

## Sayyid Ammar Al Hakim Shares Christmas Celebrations with Christian Iraqis

The Head of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq, Sayyid Ammar Al Hakim, reiterated that Christians in Iraq are not just an addition in numbers but a qualitative addition that is seen as a new color to the Iraqi bouquet of roses. His Eminence stressed the need to preserve religious freedoms and the practice of rituals for all sects and categories in Iraq.

This came when his Eminence was participating with Christians in Baghdad in the celebration of the birth of Christ (peace be upon him), on Tuesday 24/12/2013.

His Eminence explained that the Christ was a man of peace and his project was a project of peace and tolerance. He confronted dictatorships and tyrant regimes at the time, Sayyid Al Hakim continued. Imam Hussein (AS) is the successor of Prophet Isa (peace be upon him), the legacy being the human project and message. His Eminence assured that Muslims and Christians

of Iraq are both being targeted and defied, as they are compelled to confront this extremism and positions strange to our Iraqi community, stressing the need to overcome the challenges through unity and cohesion.

Here below is the text of the statement:

Talking about Christ means talking about this ordeal and pain and how he dealt with it. How did the Christ deal with his enemies and whoever wanted to target his project? He prayed that they be guided and forgiven and wished that they turn from sins. He was a man of peace, and his project was a project of peace and tolerance. His companions were advocates of forgiveness and coexistence. He has become a flame for humanity and has confronted dictatorships and tyrant regimes at the time. He did that in a peaceful manner in an atmosphere of coexistence, tolerance and mindedness. He dealt with others in this spirit and he triumphed despite their capacities.

Today, when we look back at this great human history and at the movement of great divine messages, when we go over the good men throughout human history, especially that we are commemorating the birth of the Christ in parallel with the Arba'een of Imam Hussein (AS), we can see that Hussein is the heir of Isa and this is what we interpret from this visit. It is a legacy of human project and message that both have carried. You know that the Holy Quran mentions in many places the Prophet Isa and Virgin Mary with high regard, veneration and respect. It mentions the presence of women in the divine project of change and reform. Each time a prophet was set to diffuse a message, he had a woman beside him. Isa (pbuh) had the Virgin Mary beside him, our Prophet Mohamed (pbuh) had Fatima, Hussein (AS) had Zaynab. This shows that women are present in the divine project, in the project of change. The Disciples

of Christ belonged to different social categories, and this is what we find in the companions of Hussein, from newborn Abdullah to youngsters to adults. The sheikh of the tribe was present, and modest people were present for the triumph of the divine project.

We must remember that the project of Christ and embody it in our life nowadays. Christ is not just history we need, but a fact that we live daily. We ought to bear ordeals and unjust targeting. Just like Christ faced difficulties with peace and love, we should face fragmentation and extremism today with the same spirit. If Christ did not kneel or bend before all these ordeals, we must be strong. I always say that Christians in Iraq are not just an addition in numbers but a qualitative addition that is seen as a new color to the Iraqi bouquet of roses. This is a message to stress the need to preserve religious freedoms and the practice of rituals. Muslims are killed by Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham and others, and you are targeted by them as well. Consequently, we are both being targeted and defied, as they are compelled to confront this extremism and positions strange to our Iraqi community. We should overcome the challenges through unity and cohesion. We ought to live together under the umbrella of Iraq, this country that gathers us all and the humanity that brings us together.