

The Dawn Raid Campaign to Eradicate Corruption: Between Illusion and Reality

(Translated)

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Since the 2003 occupation, Iraq has suffered from rampant financial and administrative corruption that has severely impacted state institutions and public trust. Successive governments have pledged to combat corruption, yet the phenomenon has persisted and worsened under each administration. Ali Al-Zaidi assumed the premiership with U.S. blessing and approval—following the rejection of the “Coordination Framework” candidate Nouri al-Maliki and any candidate linked to armed factions, alongside threats of economic sanctions. Like his predecessors, Al-Zaidi vowed to make fighting corruption a top priority. To demonstrate his credibility, he launched an extensive campaign at dawn on Sunday, June 28, 2026, targeting corrupt individuals and those accused of misappropriating public funds. Dubbed “Dawn Raid” (Sawlat al-Fajr), the campaign has so far resulted in the arrest of dozens of officials—including faction leaders and members of parliament—and the seizure of approximately \$100 million, as well as numerous properties and quantities of gold. This operation was preceded by the May 30, 2026, arrest of former Oil Ministry Undersecretary Adnan Al-Jumaili in the Ishaqi district of Salah al-Din Governorate; the large sums of money found in his possession triggered investigations that led to the current operation and the arrest of prominent politicians, such as Muthanna Al-Samarrai and Alia Nassif. The campaign has involved raids across various parts of Iraq, including the heavily fortified Green Zone in Baghdad; however, many analysts remain skeptical of its credibility unless it ensnares the “sharks”—the faction leaders and high-ranking officials. Conversely, some analysts have questioned the timing of the campaign, asking whether it stems from a genuine national need or serves as a prelude to the Prime Minister’s visit to the United States—particularly given the anticipated discussions regarding economic and investment reforms.

To truly grasp the scope of this campaign and determine whether it offers an effective remedy for Iraq’s woes, one must acknowledge that corruption in Iraq extends far beyond the mere theft of funds. It encompasses moral decay, rampant crime, the proliferation of narcotics, and extortion by armed factions. Most egregious of all is the loss of hundreds of thousands of innocent lives due to sectarian strife and the rise of the Daesh (ISIS), alongside the myriad other forms of corruption that have permeated the nation. This state of affairs was the inevitable outcome of a corrupt system built on the sectarian quota system and the protection of corrupt actors.

Therefore, we maintain that generating media hype around the pursuit of thieves—while leaving intact the very system that spawned them and fostered such widespread corruption—is neither an effective remedy nor an optimal solution for the suffering of this wounded Ummah.

The core problem in Iraq is not merely a handful of corrupt thieves being sacrificed as scapegoats for a corrupt system imposed by the US occupation upon a

Muslim people; treating a few symptoms is futile as long as the root cause of the disease remains. The root of the malaise lies in the presence of the American occupier and its control over the political order imposed on Iraq since the occupation. Yet, this root cause is never addressed; instead, the Iraqi people are misled into believing the problem lies with specific individuals. This keeps the populace—still lacking sufficient political awareness—trapped in a cycle of merely swapping one figure for another. A case in point is former Prime Minister Muhammad Shia' Al-Sudani; he once enjoyed the American occupier's blessing and was showered with praise, only to be exposed later as a ringleader of corruption.

Portraying America as a savior that will root out corruption is an act of political naivety. In reality, America is the patron of corruption; it helped entrench it by imposing the very political system that spawned all these crises. Consequently, Muslims in Iraq must grasp the true nature of the corruption—a problem stemming from a single source: the political system that holds them in its grip. Any attempt to address the symptoms without recognizing that this system is the root cause of all forms of corruption cannot be considered a genuine remedy or reform.

Furthermore, one must realize that a problem cannot be solved from within itself or by its own cause; rather, the problem must be eliminated by eradicating its root cause and the system that produced it.

It is deeply saddening and painful to witness Muslim lands in such a state, and to see Muslims—who possess the greatest belief and the most sublime ideology—begging their enemies to solve their problems. Is this befitting of the “best Ummah”—a people who once resolved their issues through the political system chosen for them by the Creator and Sustainer, Allah (swt)? Therefore, it is incumbent upon Muslims to realize that the source of their honor and well-being lies in upholding the Shariah Law of Allah (swt) and establishing an Islamic system of governance—one that safeguards wealth, honor, and life, grants the Ummah the right to hold rulers accountable, and ensures that no individual stands above the law. This is in accordance with the words of the Messenger of Allah (saw) who said, **«إِنَّمَا أَهْلَكَ الَّذِينَ قَبْلَكُمْ أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا إِذَا سَرَقَ فِيهِمُ الشَّرِيفُ تَرَكُوهُ، وَإِذَا سَرَقَ فِيهِمُ الضَّعِيفُ أَقَامُوا عَلَيْهِ الْحَدَّ، وَإِيمُ اللَّهِ لَوْ أَنَّ فَاطِمَةَ بِنْتَ مُحَمَّدٍ سَرَقَتْ لَفَطَعْتُ يَدَهَا»** **“Those before you were destroyed because, when a noble person among them stole, they would let him go, but when a weak person among them stole, they would carry out the prescribed punishment upon him. By Allah, if Fatimah, the daughter of Muhammad, were to steal, I would cut off her hand.”**

In short, true change and the eradication of all forms of corruption cannot be achieved through selective campaigns or by sacrificing a few corrupt individuals; rather, it is essential to dismantle the corrupt system that spawned this corruption and to establish the system ordained by the Lord of All-Might, Allah (swt).