

## **For a Radical Change in Services, Sayyid Ammar al-Hakim Stresses the Need that the Provincial Councils Make Alliances within Well-defined Vision and Program**



Sayyid Ammar al-Hakim, head of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq, said the local governments are the first line in the governmental dealing with people, because they are service governments having direct contact with their life, considering the formation of a coordinated team in the provincial councils as one of the main missions for alliances. He also underlined the need that the alliances be made within well-defined vision and program in order to make radical change in the services rendered by these governments, making clear that the Martyr of the Niche movement run his men for executive positions in order to offer something and make an achievement, while at the same time its members do not care about positions and cannot risk taking the blame for them if they find themselves unable to offer the services for any reason. Moreover, he pointed out that homogenous provinces will create homogenous governments, those to be produced by these councils, and that without such homogeneity, discord and blockage will be characteristic of the provincial councils and each party will try to impede the other's action, warning that the result does not rise up to the ambition, and as a consequence, the councils and the governments they represent would fail. "The competency of the officeholder is what makes the change", he added. This came during a speech delivered by his Eminence during the ceremony held on the occasion of the birth of Imams Hussein (AS), Sajjad (AS) and Abbass (AS) in his Eminence's office in Baghdad Wednesday 12/6/2013.

### **The Martyr of the Niche Was the First Political Movement to Strongly Support the Local Governments**

His Eminence maintained that the alliances are not, and will not be, the end of the road, considering them as agreements on a plan of action, a vision and a way of governance so as to achieve success with the available opportunities, stating that the Martyr of the Niche movement will withdraw from the local governments, and will only act as observer in case he would not be able to make the change or set things rights. His Eminence also reminded that the Martyr of the Niche was the first political movement to strongly support the local governments in the first round with the available means and within the then complicated situation. "In the second round, the other parties decided to build alliances between them, with us out, and we have remained unrepresented in the executive positions in the provinces for four years. That's why we reconsidered the situation, arranged our ranks and reevaluated our capacities and men", he said, adding that "democracy is that people have the power to delegate you, then depose you". According to his Eminence, in this round, the Iraqi voters have given to each party a little bit of trust. "Therefore, no party won a landslide victory, and each party needed the other parties to work", he commented, considering the choices of the Iraqi voters as an evolution towards the right way albeit all the obstacles, and that they are increasingly built on the

reality. Moreover, he called on the provincial councils to be as much developed as the public who elected them. In his opinion, the voters today are more aware of their rights and more able to hold them accountable through the ballot. His Eminence considered the current round as the most hardest and the most challenging to everybody without exception, justifying that this period is pivotal and that the youth are the greatest segment of the society and are more interested in the performance of the local governments than in that of the federal government. "The observance will start as of the first day, and the evaluation will start as of the first year", he stated.

As Long as There Is a Will to Find a Solution, We Will Absolutely Reach Realistic and Logical Solutions Acceptable to all Parties

Sayyid Ammar al-Hakim said the visit of the Prime Minister, Nouri al-Maliki to Erbil and the meeting of the cabinet held there prove that the fellow leaders started to reach out to each other, meet and engage in dialogue, agreeing with the Prime Minister in that he does not have a magic wand that can solve all the outstanding problems. According to his Eminence, this is true given the accumulated problems that may not be settled in one visit or one meeting. However, "as long as there is a will to find a solution, we will absolutely reach realistic and logical solutions acceptable to all parties", he said, adding that "a vision of how to reduce the problems to zero helps end them". In addition, he considered the relation between the region and the center as an important pillar in shaping the modern state of Iraq, and at the same time, as an indicator to the nature of the relation between the central government and the rest of the provinces. "The federal system of the new Iraq, which is written in the constitution, is not easy or familiar in our region or our personal and social culture, and that facing the problems is something normal in dealing with and adapting to it", he declared. "Federalism means wide governance powers for the region, though not to mean independence because the interests of the country prevail over those of the region, while at the same time, the central federal government will watch over the Kurdistan region and protect it without restricting its powers". In his opinion, federalism is a system in which the space of freedom and that of responsibility and commitment are equal, and the adaption to the system's requirements needs the time and the open democratic culture as well as one understanding of the concept of the country between the Kurdistan region and the State where it is. He also explained that this is why the visit of the Prime Minister was considered as success, since it helped break the deadlock that marked the relation between the federal government and that of the Kurdistan region in the past, saying he has no doubt that the frequent meetings between both leaderships would help find satisfactory solutions to the outstanding problems and reinforce the relation between the region and the center.

We Hope the Cabinet Convenes in Anbar, Salaheddine and the Provinces of the South

The head of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq confirmed that the cabinet meeting in the provinces is a practical and significant step that brings the federal government officials in contact with the real environment of the different Iraqi provinces, thus making it easier to understand the needs of these provinces and learn about the challenges they face, and also resulting in moral and psychological benefits. This was in fact sensed in the cabinet meeting in Erbil thanks to which a meeting was held between Prime Minister Nouri Al Maliki and Kurdistan Region President Massoud Barzani. Sayyid al-Hakim hoped that the next cabinet meetings in the provinces of Anbar, Mosul and Salaheddine and in the provinces of the south will be an opportunity for government officials to meet, get introduced to the local governments and exchange viewpoints. He indicated that to run a country, the cabinet in such country must have the ability to communicate with the different parties and that the technical teams in the federal government be in contact with the technical teams in the local governments and regions. In such way, maximum streamlining can be achieved in the performance of the central administration with the provinces and vice versa.

#### Turkey no longer Applies the "Zero Problems" Policy with its Neighbors

As far as Turkey is concerned, Sayyid Ammar al-Hakim highlighted that the reactions to the latest events in Turkey, whether admonishing, advising, gloating over them or silent, prove that Turkey no longer applies the "zero problems" policy with its neighbors. Sayyid Al Hakim clarified that what is happening in Turkey represents warning signals about the nature of Turkey's relation with some of its important and close neighbors, indicating that the current protests prove to the Turkish government that not anyone who takes to streets is necessarily right and the people's movements mostly start innocently and spontaneously, but sooner people with personal interests and projects manipulate them and deviate them from their normal path. His Eminence considered that Turkey is a successful country that was able in no time to achieve a quantum leap for its citizens and to become a recognized economic power. Turkey's "zero problems" policy is one of the most important factors that helped the country accomplish these achievements.

#### The Births of Imams are Interrelated and the Proximity of their Births Is not a Coincidence

His Eminence stated that the births of Imams Hussein (AS), Abbas (AS) and Sajjad (AS) in the beginning of the month of Sha'ban are no mere coincidence and that there is a link between them. Sayyid Ammar Al Hakim explained that Imam Hussein (AS) is the owner of the project, Abou Fadl (AS) the holder of the banner and Imam Sajjad (AS) the guardian and protector of the project, indicating that several lessons can be learned from the births of the Imams and the project of Imam Hussein (AS), most importantly, the need to have faith in Allah, full preparedness to sacrifice and submission to Allah's will; second, the importance of identifying the objective and focusing on the track of the project; third, that the approach of Imam

Hussein (AS) is a lamp-light illuminating people's paths and fourth, the social responsibility to introduce change and reform.