

## **Sayyid Ammar al-Hakim calls for electing the mayor of Baghdad directly by its people, launches the project of “Baghdad 2020: Capital of Rising and Hope”.**



Sayyid Ammar al-Hakim, head of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI), has stressed that Baghdad does not need a project or an initiative; rather, it needs a real construction epic that covers all economic, housing and service aspects based on a studied scientific planning and defined by a specific time period. He announced the launching by the Citizen Coalition of the Baghdad construction epic, i.e. the “Baghdad 2020: Capital of Rising and Hope” project. He explained that the project would continue for seven years so Baghdad may rise again and may become the symbol of hope and of the future, stressing that Baghdad does not need a grant, a gift or a patching project here and there. He drew attention to everyone without any exception having fallen short towards Baghdad as a result of poor vision and thinking. He stressed the necessity for Baghdad to be the capital of sovereignty and Iraqi unity, calling for getting the post of mayor of Baghdad out of the political quota by the residents of Baghdad directly electing the mayor of their city and its municipal council. This came up during the massive festival for the Citizen Coalition 411 in Baghdad on Tuesday, April 16, 2013.

### **The “Baghdad 2020: Capital of Rising and Hope” Project**

His Eminence explained that the “Baghdad 2020: Capital of Rising and Hope” project contains several axes: They include setting a Baghdad reconstruction fund by deducting 1.5% of the general budget to finance this fund for 7 years. It specifically finances the capital’s strategic projects outside the scope of the earmarked general budgets, in addition to forming the Baghdad Reconstruction Council to oversee the designs and the implementation of the strategic projects provided it is comprised of the capital’s social and academic segments, i.e. engineers, businessmen, architects, artists and economists. The project also includes restructuring the Baghdad municipality and the issuing of the Baghdad Municipality Law as well as expanding the powers of the mayoralty by adding Baghdad’s outskirts to its powers and the forming of the municipality of the Greater Baghdad and the forming of the Mayoral Council provided the mayor and the mayoral council are directly elected by the people of Baghdad so the post of mayor may get out of the political quota. He stressed that the theory of developing Baghdad must start from the outskirts in the direction of the heart and emphasizing that developing Baghdad’s outskirts would develop and speed up the ending of the siege of the outskirts, that raising the status of and developing Baghdad requires developing areas of Jurf al-Naddaf, Abu Ghraib, al-Mahmoudiyya, al-Hussainiyya, Hayy Tariq, Sab` Qusoor, al-Ma`amil, al-Taji and other suburbs after these areas are annexed to the Greater Baghdad Mayoralty. He explained that the Citizen Coalition’s project includes modernizing the basic design for the capital, Baghdad, due to the passage of thirty years since the basic design presently in effect was made. He pointed out that it includes building the government city in Baghdad where all ministries and government offices are grouped in it, thus the ministries and offices that

spread throughout Baghdad are drawn to one place. This will help end the bottlenecks in Baghdad and will facilitate the process of the citizens' administrative visits. It also includes the building of the diplomatic quarter in Baghdad and the Baghdad University city in the capacity to absorb 30,000 male and female students and the ending of the outer loop highway project for Baghdad which are routes 3, 4 and 5 which all are within the basic design and have not been implemented for 30 years. It contributes to the development of the suburbs through adding the development of new land plots within Baghdad's perimeter, and big sites are offered for investment, explaining that Baghdad is distinguished for being circular which makes all areas near the center if there is a sound transportation network. His Eminence went on to say in his talk about the "Baghdad 2020" project that it includes the implementation of the Baghdad Metro project and the suspended train project in order to link parts of the capital to each other and ridding Baghdad of the dangers of increasing pollution as well as alleviating the crowding which wastes time and hinders work and production. In order to treat the housing crisis, the project includes the building of the Amal [hope] Residential City in the capacity of 250,000 residential units to treat the housing crisis in the capital and encouraging the vertical construction because the horizontal construction has consumed the capital's lands and shrunk the green areas, and includes a green belt around Baghdad city.

Real investing is taking ordinary land plots and turning them into opportunities and valuable projects

His Eminence explained that the project aims at employing the privatization principle in administering the city's service projects by seeking help of international companies in this regard, especially in the field of waste recycling, sanitary sewers , tree planting, redeveloping the Adhamiyya area, developing the entire al-Rashid Street basin, implementing the Kadhimiyya city development, building the industrial city for Greater Baghdad, ending the phenomenon of random spread of plants, rehabilitating both Tigris River banks and encouraging investment in them since they represent Baghdad's lung and a great tourist wealth, in addition to creating facilities to attract local and foreign investment in Baghdad, especially in the tourist field and the rehabilitation of investments in Baghdad. He stressed that what is now happening is not real investment, for the land plots that have distinctive locations are given away free of charge while they are worth hundreds of millions he has regarded true investing as taking ordinary land plots and turning them into opportunities and valuable projects, in addition to speeding up the implementation of the Sadr City 10 X 10 project, the rehabilitating of the archeological and historic sites and buildings that surround Baghdad and investing them in order to acquaint people with Iraq's civilization, attract tourists and bring back to life Shorja quarters as historic bazaars, the restoring of the Baghdadi stamp and architecture for the quarters, mosques, Husaiyyas, churches, temples, institutions, building and roads so Baghdad may restore its attraction, charm, status, outfit and fame as the city of A Thousand Nights and a Night and of Ali Baba and putting an end to the problem of electricity, waters,

sanitary sewers, roads, sidewalks, the chaos of building by depending on modern plans and solid international companies.

Baghdad cannot rise while suffering from insufficient budget, bad planning and the crisscrossing of powers

His Eminence explained that Baghdad could not rise as it suffers from a shortage of budget, ill planning, the entanglement and crisscrossing of powers between governorate and municipality, stressing that it is not begging anyone or demanding a grant because it is already supporting the budget with much funds from various activities. He brought back to memory the fact that the capital is floating on a lake of oil, regarding the development of east Baghdad fields as ensuring an increase in the production of these fields and providing billions of dollars to the central budget, stressing that the Citizen Coalition's project revolves round a reconstruction time period of seven years supported by a budget capable of meeting the demands of reconstruction. He explained that it is time Baghdad was liberated from the mandate and seized its own affairs, that it must choose its own mayor by itself and gets out of lethal administrative bureaucracy, calling on the people of Baghdad to hold in their hands the reins of the initiative and determine the fate of their city and the capital of Iraq, reminding them that wars, afflictions, tragedies and dictatorship have taken their toll on Baghdad, then came the grudges of the terrorists to consume what is left of Baghdad, yet it remained firm, and it now needs actions, neither words nor false promises.

Politics is providing services and prosperity to the people, not prosaic speeches and parliamentary battles.

Sayyid Ammar al-Hakim explained that the Movement of the Martyr of the Niche and of the Citizen Coalition believe that politics is not only social theories; rather, it is actions translated on the grounds of the reality in building a school or a hospital, in making a new road, providing housing, and various services. He stressed the belief of the Movement of the Martyr of the Niche that politics means that we must provide services and prosperity to our people and not prosaic speeches, parliamentary battles and a struggle for power and gains, stressing that the Movement of the Martyr of the Niche presents its candidates to Baghdad and bears the full responsibility for their performance and action in serving the mistress of capitals. His eminence reiterated that the Movement of the Martyr of the Niche will never be courteous to anyone at the expense of Baghdad, nor will it permit anyone to corrupt or to fall short; it will watch, monitor and precisely hold them to account, and it will not repeat the mistakes, nor will it permit trust to be utilized again, and it will not accept anyone to tarnish its image. He explained that the Movement of the Martyr of the Niche is the one that has this project, and it will not permit anyone to take advantage of its project for his own personal interest, explaining that the Citizen Coalition will place its hand in the hand of anyone who believe in the "Baghdad 2020: Capital of Rising and of Hope" project because it deserves more,

regarding the broad participation in the elections as the important step to regain the rights and curtail rigging and vote tampering, to choose the competent and honest persons in the qualified and strong slate, and this is what the religious Marji`iyya has recommended; it is the strong fort for this good people. He called on the sons of Baghdad to give their precious votes to those who deserve them because deserves more, explaining that when the Movement of the Martyr of the Niche presents its projects for the capital, Baghdad, it says through these projects: This is our project for building the New Iraq within a fair modern state that believes in rights and responsibilities, believes in coexistence, in partnership, in participation, in dialogue, and it tries to establish justice and resists injustice and despotism, believing in liberties and in the law. He stressed that building the governorates is everyone's responsibility starting from the governorate council, the council of representatives (parliament), the council of ministers (cabinet), the Higher Judicial Council, etc., each according to his powers and specialization. He pointed out to the projects of the Movement of the Martyr of the Niche are for all Iraqis and benefit everyone, emphasizing the need to build Iraq and to get it out of the rubble of the past years that have destroyed this great homeland, regarding reliance on Allah as the key to success.

Baghdad is the heart, the rest of the world is the body, and the body cannot be healthy if its heart is sick

His Eminence regarded Baghdad as the pride of the world because it is perfumed by the presence of both Kadhim Imams, peace with them, of both great sahabis (companions of the Holy Prophet), Salman al-Farisi and Huthayfah ibn al-Yaman, may Allah Almighty be pleased with both of them, of Abu Haneefah al-Nu`man, of Abdul-Qadir al-Gailani and of the four ambassadors from among the deputies of Imam al-Mahdi, the Awaited One, may Allah hasten his sacred ease, and of the mausoleums of the friends of Allah and of many righteous men. He explained that in it rests Sheikh al-Mufid and both Sharif Sayyids, al-Murtada and al-Radi, and from it did knowledge spread throughout the world, so science moved with Sheikh al-Tusi to al-Najaf al-Ashraf. He pointed out that in Baghdad is Ibn Tawoos who taught science; from it did the flag of jihad start facing the British occupation of Iraq in 1914 carried by both great mujahids, Sayyid Mahdi al-Haideri and Sheikh Mahdi al-Khalisi, may Allah have mercy on both of them. He added saying, "And here was Sayyid Hibat ad-Din al-Shahristai disseminating knowledge and building monuments for it, and from here did the great martyr, Sayyid Muhammed Baqir al-Sadr (may his soul be sanctified), rise. He explained that in Baghdad are the Al [clansmen of] Haideri, Al al-Sadr, Al Kubbah, Al al-Chalabi, al-Alusi, al-Naqeeb, al-Chadarchi and the honorable families of Baghdad that gave Iraq all the goodness they had, regarding Baghdad as the heart while the rest of the world is the body, and the body will never be healthy if its heart is sick; and that it is the orchard while the rest of the world are gardens surrounding it.