

Speech text by His Eminence Sayyid Al-Hakeem at the Annual Persons with Disabilities Carnival



In the Name of Allah,

Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds, May Allah's peace and blessings be upon our master Mohammed, his pure family, and chosen companions.

Honored attendees, brothers, and sisters, May Allah's peace, mercy, and blessings be upon you,

First and foremost, I would like to extend my thanks to our dear brothers, who devoted themselves to the cause of our beloved Persons with Disabilities (the Iraqi Persons with Disabilities Association), at the front, thanks go to the Presidency of the Parliament for sponsoring this significant annual carnival, to affirm this precious opportunity to meet our family and beloved ones with disabilities, listen to their cause, and speak to them directly, as a sign of solidarity and defense of their rights, as well as supporting their claims, concerns, and legitimate rights.

We believe that the International Day of Persons (with Disabilities) represents an important annual station to review this segment's causes in Iraq. Not at the scope of starting up and launching projects, but out of accumulation and continuation in resolving the issues, building capacities, and studying and discussing what has been achieved and what hasn't. Countries that respect their citizens, despite communal titles, are compelled to put this segment's causes forward and grant them priority in their plans and fundamental development projects to mitigate obstructions, provide a real integration environment for them, activate their aspirations, and invest their inner capabilities.

Iraq owns one of the highest rates of persons with disabilities, this is due to wars and deteriorating security and health status that stormed the country in the past couple of decades. This requires a serious position to review the previous legislating, executive, and societal steps and the how-to to improve the gains in this humanitarian matter. In addition to achieving additional qualitative initiatives in this field.

Regarding the legislation, dedicating the parliament's attention to persons with disabilities laws and establishing their committee, signing international pacts regarding this matter, and sponsoring this event are all excellent positive steps. Yet, we need to double the practical and qualitative results and outputs.

In terms of political roles, active participation, and government empowerment, we are still in a state of delay and there is a significant shortcoming in this aspect. Hence, I call upon the new Government and the esteemed Prime Minister who, in a well-known time clip, took direct responsibility for this field, to pay attention to it and provide appropriate government opportunities for this segment. I call upon all parties, national entities, and relevant organizations to join forces and cooperate constructively in the adoption of the rights and empowerment of this segment. Physical disability is not an acceptable reason to impede these loved ones' path to coping and empowering in a manner appropriate to their legitimate circumstances and rights.

I also call on all national media in all their directions to highlight the concerns, rights, and demands of this segment, and to involve them in awareness-raising and mentoring programs that educate citizens on how to deal with the needs of persons with disabilities, respect their privacy and help provide a broad and welcoming community environment that understand their issues.

This segment desperately needs supportive media, society, and government. In addition, I call for combating the phenomena of bullying, marginalization, and discrimination towards them, both media, culturally, and socially, as a humanitarian duty and as a responsible role.

In terms of education, we believe that the concerned institutions must provide all the necessary supplies, tools, and environments to make children and young people with disabilities in a fair and equal space with their peers. In particular, with the world's technological development in developed countries that respect human rights. Rapid and qualitative solutions can be provided to this segment, guaranteeing them the principle of equal opportunities and possibilities.

In terms of employment opportunities, our beloved's conditions must be considered in terms of the difficulty of employment in the public and private sectors and the need to provide effective solutions. Hence, we suggest that official authorities develop a robust database to measure the number of persons with disabilities and the scores of disabilities to provide them with appropriate jobs according to their circumstances and qualifications. The reason is that without accurate statistics, planning processes and development projects remain random and insufficient to cover the entire needs of this segment.

Therefore, I call for the issuance of substantive instructions and procedures in all official institutions and the private sector to facilitate the transactions of persons with disabilities and to address their needs physically, morally, and smoothly.

Honorable Brothers and Sisters,

We must skip the necessity to follow up closely with United Nations and international organizations and to invest in their existing possibilities, possible projects, and proposed budgets in this area.

To conclude, I can only affirm that we were and still are one of the first claimants and supporters of the rights of our brothers and sisters with disabilities through many conferences, seminars, workshops, and official addresses we have held in programs, proposals, and priorities of (Al-Hikma National Movement) in cooperation with relevant national groups and organizations and relevant governmental institutions and international spaces cooperating with us in this regard. We will remain at the front line to promote this genuine national cause and see this as an important duty and responsibility for all of us to bear.

We have directed our parliamentary bloc to follow up on this segment's issues at all levels.

We ask Allah to guide us to achieve this purpose.

May Allah's peace, mercy, and blessings be upon you.