

Sheikh Safa'a al Temimi (Imam of Husseiniat Al-Mustafa, Representative of Muqtada al Sadr)

The interview was conducted inside a mosque that had recently been raided by US Forces for allegations of harboring terrorists. There are two pictures behind the interviewee; one for Muqtada and the other for his father. There is also a black sign reading "Al Mahdi is the key for guidance and the survival ship," signed by "Imam Mahdi Army."

SHEIKH SAFA'A AL TEMIMI : I think there wasn't even a guard outside the Dawa party office in this mosque. In spite of the American forces allegations when they raided Dawa party office, that they only came for Dawa and not for Sadar Husseinyat. These are lies.

SHEIKH SAFA'A AL TEMIMI : What proves that they lied is the situation you saw, and the rooms you filmed. In addition to blowing the cars and the house of the mosque Imam, dropping the pictures off the walls. And even messing with the Koran and the mosque religious library.

SHEIKH SAFA'A AL TEMIMI : This evidence proves what we said about their entrance to the Husseinyat and messing its belongings. And also proves their lies. I say this because they alleged that they only entered to Aldawa party office and not to the Husseinyat where people were praying. These are just lies.

SHEIKH SAFA'A AL TEMIMI : The right thing is that they raided Aldawa office in addition to Almustafa Husseinyat. They killed and executed people in the Husseinyat in a savage, cruel and ugly way. Even prayers did not expect it to be in this way.

SHEIKH SAFA'A AL TEMIMI : Even those people who were deceived by American democracy and freedom, now they see it breached and untrue.

INTERVIEWER: Forgive me for this question but I have to ask, I heard that this is a place where people from Mahdi Army were arresting terrorists and Wahabis, is it not true?

SHEIKH SAFA'A AL TEMIMI : These are lies. The Gracious Koran said "Mosques are for God, and call only for one God". And this is a mosque where people pray for God and you have seen by yourself. All rooms here are occupied, one for the Husseinyat, one for tribal sheikhs, a scientific religious school specialized in Koran, and two or three rooms opened on each others for Dawa part.

SHEIKH SAFA'A AL TEMIMI : And one other room which functions as a storeroom. We use it to store coffins. And that's all what was in this husseinyat.

INTERVIEWER: In your opinion, why have the Americans raided your mosque?

SHEIKH SAFA'A AL TEMIMI : There are too many explanations; first there was an obvious escalation from the American side after the Imam Mahdi dome explosion. Briefly, I think what happened two nights ago was nothing but a political aggravation.

SHEIKH SAFA'A AL TEMIMI : Americans think that Dr. Jafari is not good for their agenda. This is what they believe and not what we think. They think Dr. Jafari is the closest person to the Sadr movement. At the same time they want for the Sadr movement to have a strong representation in the government.

SHEIKH SAFA'A AL TEMIMI : They don't want us to be presented in the prime ministry. It's a fact that they allowed us to take part in the last elections but the results came unexpectedly against America's will. Therefore we see the aggravation these days to exclude Sadr movement from the political process.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think a civil war is possible in Iraq?

SHEIKH SAFA'A AL TEMIMI : As far as the occupier is here, I do not exclude a civil war. But as far as the religious men and Marjiya's wisdom is playing a major role also the wisdom of religious leaders as the leader Muqtada Al-Sadr, its far from happening now.

SHEIKH SAFA'A AL TEMIMI : At the same time I do not exclude a civil war endurance, I exclude it with the presence of religious leaders.

INTERVIEWER: How do you think things will be if this aggravation from the American side continues?

SHEIKH SAFA'A AL TEMIMI : I have recited people's feelings in the past two days. I found that they are really angry about the occupation. They are really irritated by its presence especially in the last two days. They are very angry.

SHEIKH SAFA'A AL TEMIMI : One of the Sadr movement conditions for the occupation is to give an official apology for the dead families. They said they are going to compensate the victims' families. You kill and then compensate, don't kill and don't compensate. Why you kill to compensate? Anyway. The Sadr movement asked the US forces not to enter the Sha'ab district any more. People here are upset with what happened.

SHEIKH SAFA'A AL TEMIMI : Different age groups were killed in that accident. Not all of them from Mahdi Army, some of them were civilians and some of them were senile. Some of them from Dawa Party, some of them were ordinary people coming to Dawa Party. And some of them were people who came to do prayers for the funeral in the mosque.