

Sayyid Ammar al-Hakim: Al Diwaniyah Needs Strategic Planning Consistent with its Potentials... and the Citizen Alliance is Launching "Al Diwaniyah Al Khayrat" (Al Diwaniyah: City of Riches) Project



Sayyid Ammar al-Hakim, head of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq, said during a public gathering held by the Citizen Alliance 411 in Al Diwaniyah city that Al Diwaniyah, with its urban and rural areas, needs a strategic planning, consistent with its potentials and which takes advantage of its strategic location, and that the all-cure for the woes of Al Diwaniyah province is by regaining its status as the basket food and green farms of Iraq. "Because building a nation means to build its economy, provide for the living of people and secure the future of their next generation", he added. "And this requires studying the problems and obstacles that stand in the way of the development of any of our cities, and digging up its potentials". He continued that the best way to apply real permanent remedies is to study the impediments and potentials, thus announcing the launching of " Al Diwaniyah Al Khayrat" (Al Diwaniyah: City of Riches) project by the Citizen Alliance, which is complementary and equivalent to that of "Ar-Rihab of Muthanna" given the geographic unity and social extension between both provinces. According to him, the Citizen Alliance does not pay lip service, but launches realistic projects, calling on the senior leaders of the armed forces to issue statements in mass-media that emphasize the freedom of choice and assure the members of the security apparatuses that they would not be accountable or subjected to arbitrary procedures.

"Al Diwaniyah Al Khayrat " Project

His Eminence outlined the features of the " Al Diwaniyah Al Khayrat " Project which aims at setting aside a 350-million dollar fund for Al Diwaniyah province for 7 consecutive years in support of the cultivation of shilb in particular, and the main cereals in general, as well as the related infrastructure in Al Diwaniyah. "This amount was accurately calculated, since it constitutes the value of the annual rice imports of the Ministry of Trade", he explained. "In fact, Iraq imports 1,200,000 tons of rice per year and the world price is \$305 per ton, which means that a sum of \$360,000,000 is spent each year to purchase rice". According to him, the project also aims at establishing a modern network of cereal granaries equipped with high standard weighing scales; building several dams that meet the agricultural needs of the province; cultivating 1,000,000,000 m2 of its arable lands; increasing the water share of the province, providing peasants with up-to-date irrigation systems, in addition to establishing the national center for development of Shilb culture, developing the Faculty of Agriculture , the agricultural institute and the preparatory school of agriculture and digging wells in desert areas. Moreover, it includes re-expanding of rivers, creation of one dump network, rehabilitation of the tire manufacturing plant and textile plant of Al Diwaniyah while increasing their production capacity in order to meet the needs of Iraq, seeking joint investments with leading international companies, excavation of archeological sites in all over Al Diwaniyah to activate the tourism sector and improve the economic conditions. According to some studies, "There are 800 archeological sites in Al Diwaynieh, but only 20 were excavated". He added that the project also encourage investments in trade, industry and tourism to

stimulate the capitals and end the unemployment problem and that the unique location of the province within the middle Euphrates makes it a vital commercial spot.

Agriculture in Al Diwaniyah: Inexhaustible source of green oil

AL Diwaniyah province is considered by his Eminence as the flower of the Middle Euphrates region and the Citizen Alliance will never let this flower fade, yet its fragrance will always permeate all Iraq. "It is one of the major agricultural cities in Iraq, and the promotion of its agricultural sector and rural areas is essential to the growth of the whole province", he commented. "There are 920 villages in Al Diwaniyah, which means that 70% of the province population lives in its rural not urban areas. So just like the urban areas, the villages of Al Diwaniyah need to be provided with the adequate services, for the civilization arose from them." Furthermore, he stated that the Martyr of the Niche movement is suggesting solutions and thus launching the " Al Diwaniyah Al Khayrat" project, because it believes agriculture is the real investment and the essential part in developing both the rural and the urban areas. "The agriculture is the green gold as the oil is the black gold, but the difference is that the latter is doomed to become depleted and the first is not," he continued. Moreover, he pointed that that the Citizen Alliance suggests feasible solutions to develop the South, the Middle Euphrates region and all of Iraq, that take the needs of the province into consideration and does not pretend to get rid of unemployment overnight, turn Al Diwaniyah into a modern city in one year, enrich peasants in few months or transform their lands into paradises in weeks. "The project of the Martyr of the Niche movement is to build a "fair modern state". It believes that the provinces are the place to go for this project-to-be and his plans and initiatives are well-studied", he continued. "The Citizen Alliance will not make promises it is impossible to fulfill; however, it promises Al Diwaniyah citizens to put their province on the right track. It is very aware of what Al Diwaniyah needs to grow and thrive, and give its citizens a prosperous future.

Anyone unable to work for the good of the citizens must not run in the election

His Eminence said, "The Martyr of the Niche movement has ran its candidates after having made sure of their competence and honesty, and those you would have voted for will be accountable to and controlled by the movement members, and will not be left alone. They have a road map and are committed to it, and they will not violate your trust." "They would be punished by us when they perform ineffectively before you would do", he added. He also stated that the very essence of responsibility is that the one with powers should work for the good of citizens and that whoever finds himself unable to do so must not run to an office of responsibility, and anyone who fails to be at the service of citizens must resign. Here he stressed the need for an official that serves the citizens and not vice-versa. "This is what the Citizen Alliance aims for, and this is where the "My Province First" motto comes from", he explained. He confirmed that building good men is one of the Alliance's priorities, considering the administrative and financial corruption as violation of the citizens' rights and dignity and ensuring that the Citizen Alliance is making every effort to fight this rampant epidemic in the Iraqi state with the modern

techniques used in the countries the most advanced in this regard.

Forcing the members of the security apparatuses to vote in favor of a specific list creates confusion between the security mission and the personal right of members

His Eminence has reported some information on pressure being exerted by some officers and high ranking officials on members of the security apparatuses, thus abusing the obligation of obedience due to officials in the security establishments. He considered these pressures as clearly causing confusion between the security mission that must be a matter of discipline and full obedience to the commander and chief, and the participation in elections and voting for a candidate, which is a personal right belonging to the members of the security apparatuses as citizens in this country. "The members of security services shouldn't be forced to vote in favor of specific lists and candidates", his Eminence noted, calling on senior leaders of the armed forces to issue clear statements in the mass media stressing the freedom of choice of the competent and impartial candidate without being accountable or subjected to arbitrary procedures. "Strict measures should be taken against officers who would such pressures and interrogations should be undertaken in order to investigate into the causes of this non-democratic phenomenon", he added, recommending that the Independent High Electoral Commission follow up all the complaints made with it in this regard and give enough guarantees to these members that they will be free in their choice.

Muthanna and Al Diwaniyah province: one entity and a common fate

The head of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq highlighted the historical and fateful relationship between Al Diwaniyah and Muthanna provinces. "Muthanna was part of Al Diwaniyah. And though it is now administratively independent, both provinces remained one single, coherent entity in terms of geography, location, rivers and tribes", he explained. In addition, he emphasized that both provinces live in the same conditions and have a common fate. "Muthanna is the poorest province with the highest unemployment rate in Iraq and Al Diwaniyah comes next." According to him, this is not a coincidence; the problem is the same, and so is the challenge. He indicated that just as the Citizen Coalition has launched "ar-Rihab of Muthanna" project and identified the problem and the potentials, then moved to solutions, "we have the honor today to introduce "Al Diwaniyah al Khayrat project so that the province can again become the food basket of Iraq and the heart of the Middle Euphrates, the first stream, and nourish our people". The joined projects of Al Diwaniyah and Muthanna were preceded by an association between Dhi Qar project, the project of Basra, the economic capital, and the rehabilitation of Maysan.

Building the country means to build its economy

"Building the country means to build its economy, to be concerned with the living and subsistence of the people and to secure the future of their children... In order to build a strong and solid economy for the country, one must discover the problems and obstacles facing this country". That's what his Eminence reiterated, saying that standing among the kind and tolerant people of Al Diwaniyah is like being home with family. "And while standing here, one can feel the depth of the history running in the veins of this

land and in the blood of its fervent people. We can see the sumptuous history of civilizations that passed by this province, settled in and yielded important experiences in the history of mankind such as Nuffar, Nippur, Afak and Hor Aldelmj". "Whoever visits Al Diwaniyah can smell the scent of amber and feel the inexhaustible generosity of the Euphrates and the patience of its nice people". Moreover, he said that Al Diwaniyah has a history of tribal resistance against injustice, tyranny, oppression and despotism. His eminence also recalled the eternal stances of Al Diwaniyah people in the uprising of Shaaban (August) 15, 1991 and the historical role of its citizens in encountering the ousted regime which we celebrate now the anniversary of its fall, confirming the commitment of Al Diwaniyah people to the course adopted by the religious references, the bulwark of this people, since Imam Muhsin al-Hakim (P), who had a special relationship with Al Diwaniyah tribes and all the way through to our current great references and the martyr Imam Sadr (P). His Eminence considered Al Diwaniyah as host for the travelers to the North or South and having its name derived from this great spirit, which is of a great social and political meaning, and a symbol of generosity and hospitality. Furthermore, he maintained that it is inappropriate to describe Al Diwaniyah as the most forgotten province since the Martyr of the Niche movement did not and will not forget Al Diwaniyah. He wondered how we can forget such a hospitable, generous and noble city. "Forgetting Al Diwaniyah is just like leaving the history of this country behind and forgetting the generous province which used to feed Iraq during the days of drought and provide it with its real wealth, the green gold, before the black gold has become predominant." he added. "The Citizen Coalition will not accept that Al Diwaniyah be transformed into a mere bright history; it will rather work hard to ensure a prosperous future to this city. It is now the right time for Al Diwaniyah to rise again and play its real role in building the new Iraq."