which continues as a result of these bloody explosions day after day. We emphasize that there is no contention over the issue of terrorism and of the killers, and there is no bargaining on the blood of our countrymen. There is no leniency when it comes to the lives of the innocent citizens. Our countrymen’s cementing and cohesion will increase whenever these dark messages from these terrorists increase. Also, our security forces have to strike with an iron fist in defense of the citizens and to protect their lives, properties and the country’s security and stability. Our bodies will not be food for the folks with dark Sadist mentalities that stood and are standing every day to brutalize and mercilessly kill our countrymen. At the time when we laud the great efforts exerted by the security forces in providing security and pursuing the terrorists and in dismantling the terrorist networks, we at the same time hear about questions raised by the Iraqi citizens about till when such bloody terrorist attacks will continue and the way to deal with these matters in order to ensure that they will not be repeated in the future, about who is responsible about these breaches that claim hundreds of victims, martyrs and wounded, on various occasions and in many circumstances.

Our countrymen wonder when these explosions will ever come to a halt and who is responsible for them especially since there are huge budgets earmarked to deal with the security dossier, with tackling the security complications. There are broad powers vested on the security authorities so they may undertake this role in measures, procedures and prerogatives that go beyond powers that are common to democratic systems.

Any of us may be part of the solution when the true will is born within him to solve problems and to sit at the dialogue table..

Also, the political reality in the country remains to be tense in the shade of the trust crisis among many political sides. This renders the incentive weak to resolve the complications, so

each side may accept the solutions and treatments offered by the other side. Thus, everyone shields himself behind his own viewpoint, insisting on his own convictions and the solutions which he offers without these solutions merging into a single national solution that brings about a true assurance for getting out of the present political crisis. Despite the elements of strength, success and the chances to get the country out of these crises in order to achieve and enhance the political and security stability and the economic boom in the country, we still lack a strategy to administer the differences among us. We differ. This is natural. But how do we organize these differences? How do we deal with these differences? How do we manage these differences? What are the principles and bases that we employ in solving contentions and problems among us as long as we remain not in agreement about a strategy to administer the differences? Every problem that faces us will remain, leaving its big consequences without our ability to find quick solutions within this framework. There is no doubt that the constitution represents the basic pillar for resolving the differences and managing them among us, but the constitution is ambiguous in many of its basic articles. The constitution needs to be backed by steps and consensus that harmonize with its principles so we may be able to come out of this crisis and firm the status of stability in the country. We think that there is no crisis without a solution. We can resolve and treat every crisis. Global wars and strangulating international crises have proven that there are solutions for them when everyone sat at the dialogue table. They were able to find solutions and put an end to the suffering of peoples and nations during big international crises; so, what is with us, Iraqis in one country living under one tent and are brought together by Iraq's interests and are joined by big connections among ourselves? Are we really unable to find a solution? Yes, we can find solutions for all standing crises. This means that each of us may be a portion of the solution when the true will to solve problems and to sit at the dialogue table is born within him. And it is possible that he becomes part of the problem when he refuses to stand and subjectively look at the country's conditions and to have the vision of a partner. Perpetuating the crises and contentions cannot represent an element of strength and a pillar of ability for any political side on the long term when a crisis is created. It is possible that in the essence of such a crisis, someone will benefit. But as soon as the peak and outburst of the crisis comes to an end, when souls stabilize, it will be clear that there is no winner or loser in this homeland. None of us can succeed by breaking the other. Our success is everyone's success. Our procrastination is everyone's procrastination. We have to look for solutions that adhere to the constitution according to the legal criteria, but they take into consideration the fears, worries, expectations and wishes of all Iraqis. Every crisis produces other crises, though small, and these crises start growing and getting bigger, increasing the suffering of the citizens. When these crises increase and pile up, they will put us before the reality: We will find ourselves before a stumbling path, one containing a serious trust crisis, a deep gap between the political forces and the officials in charge of administering this country. We, therefore, say that we have no choice except to return to the dialogue table, concentrate on national meetings, study the matters with transparency and deal with flexibility regarding what is our

demand and what addresses others' demands so we may be able to reach the sound principle that ensures the rights for us and for our other partners. We say clearly that none of the contending groups in our court now has the full and the legitimate rights in his demands, and there is no group in our yard that lacks full legitimacy. We are not before white and black: There is none that represents the absolute right, nor is there the absolute falsehood. Each of us talks about an aspect of the truth, and he has to deal with flexibility, to accept for himself this portion and give the other portion in order to get along with the other side of the truth which is present with the other. Through this method, the country is built, the souls are at ease, the consciences feel good, and we turn into the one team that works in one direction which is: serving the homeland and the citizen and treating people's problems and resolving their issues. The logical solution for all standing disputes is the strict political will, the flexible dealing, the sitting at the dialogue table and the true discussion that all make us cemented, our ranks solidified, facing one vision in resolving our problems and differences.

Concerns about representing women in the political process numerically, not quality-wise  
Woman's participation in the country's political administration is regarded as one of the criteria that express the extent of our commitment to the democratic and plural system in the country. Since 2003 and till now, we have witnessed an unprecedented attendance and representation for the Iraqi woman in the political work. It is a step that is recorded in favor of the new political system in Iraq. But there is worry, there are fears, about the decline of this achievement, that representing women in the political process becomes only with numbers and not with quality. Nowadays, when we look at the council of ministers, we do not find the woman present in the level that harmonizes with her population clout, capabilities, competencies and energies. And when we look at the national dialogue meetings and the meetings that discuss the national strategies and the joints where decisive and destiny-making decisions in the country are made, we do not find woman to be present in the sufficient level in such lobbies. Is it because we lack competent and capable female personalities? The answer is NO. Iraqi woman has for years proven that she has produced leading personalities that enjoy competence and the ability to make sound decisions, to undertake important initiatives. We, therefore, are before patriotic and leading female personalities of whom we are proud, and we express our pride of them to the world; so, there has to be serious effort so there will be a true participation in administering and in making decisions for the country coming from women just as they come from men.

Praise of the size of exchange in the Iraqi bourse, the necessity to adopt international criteria, including transparency and clarity...

According to the reports presented by the Iraqi market for securities, there is an important development in the size of exchange that has taken place in the bourse last year such as a 135% increase over the past years. The bourse and the financial markets in every country represent

an important station and one of the indications of economic stability and growth in that country. This increase, though modest when it comes to figures, is big for noticing the shift during a single year. For the increase to be 135% is something important, and we have to work hard to develop this percentage as well as the transparent and clear economic transactions across the bourse and the Iraqi market for securities. Due to the huge budget it has and the increasing oil production as well as escalating economic movement in its market day after day, Iraq is qualified to have an effective, energized and advanced bourse on the level of the region, and this requires us to find in this market international criteria, transparency, clarity and successful work that can score this big achievement.

Social welfare network must stay strong in all its allocations...

Social welfare is one of the most important rights of the citizens because it looks after a wronged and persecuted segment of the orphans, widows, the needy, the destitute and the crushed slice in the society. No matter what has been said and what is being said about the phenomena of corruption and the attempts to taking advantage of granting the social welfare from people who do not meet the conditions, this requires us to do more verification and to make sure that these funds go to those who deserve it. The social welfare network must remain strong in all its allocations. Procrastination in performance or some aspects of corruption must not prevent us from supporting this network and providing sufficient allocations for it. Rather, it calls on us to do more sieving, sorting, verifying and making sure that these funds reach those who deserve it; this is a basic issue.

Through our political impact and parliamentary presence, we will strongly support the subject of social welfare...

We appreciate what the ministry of labor and social has done: the opening of a hotline for citizens' complaints in order to provide quick responses to their complaints. It is a sound step. Now the citizen is suffering; he has a problem; he does not know to whom he should complain. He goes to the ministries where there are security complications so that one sends him to the other, and his administrative transaction is not for a long period of time completed. The existence of a hotline which the citizen contacts, and the other end in the ministry goes and deals with the matters then answers this citizen..., this is good, a step that is worthy of appreciation, one recorded for this respectful ministry. We shall strongly support, with our political clout and presence in the parliament, the subject of social welfare and the achievement of the best services for this afflicted segment of our society.

Welcoming Pope's yearend visit...

Talk goes on about the Vatican's Pope visiting Ur city in Thi-Qar at the end of this year. We welcome this visit and hope it will take place as scheduled. We call on the specialized authorities in the federal and local governments to undertake all measures that ensure that this great visitor will be well received. Iraq being visited by personalities of such a clout raises the moral and international level as well as the global status of Iraq. It is an

important initiative, and we must utilize it. It also is an opportunity to remind our people and dear Christians who migrated abroad to reconsider their return so they may be on their land, in their homeland, beside their other brethren and partners who live in peace, love and harmony.

Islamic culture can produce a high, distinctive and objective art that can surpass others... We monitored with interest last week a unique event that carries in its folds deep meaning and on more than one level. This event is represented in an Iranian film getting the Oscar which is one of the most important and finest among international awards in the cinema world. What is noteworthy is that the Oscar award was awarded to an Iranian film, to the Islamic Republic of Iran. There is a clear message in it: The Islamic culture is capable of producing a sublime, distinctive and objective art that can excel over others and win the highest awards in the world. This clearly points out that Islam is not against creativity, is not against excellence, growth and sparkle. Rather, the Islamic culture and education help this shine, this presence in such fields. Islam supports art when this art has a goal, a clear message. The problem is not in Islam; the problem is narrow-mindedness, in the faulty understanding of Islam and its tolerant message. If we make the right onset in understanding Islam, we will find it capable of achieving these major victories. It is an opportunity during which we call on the respectful Iraqi creative artists to exert their efforts to present this genuine art which is based on their Islamic and national identity and which is derived from their civilization and deeply rooted history to provide an advanced art that wins others' respect and takes its place in the international artistic lobbies.

The other side which is noteworthy in this event is that this award was given by an American arbitration committee that grants this first global award to an Iranian film during a condition in which we live the ongoing clash between the United States and Iran on the political level. We notice that this struggle has covered the relationship between both countries. What does this message, this step, mean? It points out that competence, creativity and experience can identify their likes. Birds of one feather flock together. The creative individual can free himself of his contexts and make the right step, honoring the other when he is in the level of progressive and advancing creativity. This event has important lessons. We must learn from them that we in Iraq, and in the Arab world, can learn from the Iranians how to be creative, how to shine, how to get our message to reach the others, how to call on the other side that differs from us to respect our art, to respect creativity, to respect our achievement and undertake the position of appreciation and veneration of these outgivings and vision which we present. Specialization and creativity are on a level that prompts the other to respect him, to deal with him, to interact with him. The Iranians were able to raise their flag on the American lands, a sign that the creative art which they presented, while being in the peak of contention with each other, provides an important message. We have to advance, to develop our abilities and performance. We have to present ourselves in a way which others accept, one which obligates the other to deal with it, to cope with it. We also have to learn from the American arbitration

committee, despite the numerous differences, that the presence of veiled actresses, or a bearded producer, or an Islamic system that produced this film... did not prevent them from looking at the creativity in all its connotations without entering in sideline considerations and to deal with competence and integrity with this event. This means that the competent creative individual can deal with integrity and rise above other considerations because his creativity got him to reach this position. He did not reach it through opportunism, bribery or corruption. Let us place the creative individuals, the competent ones, in their places, and their competence is the immunity that prompts them to undertake the right decisions.

Governmental and social entities have to bear their responsibility to form specialized committees that study the begging phenomenon

Nowadays, the begging phenomenon spreads in a noticeable way in Baghdad and many Iraqi governorates following economic, social and family problems that prompt these beggars to come out to the streets and beg. What is more worrying is that this phenomenon has turned into an organized one: There are networks and Mafias that are now making this case a profession, gathering these children and women, especially those with disabilities, to trade in them, to get them to work in this process so our beloved capital, Baghdad, and many other cities of Iraq may appear in another inappropriate way. It does not befit these beggars or the history of this country in all its resources. This is an abuse of the citizens and of the reputation of this country to a great extent. Begging is now a trade undertaken by whoever wants to earn a gain in which there is no loss, nor are there any consequences in it. Statistics of some civil society organizations point out that in Baghdad alone, there are now more than 100,000 beggars. This is a very big figure that calls for a long and serious halt before this negative social phenomenon. The governmental and social entities have to bear their full responsibilities. The ministry of labor and social affairs has to form specialized committees to study this phenomenon, its causes, origins, and how to treat and contain it. It also requires social and awareness treatments that prevent some needy persons from begging like this or falling in the traps of those networks and mafias that push them to beg. We also have to provide work opportunities, social security, suitable places and centers for social welfare that embrace the beggars, especially the children, till this general reality is regulated in our homeland. We also need laws put to limit the begging phenomenon and to punish the entities that are involved in this action that destroys Iraqi childhood and tarnishes Iraq's image.

Iraqi Teacher Day: A Day that is dear to our hearts

On the first of March of every year, we celebrate the Iraqi Teacher Day. It is a day that is dear to our heart. We take this opportunity to congratulate all teachers and the education family on this glorious day, hoping that it becomes an important station during which we recall the big effort exerted by the education sector and the educative school in raising the new generation and the great efforts exerted in building a good and cemented society. The teacher represents one of the basic pillars in building the homeland, and the citizen must earn enough

attention if it is on the service and prosperous level, and the requirements of honorable living must be provided for the educators even if it may be on the level of training, development, rehabilitation and specialized courses that enable the teachers to become familiar with the modern teaching methods. This will raise the level of education to a great extent. This requires an important effort by the specialized ministries: the ministry of education and learning and the ministry of higher education, to achieve this important goal.

Arbil: Capital of Arab Tourism for 2013... an Achievement for all Iraqis

Finally, Arbil has been named capital of the Arab tourism for the year 2013, that is, next year. It is a good news that reveals the big effort exerted by Arbil city and those who administer the Kurdistan Province in providing security, services, economic revival and effective regional relations that enabled all these factors together to make Arbil the capital of Arab tourism for next year. We see this as an achievement for all Iraqis. Any achievement that takes place in any Iraqi city is an achievement for all Iraqis, so we congratulate and bless the residents of Arbil for the city of Arbil having been chosen to be the capital of Arab tourism, and we hope the specialized local authorities in Arbil governorate and in the Province will undertake all the measures that ensure the success of this important action so Arbil may become an important station sought by tourists the next year, and so they may become familiar with the conditions of our beloved homeland.