

At Their Second Conference, Sayyid Ammar Al Hakim Calls the Government to Create a Specialized Body in Charge of Caring for Persons with Special Needs

The Head of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq, Sayyid Ammar Al Hakim, called the Iraqi government to take the necessary measures to create a specialized body in charge of caring for persons with disabilities and special needs and enforce the law ratified by the parliament. His Eminence expressed his joy that the parliament responded to the first conference's demand of adopting the creation of the body and regretted at the same time the lack of any appropriations allocated for the creation of this body in the general budget of 2014. His Eminence also called to provide care for the disabled and persons with special needs, introduce their issues as integral part of the related strategies of the sustainable development and take all the legislative, administrative and other measures that guarantee that this segment acquires its natural rights, including to be given the priority with respect to the achievement of the formalities with the governmental departments. Sayyid Al Hakim explained the importance of eliminating all forms of discrimination based on the

disability as its cause, because this represents a violation of the dignity and the human value and oblige all the governmental and private institutions to provide the facilities and utilities required for this segment in their environment. He insisted on putting in place the general plans and programs that secure the rights of this segment, as well as the plans that prevent the causes of disability, indicating the importance of making available a database on the persons with special needs according to the age and the nature of disability. His Eminence called to provide the treatments, the social services and the psychological and professional rehabilitation for the disabled and persons with special needs, develop the rehabilitation, care and health centers designed for this segment, and catch up with the modern technology with respect to inventions in order to develop the tools and equipment that help and enable the disabled to live a normal life. He highlighted as well the need to provide public and private education and higher vocational education opportunities for the said segment, set up the educational programs according to their capacities, ensure skillful educational and technical personnel to deal with them and designate special classroom seats for the disabled and persons with special needs to be able to pursue their higher studies. This came during the second conference for persons with special needs held at His Eminence's office in Baghdad, on Saturday, March 1, 2014.

Providing Work Opportunities and Job Position for the Disabled is One of Their Rights

His Eminence stressed the need to train persons with disabilities and develop their performance according to the needs of the labor market, provide job opportunities that fit their capacities and allow them job positions within the personnel of the ministries and the non-ministerial institutions. He demanded giving monthly subsidies to the persons with special needs unable to work, provide a 50% discount when hired at the public utilities and services including transportation means such as the Iraqi airlines, give them easy loans to improve their social and human situation, open marriage opportunities for the persons with special needs and the state shall ensure the supply of the requirements and assume the marriage costs without discrimination based on the nature or cause of the disability. His

Eminence also insisted on looking after the disabled women and understanding their suffering and the psychological, medical, social and economic needs and called for setting up sport clubs and centers exclusively for this segment and supporting them in order to give the disabled the chance to be active in this vital field and for cancelling around 25% of their income tax. Furthermore, Sayyid Al Hakim called to activate the role of the mass media in spreading the popular awareness about the persons with special needs, promote and encourage their support, treat them impartially and shed the light on the creative and distinguished ones, urging the competent authorities to attach importance to the political and democratic participation of the persons with special needs, ensure that they have influential presence and quality contributions to the public political, administrative and social arena, not to mention the active participation in elections, and give trust to whoever understand their suffering, defend their rights and make their ambitions come true. Caring for persons with special needs is the essential standard to measure a people's civilization. His Eminence considered that everybody has special needs but the needs of persons with disabilities are clearer and more urgent, and underlined the importance of correcting the understanding to correct the path. He affirmed that Iraq needs serious work and a strong will to handle this significant group of people in our society, especially that the exceptional circumstances that Iraq has been witnessing for decades has led to a high percentage of people belonging to this group. Wars, terrorism, wrong medical practices, some irresponsible social practices and congenital diseases have all significantly contributed to the increase of the ratio of persons with special needs in our community. His Eminence expressed his deep sorrow for the fact that this segment is forgotten and left alone to face different challenges and struggle against misapprehension, social ignorance and human neglect. He explained that caring for persons with special needs is the essential standard to measure a people's civilization and added that Iraq's progress will remain slow and deficient as long as this group of people is not receiving sufficient and real care. He also indicated that the care that civilized peoples manifest towards persons with special needs is not restricted to human concepts and to the fact that humans are the highest values in life, but also it is also based on educational, cultural and economic pillars. Persons with special needs, he added, are no longer viewed as weak and miserable humans who deserve mercy, charity and empathy, but they

are now seen with a more open vision as being humans, even if they are deprived from certain physical abilities, humans who have so many other capabilities and who may become, if opportunities were made available, great scientists, inventors or artists in many areas; examples of that are many in our daily life. Persons with special needs in countries that -respect their peoples have become productive humans who participate in life and decision making. Certainly, the factors that contributed to this leap are the major legislative developments in laws, conventions and pacts related to the rights of this group, as persons with disabilities were recognized as equal to others in society.

Unfortunately, Infrastructures Do not Observe the Requirements of Persons with Special Needs

Sayyid Ammar al-Hakim considered Iraq as relatively well behind with respect to the issue of the persons with special needs which became most of the time a matter of slogans and seasonal interests only, explaining that the laws concerning persons with special needs have not been activated, nor have the legislations, regulations and governmental instructions that deal with them been completed. He said unfortunately in Iraq, we do not take into consideration the services which should be provided for the persons with special needs when designing and implementing the infrastructures of the streets, buildings, schools, entertainments centers, parking lots and even places of worship, and this is why those persons feel embarrassed whenever they visit these places because they are not designed in a way that enables them to use them easily. According to him, this means that we lack the adequate legislative, executive and service resources for the persons with special needs, and instead all what we do is uttering expressions of mercy and charity. He confirmed that those people do not want you to have pity on them because they are strong and their heart is full of faith, yet they want their legal rights and to be active in the society they are integral part of, stressing at the same time the importance of raising the awareness of the persons with special needs about their rights, since the need and disability entails acquired rights for the affected persons and therefore it is necessary to give strict instructions to the governmental and civil institutions to give special care for the persons with special needs and complete their formalities in an exceptional way given

their special condition as in any civilized country.

Our Resisting Anbar Initiative Was Launched based on the Light Will against Darkness
His Eminence maintained that the real disabled are those who suffer from corrupt moral and intellectual disability, describing them as morally disabled because they justify the death with no reason and limit the religion to a lunch in the claimed paradise, when in fact hell will be their reward and the reward of the founders of this corrupt thinking, considering the triumph over terrorism as a matter of time and an act of will because they are wrong and we are right, they are the darkness and we are the light, they are the death and we are the life. He added that the will is the true political one that works on building the state and its institutions and a new Iraqi citizen, the will of common action, reminding that on this basis, our "Resisting Anbar" initiative was launched because we believe that there is no victory without cooperation and no peace if we do not all contribute to this victory and that fighting terrorism is everyone's responsibility.

Elections, the Hope for Change

His Eminence stated that the elections which represent the introduction into a new strategic stage in our Iraqi reality and that we believe that a big segment of the Iraqi people is now highly politically mature and is able to select the right project. In his opinion, those citizens depend no longer on emotions, instead they are more intellectually aware, thus supporting the well-defined project and vision to build the state and find the adequate solutions and remedies for the crises the country is going through, and they managed to choose their representatives in the Council of Representatives based on convictions not under influences or on emotions. Thus he urged everybody to strongly participate in these elections since they constitute the birth of a new stage, a new vision and real solutions for the problems and crises in Iraq, describing the elections as the hope that encourages us to make a change and step forward. One can tolerate some negligence, he said, but we cannot

allow any negligence in holding elections on their due time without postponement or delay or in its integrity and transparency without manipulation or fraud.