

## **We Look Forward to Building a Crisis and Tension-Free Iraq Based on Democracy, Freedom and Mutual Respect**



Sayyid Ammar al-Hakim, head of the Islamic Superior Council of Iraq, said the Martyr of the Niche movement and the Citizen Coalition strongly believe that diversity is the strength of Iraq, and that its historical and present unity of people and land makes it a special country, while affirming that they will give outstretched hand to all of the winners in the elections in order to build this country and drive it to a bright future as planned in the platform of the Citizen Alliance designed for the provinces.

This was during a speech on TV pronounced by his Eminence on Sunday, April 21, 2013 upon the end of voting in the provincial council elections.

His Eminence stated that dialogue is the main dynamic and motivation for the democratic action, stressing the significance of engaging in an open dialogue over all developmental and structural matters which concern the country and shape its future. He said there may be differences of opinion in such exchange of views; however, it is important to know and learn the culture of the constructive, not destructive difference. According to him, stubbornly adhering to one's opinion makes us unconsciously tighten the screws on the democratic process and stifle any participation in the decision making, which makes any real agreement impossible to reach.

His Eminence also pointed out that accepting diversity and allowing others to express different point of views are essential to democracy. "We look forward to building a crisis and tension –free Iraq based on democracy, freedom and mutual respect. And this is the way that will lead us to the bright future all the Iraqis deserve", he added. He maintained that the elections represent the right of peoples who believe in freedom and democracy in life, and are a real marker of the strength of the Iraqi public institutions since this is the first time that elections, in all phases, were held by Iraqi citizens in a sovereign environment. Moreover, he said the dialogue and discussion must focus on matters that concern the citizens and the country mainly combating poverty and unemployment, improving health and education services and fighting all forms of corruption.

His Eminence also addressed the leaders of political blocs, when he emphasized the importance of turning the difference of opinion into a dynamic for everyone to get ahead, as well as the belief in we-give-as-much-as-we-take principle and that the honest political work must be built on altruism. He explained that the next stage will be that of big challenges and hard turning points and that the participation in shaping the future of the country is the key to a safe future for all segments of people. He also stated that the difference does not indicate irregularities, rather a ground for dialogue and diverse ideas and that the difference must be held within the national and constitutional principles while strongly believing in the new Iraq.