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A statement for immediate release issued by

Human Rights and Democracy Media center "SHAMS"

**Regarding the decision of the Attorney General in the government of Gaza to
close the offices of Al-arabiya and Maan news agency**

"SHAMS" center **claims** the attorney general in the government of Gaza to back down his decision which states to close the offices of Al-arabiya and Maan news agency in Gaza Strip. The center mentioned that the government should be objective relating to political problems and it shouldn't be a part of events' circle in the Arabic arena, and it should take into consideration the free policy for each mass medium regardless if it is in harmony with the political positions of the government in Gaza Strip.

"SHAMS" center **reminds** the risk of the step decided by the Attorney General which contradicts the Palestinian Basic Law particularly article (19) "no infringement upon freedom of expression, and each person has the right to express his/her opinion and publish it by saying or writing or by other forms of expression and arts taking into account rules of basic Law. as well as article (27) about "establishing journals and other mass media represents a right for everyone guaranteed by the Basic law, and its sources of funding should be complied with control of law. and the freedom of visual, audible and written mass media, freedom of printing, publishing, distributing and broadcasting and the freedom of those who work in it as guaranteed by the virtue of Basic Law and related laws. Control of mass media is banned and it is not allowed to alert, stop, confiscate, cancel or set restrictions over if it is not according to law or a judicial sentence.

"SHAMS" center **stresses** that the decision of the Attorney General was preceded by abetment campaign via media reports in the recent days broadcasted by some media agencies affiliated with the government in Gaza, in an attempt to prepare the public opinion for the decision of the Attorney General in a step to legalize it. The center also request him to back down his decision regarding the closure of the offices besides allowing the three Palestinian newspapers (Alquds, Alayyam and Alhayat) to be distributed in Gaza Strip freely without restrains.



“SHAMS” center **perceives** that the decision of the Attorney General in Gaza Strip will signify a risk and a restriction against the Palestinian Journalists’ Syndicate’s efforts for the international community to obligate the government of the occupation to stop preventing Palestinian journalists from free movement. This will also embody a real limitation for efforts to reach about billion peoples to sign the petition which will be submitted to the International Federation of Journalists as well as international organizations concerned with rights.

“SHAMS” center **calls for** keeping mass media away from any political or partisan conflicts since such step will be understood as a mean of pressure and threat over mass media so as to keep in line with direction of the government. The center mentioned as well that the policy of closure and muzzling will affect the objectivity and neutrality of mass media.

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