

The Escalation of Violence in Iraq

Interview with Fatah Al Sheikh, Member of the Iraqi National Assembly

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ANCHOR: Joining us from Baghdad is Fatah al-Sheikh, a member of the National Assembly.

Sir, what is happening now according to your estimation?

FATAH AL-SHEIKH: In the name of God, Most Merciful and Gracious. Since the morning, the people of Baghdad were surprised by several bombings that shook the existence of every Iraqi, especially as we saw victims of the Kathemiya bombings with our own eyes, and there were more than a hundred martyrs.

Yesterday we used to hurt when one martyr fell, but it became clear that there will be many martyrs every day and it really hurts that the Iraqi people still sacrifice their blood and the bloodshed still goes on without any move being made by the security officials. I also hold the occupation forces completely responsible, because they did not completely hand the security over to the Ministry of Interior and the Iraqi security forces in order to stabilize the matters, and we can protect ourselves.

I also say that putting Saddam on trial and the departure of the occupiers are two main points to stopping this bloodshed and terror.

ANCHOR: The statements by groups that belong to al-Qaeda claiming responsibility said that this is a response for what is happening to the Sunnis in Tal Afar. What do you think?

FATAH AL-SHEIKH: The truth is that this claim is not true. The situation in Iraq between the Sunnis and the Shiites is good, especially after the accident on the Imamas Bridge. There are good relations and connections that made our sorrows and happiness as one, because we shared our grief together. This is not an issue of Sunnis and Shiites, as much as they are working with the occupiers. They were hired in order to receive green dollars and they are not satisfied unless they see Iraqi blood, whether Shiite or Sunni.

This is the real issue, and not as was mentioned in the media which portrayed it as revenge for the Sunnis. The Sunnis are with us in all the steps and now they are preparing for the next political process. This is rejected by me, and those who do these operations are the ones who follow the occupation. The Iraqi forces will arrest them and then they will be released tomorrow (-inaudible-) by the occupying forces. This matter is taking place in many prisons and detention houses.

ANCHOR: Sir, is it possible for these bombings to have a reflection on the military operations in Tal Afar?

FATAH AL-SHEIKH: The whole of Iraq is a combat field. It does not matter if it is Tal Afar or another place. Yesterday late at night and early morning, there was a reinforcement of the American forces from Sadr city and attempts at arrests, and taking over places, and I want to ask if there is terrorism in Sadr city? It seems that the American forces are trying to escalate the situation in order to make the Iraqi people suffer, and on the other hand there are more terrorist attacks that prove that Iraq will not be stable with the presence of the occupying American forces.

ANCHOR: Do you see this as an attempt to start a religious war between the Sunnis and the Shiites of Iraq, and who has an interest in this?

FATAH AL-SHEIKH: The religious fighting became a crucial issue in the face of the steadfastness of the Iraqi people, Sunnis or Shiites. We hope for it to be put out by the Iraqi people. They want to start the fire of a religious war, and God will put this fire out. There is no place for religious war in Iraq as the Sunnis and Shiites are condoling one another.

I confirm that there are attempts at this, as there are people working for the foreigners. They even reached popular places like Sadr City, the city that I have not seen anything like what is happening there today since the day I was born.

There is a huge campaign for the agents of the foreign occupation to enter and plant hatred between the sons of the Iraqi people, and spread rumors in order to scare the one from the other. The occupiers are trying to start religious incitement and if it does not happen, then they will try to start an internal Shiite incitement.

ANCHOR: So what should be done now according to your opinion?

FATAH AL-SHEIKH: What is needed, as I mentioned at the beginning of the interview, are two things only. The first is for the occupation forces to leave as soon as possible, and leave the matter for the Iraqis, and there is an Iraqi force that is capable of keeping security and peace.

The second issue is putting Saddam (Hussein) on trial, as he is still considered the head of the whole tragedy in Iraq.

ANCHOR: How do you see the situation in the future? Will there be worse bloodshed than what we see now?

FATAH AL-SHEIKH: I tell the government that the bloodshed will continue as long as the occupation does, and anyone who wants to let the occupier stay in Iraq means that he wants there to be bloodshed.

If some parties and movements think that they will not be able to work in Iraq without the presence of the occupier, then I think these parties and organizations and any officials who call for the occupiers to stay, is an occupying traitor who is completely rejected by the Iraqi people.

ANCHOR: Thank you very much, Mr. Fatah al-Sheikh, member of the Iraqi National Assembly from Baghdad.

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