TV interview on Al-Taghyeer Channel with Sayyid Al-Hakeem, the leader of the National State Powers' Alliance.

Host

20 years have passed since the start of the political process, in which you played a prominent role. How would you assess this timeframe with complete impartiality, with all of the years that have passed?"

Sayyid Al-Hakee

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

Greetings to you and our dear viewers.

In truth, these past 20 years have not been ideal. They witnessed achievements and victories, as well as failures and setbacks, just as in the course of a human life. Humanity experiences ups and downs, much like the heartbeat, which rises and falls. This is life. To assess any specific phenomenon fairly and objectively, we must take into account its circumstances and the surrounding factors. Our country has gone through 50 years of continuous wars, with varying patterns of conflict, including famine, siege, and the numerous challenges faced by Iraqis. Considering this 50-year history of ongoing conflicts, we must take note of these realities and the challenges that Iraqis have endured, as well as the significant diversity within Iraq: different sects, ethnicities, tribes, clans, religions, specific regions, regional and international contexts, and the extent to which their perspectives, impressions, evaluations, and fears have influenced the Iraqi experience. All these factors have led to major complexities in the Iraqi domestic scene. When we assess all these things, I believe that we are on an upward trajectory. Today, as we evaluate our current situation compared to the past, the political environment has become more conducive to dialogue, shared language, and the ability to reach common outcomes among political leaders. On the security front, our cities are largely secure, and security is stable. There are real efforts to dismantle terrorist cells. Immense sacrifices have been made to liberate every inch of land and eliminate the threats that were a source of concern for Iraqis. In terms of societal interaction, the sectarian and ethnic components have transformed into cooperation and solidarity among Iraqis. Administrative and service-related aspects are gradually improving, and the country's resources are being managed more effectively.

We are lagging in some aspects compared to other nations, but in terms of our challenges and problems, we have made progress over these 20 years. The country is slowly regaining stability, which I consider a significant development.

Host

Regarding the upward trajectory you mentioned, some listeners may still believe that there are ongoing disputes, especially significant Sunni-Sunni and Shia-Shia disputes. How can this trajectory be sustained in the face of disputes that have sometimes reached the point of breaking?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem

Firstly, disagreement, and difference, are innate in human nature and societies. A society without differences, where everyone thinks the same way, raises doubts about their minds, doubts about the required human diversity. But as I mentioned earlier, the competition was once Shia and Sunni, from different ethnic backgrounds. Today, there are differences in perspectives within the same group, which means moving away from sectarian and ethnic biases and starting to take on political dimensions. Political disagreement is a healthy phenomenon in any democratic system. All democracies are built on support and opposition, on differing opinions. People assess and vote for those whose views align with their interests, they experiment, and it may succeed or fail, so they vote for someone else. This diversity of opinions and differences in perspectives should exist within the same group, within the same color. This means that the identity here is political, not ethnic or sectarian, and that, in itself, is an evolution in the democratic reality.

Host

Very well. Your Eminence, when you mentioned that the conflict used to be societal, the conflict that was societal during the sectarian era was the result of political actions. Now, we have moved beyond the societal conflict. The society has managed to organize itself. The current political conflict, if you want to explain it, provide an analysis and description, or delve into its causes, what do you say about it?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem

As you mentioned, sectarianism in Iraq was not societal sectarianism; it was political sectarianism. The political actors are the ones who left their mark. Today, when we talk about societal harmony, it also reveals a common language among politicians that I have started with. Today, we are talking about a State Running Coalition with 280 parliamentary seats and political powers from all Iraqi components forming the framework and supportive environment for this government. Therefore, there are commonalities, a clear vision, and a political agreement that has outlined the features and roadmap that politicians can understand and rendezvous at. As I mentioned on the day when differences end, and all politicians have one opinion, we must doubt ourselves, our capabilities, our history, and our civilization. We will always face more

than one opinion, and we must coexist with the diversity of views. It is not a flaw to differ, but it is a flaw to be unable to manage differences among us and reach results within our legal, constitutional, political, and social context, and the traditions of political work.

Host

Was your disagreement a blessing?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem

In some cases, disagreement was a blessing, and in some cases, it was a curse, and in some cases, disagreements got out of control. All of these exist. We cannot measure everything, but the essence of diversity in ideas, opinions, and approaches gives vitality and dynamism. Our people are larger than being reduced to one direction and one project. Multiple projects, and diverse opinions, allow every citizen to find their representation in some of these political powers, and this diversity is important. The important thing is to establish rules on how we organize the process. If there are cars on the road and no traffic rules, these vehicles can collide with each other and create a major traffic jam. The traffic police officer's job is to guide people back to traffic rules, and there should be a smooth traffic flow. People go right, left, and in different directions. Similarly, political powers with their different approaches express the diverse mood of our great nation with its rich civilization.

Host

I will stop at your statement to Davutoglu, the Turkish Foreign Minister when he came to you on a certain matter, and you said no. If you were wrong, you learned a lesson, and if you were right, you navigated the unknown path. Is this unknown still with Sayyid Al-Hakeem?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem

Certainly, things are clearer now. The approaches have been sorted out, matters have become clearer, and the country's situation, in general, has stabilized. The influences that were present in 2010, which you alluded to, have subsided. The situations have evolved, but at every turn, in every crisis, opinions may vary in their evaluation, analysis, foresight of the future, and its implications. Leaders will differ in their assessment at that time. On that day, many political powers had a direction to go, but we had our point of view on evaluating political performance, and we thought that this project, with this composition and these priorities, might not have been productive. Later days showed that our assessments were close to being correct.

Host

What is your decision’s basis on whether to participate or not? You did not participate in the government of Al-Maliki, you did not participate in the government of Abdul Mahdi, and now you will not participate in the government of Al-Sudani. Is the objection to the way of formation, or the leader's personality, or to the government program? What are your pre-formed evaluations in opposition to formation?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem

In truth, we institutionally manage our affairs. We have decision-making forums where we sit together, consult, delve deep, and analyze. In 2010, and 2018, when we assessed the circumstances, we found that the equation, the composition method, and the priorities presented at that time for the team in charge did not offer opportunities for success. We did not want to involve ourselves in a project with which we were not convinced of its paths and outcomes. Therefore, we chose to stay outside the government. Yet, during Mr. Al-Sudani's tenure, the matter had a different context since the 2021 elections brought unbalanced and unrealistic outcomes.

Host

Unrealistic? What does this term mean?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem

For a simple reason, we obtained 400,000 votes and received 4 seats. So, the price of one seat became 100,000 votes, while for another political party, the price of one seat was 12,000 votes. This means that each of our seats is equivalent to nine seats for another political entity that participated in the same process. I don't want to dwell on the past and get into a debate about the reasons for these results. Is it due to poor management or legal requirements? Or is it other factors? Whatever the reason, we ended up with four seats, which did not suit us, considering our history, popular base, and extensive presence. It was not appropriate for us to participate in the government with these results. “Allah bless those who know their value. Even if we had 400,000 votes, our seats were not in a suitable proportion to represent us adequately in the government. We chose not to participate, and Sayyid Al-Sadr encouraged and supported us in the first stage and presented a proposal. I apologized to His Eminence.

Host

How did a small faction overpower a larger one?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem

In my estimation, roles are not limited to government positions. In a democratic system, we must adhere to its rules. Democracy is a numbers game, regardless of the reasons or the size of the popular base. When you come out with four seats, it is not appropriate for you to participate in this phase. You must respect your history, your popular base, and your principles. Therefore, we exercise an influential role in political life, but not through the government.

Host

I listened to the answer, and it resonated in my mind, but I don't know why I have doubts or suspicions. There is another truth or interpretation that you hold or have thought about, or you believe in regarding non-participation. This time, you have four seats, but in previous stages, you had more seats in other phases. So, what gives?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem

I am straightforward with you and with my people, and I must be honest. So, I mentioned the justifications in the previous two stages, in 2010, 2014, 2018, 2020, and 2023, we did not participate in those stages. It is not for one reason. We saw that the team, priorities, discourse, and project were difficult to accept under Iraq's circumstances and conditions at those times. The results in 2010 and 201 had been proven, and ISIS emerged and took 40% of Iraq's territory, and there were problems. Therefore, our reading and foresight were correct, regardless of the reasons, in 2018, it led to the resignation of Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi after just one year in office. It also proved that our reading and foresight were correct, that this equation and this composition were difficult to achieve the desired success. In Prime Minister Al-Sudani's government, this time, it is different because the reason is related to the outcomes of the electoral process.

Host

If this pen were given to His Eminence Sayyid Ammar Al-Hakeem and was asked, "Do you want to maintain the quota system as a political approach to governance, or do you want to abolish it?" What would you write?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem

Life is not black and white, and there is no simple yes or no answer when it comes to power-sharing. We believe in collaboration among political parties and powers participating in the political process. We are not the only parliamentary system in the world; there are 80

countries governed in this manner. In a parliamentary system, political powers participate, and based on the winners, they work together and cooperate. They collaborate to form a majority and then create a government. This means they must have a role in administration, and they should have ministerial candidates and the like. Collaboration is acceptable in this context. However, the quota system is where ministers are chosen based solely on their party affiliation, leading to interference in all details of the ministry, from deputy ministers to directors and even ordinary employees and officials in various departments. This approach is flawed. We should have institutions where responsibilities are assigned based on job hierarchy, logically and reasonably. Ministers should be selected based on the winning parties and from allied parties to form the parliamentary majority that leads to the formation of the government.

Host

A little while ago, Your Eminence mentioned that one of the reasons for not participating was Your objection to the method of participation or the partnership that took place. In other words, you have an issue with the quota system in governing the country, as in, it's the one that produced all these problems that we are all suffering from?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem

There is not a sole reason, Surely, the quota system, as I explained earlier, involves every official from a specific party interfering in all the details of their ministry and trying to change the entire team. We lose the opportunity for expertise and accumulation of experience for these officials, and they become agents on a political basis, managers on a political basis, and department heads on a political basis. This quota system is one of the reasons for the political stagnation that has affected the political process, but it's not the only reason. In parliamentary systems, ministers are chosen from the winning political party or parties, but ministries are subject to a strict system of career progression, accumulation of experience, and evaluation of employees independent of the political considerations of the winning powers. The winning powers today may win, but after four years, other powers might win. Things change, but the state remains, and institutions serve the people continuously. Therefore, this quota system should not be applied to all state institutions, especially not in its current form, as it happened in previous stages.

Host

Do you think that political powers still possess elements of strength and effective mechanisms that can lead to transitioning to a better stage?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem

The political process, the political system, and the country possess this effectiveness, and political powers are manifestations of this public scene. These powers are not all the same; some of them understand the nature of societal and political transformations, external influences, internal realities, public sentiment, and citizen expectations. They adapt and evolve their discourse and align themselves with what has been mentioned. As described in the saying of the Prophet Muhammad “PBUH”, "A wise man goes around among people and learns from their expectations and knows their needs. He presents them with vision and solutions to their problems." Political powers today can adapt to these developments and remain a part of the political reality. Political powers that cannot do that, focus only on their contexts and believe that everything will work out for them, and gradually start declining. In the current political scene, we find conservative powers that maintain their presence, rising youthful powers entering the scene, and other powers leaving. This balance is shaped by the political and social reality.

Host

Does this mean it's a matter of roles being exchanged?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem

No, it's not about roles being exchanged. It's about societal and political facts, the realities of the people, the mood of the street, and the aspirations of the citizens. What was appealing ten years ago may not be appealing today. A political party can present a convincing message to the public, set priorities, and define its approach in a way that aligns with the citizens' needs. It can continue to gain the trust of the citizens. The powers that freeze their discourse, behavior, and reality without recognizing their importance to the citizens will lose their credibility, and naturally, they will exit the scene. This is one of the advantages of democracy; it keeps the door open for rising powers, exiting powers, and stable powers in the political landscape, each according to the circumstances.

Host

From the Supreme Council to Al-Hikma Movement, His Eminence Sayyid Ammar Al-Hakeem has placed many bets on youth. Stages have passed and you have always been with the youth. Have you now become convinced that the young talents nurtured by you have produced leaders who can move forward, or does this experience need a review?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem

We are talking about a political and social project. This question should be asked to the people. How do they see us? Do they see dozens or hundreds of young leaders who are qualified and capable of managing this project? If so, then we have succeeded. If the people do not feel that, no matter how much we claim about ourselves, we would have failed in this regard. Personally, from my perspective, I never hesitated for a moment that this path was the right one. For a simple reason, we are a nation where 68% of its citizens are under 24 years old, according to the statistics of the Ministry of Planning, and 90% are under 50 years old. So, we are a remarkably youthful nation. The population growth rate in this country is 2.6, one of the highest in the world. Therefore, we are a youth-centric nation. Investing in youth means dealing with the largest and most influential segment of the population, and we should not doubt the importance of nurturing, empowering, and preparing the youth, pushing them to the forefront. If any party fails in this matter, the problem lies with them and not with the youth. The youth deserve all the care and attention. The success of our country's future is closely linked to our focus on youth, empowering them, giving them opportunities, and enabling them in essential aspects.

Host

Many political observers and intellectuals say that Mr. Al-Sudani's government is the last opportunity for the political process. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this characterization?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem

I prefer to use the term "precious opportunity." Al-Sudano is a precious opportunity for the political process. There is no last chance for this country. Empires rose and perished, different regimes rose and perished, but Iraq remains, and its people remain, and the political process remains as a means of managing the affairs of the people. There is no one representing the last chance for this country. The country exists, and we will all eventually leave. May Allah grant everyone a long life. However, there are valuable opportunities. Mr. Al-Sudani, with his administrative capabilities, administrative experience, and youthful energy, understands how to deal with the administrative bureaucracy in the country. He avoids getting involved in political conflicts and the like. He has the opportunity to move the country a real step forward. In a strange twist, we did not participate in the government, but we are among its strongest supporters. For this reason, we believe there is an opportunity for success, and we want to invest it for the benefit of our people. If we were to adhere to traditional contexts, the opposition is expected to obstruct and create obstacles. However, the people

would bear the cost, and we do not want to be the reason for obstructing the will of our people or their service and well-being.

Host

Do you want to establish a new pattern within the Iraqi opposition? I don't participate in the government, but I do support it. How do you explain that, Your Eminence?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem:

In all the governments that we did not participate in, and even those we opposed in some of their paths, wherever there was a positive and correct position from our perspective, we were the first to welcome and support it strongly. We always believed that we should not oppose for the sake of opposition. So, if I did not participate, I should not obstruct and object to everything, or if I did participate, I should not praise and applaud everything. This is a mistake. We participate, object to some wrong steps, and praise and thank some correct steps. As for this government, I mentioned that the reason was not related to our brother Al-Sudani or his government, but it was related to the election results. We see an opportunity for success, and we stand with all our efforts to support this opportunity to achieve prosperity and well-being for our people.

Host

In the book “Rehlat Watan” (A Homeland Journey), I stopped at a beautiful story. When Biden was the Vice President of the United States, he asked you for your support for the second term of Mr. Al-Maliki. You refused at that time and said we must look for an alternative. What were the reasons and necessities for this refusal?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem

I have great respect for our brother Mr. Al-Maliki. He is a respected person and a friend, and we had no personal issues with him. But his convictions, his approach, and his priorities were subject to evaluation and discussion. Also, the issue was not about him; it was about the circumstances, the social situation, the stance of political powers from other components, the country's situation, and the priorities that Mr. Al-Maliki was adopting. In our overall evaluation, we found that it was an unproductive combination, and this path would lead the

country to regression. That was our understanding. However, we do not impose our understanding on others. We said that as long as we have this understanding, for any reason, we either participate and see that things are not going in the right direction, so we respect ourselves and withdraw from this process. But others were convinced, and the majority was formed, and they proceeded with it. I was glad that the government was formed and that we emerged from the political deadlock that lasted more than eight months at that time. At that time, people needed a government to manage their affairs and serve their interests, and a comfortable majority was formed, and things moved forward. We remained loyal to our readings, foresight, and analysis. Today, I do not regret that stance, and perhaps others who entered it two years later (from the participating leaders) were whispering in my ear and saying, 'You made the right decision, and we got ourselves into trouble when we entered. Some of them officially withdrew halfway, as you know.

Host

Bold decisions or pivotal decisions made at certain stages may upset others or cost you.

Sayyid Al-Hakeem

Undoubtedly, any decision made by a person who is responsible for public affairs in the political and social situation will be welcomed by some and upset others. It has consequences, and it also comes with costs. But a person must be faithful to his understanding, analysis, and reading of matters and the interests of his people as he sees fit. So, I did not spare any effort in bearing all the major bills and taxes that I incurred as a result of the positions I took in previous stages because our people deserved that."

Host

You worked in politics and at a young age. What did politics give you, and what did it take from you?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem

Indeed, Personally, my background was cultural and scientific. I spent my youth in this field. My father's illness placed us in unexpected and difficult choices. You know, my father passed away at the age of 60, in the prime of his activity and vitality. It was very shocking that under such circumstances, he fell ill, and the assessment of the brothers at that time, and the encouragement of His Eminence, was that there was no one else who could undertake the task and be accepted by the people other than you. So, I came into political practice completely contrary to everything I had planned and that was consistent with my cultural background."

Host

A planned decision?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem

"No, of course, the illness was accidental, but my father's illness lasted for 30 months. There was ample opportunity for observation. You know, at that time, the Supreme Council, the popular bases, were linked to the symbolism of Al-Hakeem family. It was difficult for anyone else among the brothers to take on this role, and people rallied around him. So, they insisted on our candidacy and support, and by consensus, we were chosen, smoothly and without any specific pressures, two days after my father's death. It happened quickly, without hesitation or delay. In any case, we found ourselves facing new requirements that we had not anticipated, and we were not prepared for such a mission. You know that the political field has entirely different requirements from the cultural, intellectual, and scientific fields and the environment I was in. But I tried to adapt, and the brothers have provided consultations. I listened, learned, asked, and followed. To be fair, Brother Adel Abdul-Mahdi was one of the political figures from whom I benefited greatly in consultations during that period."

Host

You took a decision and felt like it was a gamble, such as forming Al-Hikma Movement. Is there any decision you made that you wish to reconsider in this political era, whether related to Al-Hikma or related to His Eminence Sayyid Ammar Al-Hakeem? Do you wish you could turn back time to reconsider?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem

In reality, the strategic decisions we made at critical junctures, without being arrogant, stubborn, or insistent, I do not regret them. I feel they were the right decisions because we did not make them impulsively but we made them after study, consideration, research, and extensive consultation. However, as a person gains more experience in the details of political life, the steps taken in many details make a person feel that he could have been more professional in handling these matters with fewer losses and fewer burdens and with better understanding with other parties. Apart from that, the youthful enthusiasm, impulsiveness, and desire to rush toward what we perceive as the interest of the country and our people may have led to taking steps in a way that could have been taken with fewer costs and fewer obstacles.

Host

Let the question go deeper, Your Eminence, Sayyid Ammar Al-Hakeem, you served as a political leader in a political process often described as corrupt, does this topic embarrass you?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem

In any case, there is no action without complications. A skilled doctor performs surgeries, succeeding in some and not in others, and he may view them as successful but they may lead to the patient's death for various reasons. It bothers me here, but this is the fate of providing a service. Similarly, the political field is one of the real areas of service, and a person can gauge the impact of changing the course or in convincing other leaders. A leadership political decision made in the country can either save lives or lead people into disasters and problems. It's a very delicate process. I believe that during our political journey, we intended good and were peaceful doves. We always tried to reduce tensions, calm down emotions, to call for harmony, communication, and coexistence among people. We presented many initiatives in difficult circumstances during times of tension and great agitation, and we did not get involved in any Iraqi bloodshed. This is what our competitors say, even before our partners and allies. Everyone in the scene, no one accuses us of a drop of blood, even in corruption issues. Now, in a general sense, if the political class is corrupt, it includes us among others. But if any citizen is asked to name five corrupt individuals or ten, I don't think that they will include any of Al-Hikma Movement leaders in this list.

Host

The Shiite-Shiite disagreement, especially with Sayyid Al-Sadr, has persisted for a long time. Mediation and dialogue have not succeeded. Do you now deal with it as a reality?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem

His Eminence Sayyid Al-Sadr is an important and respected leadership figure, and the Sadr Movement is a fundamental partner in the social and political scene in the country. It has been like this, will continue to be, and will remain a source of respect and appreciation for everyone. The Sadr Movement has always had sharp differences in some details and often disagreed with other partners. What we see today is not unusual. It means there have always been multiple directions and opinions among the Shiite, Sunni, and Kurdish political powers. Yes, in previous stages, the Sadr Movement opposed the government and withdrew from it but remained in parliament. They voted inside the halls and parliamentary committees. This is the first time that the brothers in the Sadr Movement have withdrawn from the parliament. They did not withdraw from the political scene but withdrew from the parliamentary scene. The political reality is broader than the government and parliament, and they are present. I believe that if

we go to the upcoming parliamentary elections, the Sadr Movement, being a fundamental partner in this equation, will participate.

Host

They will not participate in these elections. What impact will the Sadr Movement have?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem

Considering these are local service elections when they withdrew from the parliament, they said, "We left the big door; shall we enter through the small door?" I analyze the situation in this way. I don't speak on their behalf, but I believe that in any upcoming federal parliamentary elections, the Sadr Movement will be active, contributing, and a partner. Naturally, we will have to work together and tolerate differences in our evaluation of performance, behavior, approach, and the like. Thus, the people who vote for them are Iraqis, and the people who vote for other partners are also Iraqis. Therefore, the outcomes of the electoral process and the winning forces all represent the will of our people. No doubt, opportunities are never completely cut off. Doors are always open, and we are welcoming. His Eminence Sayyid Al-Sadr is a dear brother and an important partner. Whenever he decides to respond to these calls and opens his door, he will find his brothers alongside him, and we greatly value that.

Host

The relationship with Sayyid Al-Sadr, Do you still have communication with him?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem

In reality, there is no daily communication at this stage due to His Eminence's preference, but we are always ready to communicate.

Host

What are the relations with the Kurdistan Region in this government? Despite Mr. Al-Sudani’s tendencies, tensions have resurfaced in Kirkuk in terms of security, and financial matters with the Central Government. When will this crisis be resolved?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem

As you know, there are constitutional texts that each party reads and interprets in its way. There is no common understanding of constitutional texts between the two sides. When there is a

difference in interpretation, it goes to the Federal Court. Unfortunately, we did not all accept the outputs or interpretations of the Federal Court completely. Even its interpretation of constitutional texts has become a source of disagreement between the federal government and the regional government. But I believe that there is good trust, continuous understanding, and communication. We managed to reach an understanding with each other. I believe that legislating the oil and gas law will provide an important opportunity to unify the understanding and vision of constitutional texts and transform them into laws and regulations. These matters will be resolved once the relationship between the region and the federal government is regularized based on an agreed-upon legal basis. There is no psychological problem; there are legal determinants and formulations on how we adjust them together and come up with satisfactory and convincing results for everyone.

Host

What are your preparations for the upcoming local elections? Al-Hikma Movement?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem

As you know, the Coordination Framework decides that its powers run on more than one list because this law allows for such diversity and multiplicity. We have run on the National State Powers' list along with our brother Dr. Abadi and several other allies. We have candidates in all the governorates where we compete. Thanks to Allah, and as attested by our other competitors in this process, the National State Powers' lists are characterized by strength, balance, and representation in terms of the figures selected and the wide representation from various tribes, clans, governorates, and regions. They are strong and effective lists, and the decision remains with our people. We hope that the results will satisfy our people and be suitable for the history of Al-Hikma and its allied forces.

Host

I believe there may be surprises leading up to the elections, regional stances that could have implications within Iraq, or internal arising from the political scene. Is there any cause for concern?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem

In my estimation, the elections will proceed as scheduled, Allah's willing, and everything is moving in that direction. This doesn't mean that our people are not active and vibrant. Some youth in the October movement might want to commemorate the anniversary or other details could

emerge. However, all of these aspects are accommodated within Iraqi democracy and our political and social reality. I don't believe they will affect the electoral process or its schedule.

Host

Is there maturity in the political scene, when it comes to accepting others, we have transitioned to a phase where we accept each other, produce common ideas, and accept opposition or dissenting voices.

Sayyid Al-Hakeem

I believe we have made significant progress in this regard. When we disagree, we sit down and address the issues. You may have noticed the recent crisis over the issue of the Kurdistan Region's salaries. Mr. Masrour Barzani visited Baghdad and met with the heads and political leaders, listened to their observations and concerns, explained his perspective, and this led to an agreement on steps to resolve this humanitarian issue for our people in the Kurdistan Region. This is an example. Such matters weren’t resolved with such smoothness, it used to be much more difficult and sometimes, even spilled over into the media. Our people remember such details.

Host

Is there a shift in the equation?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem

Certainly, the State Running Coalition, representing the most significant political powers participating in parliament and the government today, represents a broad spectrum of various parties. They agree on many sensitive issues and engage in discussions. Matters that were once challenging to address in forums like this are now openly discussed, and opinions are heard. We reach conclusions. All of this is progress in the political scene.

Host

Your Eminence, in the political scene or among the people or society, about 75% seem dissatisfied with the political process. The majority remains silent. Why don't political powers engage with them? Why does this barrier persist?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem

Of course, in all countries, the silent majority is not affiliated with parties, powers’

audiences, and political entities is the larger space. This is a reflection of the overall situation. Whenever we can provide services, the crisis for these individuals is that they see the political system and its legitimacy based on the services it delivers. Their perception links the legitimacy of the system to the services it provides. Now, in this phase, we have an opportunity as services are starting to be delivered better. With the current budget, of approximately 200 trillion dinars, almost all budget implementation instructions and the like are in place, and they are now entering the implementation phase. We may witness a significant Iraqi workshop in the coming months in various provinces to build projects for serving the people. If the government succeeds in this, it will enhance the legitimacy and credibility of the political system in the eyes of these people. Also, the performance of the Electoral Commission and people's belief that the vote they cast will be counted as is, without any behind-the-scenes arrangements or manipulation, which people sometimes imagine. The will of the people will represent this, and it will greatly encourage more voters to participate in the elections.

Host

From your recent statement, it seems you are worried about the elections and their results.

Sayyid Al-Hakeem

No, I'm not worried, but let's be clear. We are cautious. We are working diligently, silently, and systematically to restore the position of Al-Hikma Movement, with its history, status, and place in the political scene taken into account.

Yes, we are trying to respond, as four seats are not who we are, and indeed the people supported us with 400,000 votes, and our voices were significant, but the appropriate seats were not obtained. In these elections, we hope to improve the situation and place Al-Hikma in a suitable position that is appropriate with its history and its broad audience.