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## **CIVIL WAR LOOMS IN IRAQ'S DIYALA AMID SECTARIAN TENSIONS**

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Baghdad – Hamza Mustafa

Despite the liberation of Iraq's Diyala province from the terrorist ISIS group some three years ago, sectarian displacement and murders have once again reared their head in the northeastern region.

MP Raad al-Dahalki warned that the dangerous situation was reminiscent of the conditions witnessed in the region in 2006 and 2007.

He said militias and armed gangs are undermining the law and preventing security forces from carrying out their duties in serving the people.

He blamed the weakness of the federal government for failing to impose security in Diyala and to political settlements that take place at the expense of the people.

This has encouraged outlaws to continue their hostile acts against the people, he said in a statement.

Dahalki warned that the developments in Diyala were part of a new plot to bind security and stability and return the series of killings and displacement, which will lead the province and others to chaos and squander the sacrifices of the past years in restoring stability and peace.

He stressed the need to immediately and firmly confront the militias and gangs, calling on Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi, in his role as commander of the armed forces, to assume his responsibility and intervene to put an end to the chaos.

He urged him to deploy troops to Diyala from Baghdad to restore order.

Silence over this issue will lead the country towards unforeseen and dangerous consequences, warned the MP.

Head of the Fateh alliance and Badr Organization Hadi al-Ameri denied that members of his group were behind the sectarian murders and displacement in Diyala.

He called on politicians to return to national rhetoric and steer clear of inciting strife.

Moreover, he said that he grants security forces complete authority in arresting any Badr members, who have outstanding arrest warrants against them and who are affiliated with armed groups.

Officials have blamed the deterioration of security in Diyala to efforts by ISIS to once again infiltrate the province. The terrorists are taking advantage of the poor performance by the security forces and control armed factions have over security decisions. This has consequently turned the situation into a sectarian conflict that harms Shiites and Sunnis alike.

This was confirmed by MP Burhan al-Maamouri, who underscored to Asharq Al-Awsat the need to bolster security forces to allow them to fully perform their duties.

<https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1760536/civil-war-looms-iraq%E2%80%99s-diyala-amid-sectarian-tensions>

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