

15/2/2014

**A statement for immediate release issued by  
Human Rights and Democracy Media Center "SHAMS"**

**"SHAMS" center welcomes abolishing the field of religion of Palestinian  
identities**

"SHAMS" center **welcomes** the decision made by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) to abolish the field of religion of the Palestinian identities and passports upon a decision made by president Mahmoud Abbas. The center mentioned that this decision comes in line with the Palestinian Basic Law, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights and with the principle and conditions of citizenship.

"SHAMS" center **believes** that this step represents advancement toward the correct direction to eliminate kinds of discrimination and bias. This decision is also the beginning of future legislations and it will motivate several institutions which put the field of religion in its documents to cancel it, in this regard **SHAMS** center calls for the importance of abolishing the field of religion of other documents.

"SHAMS" center **emphasizes** that the decision reflects an immunity and protection for the Palestinian society from sedition and conspiracies since many people have been victims of civil conflicts and others have died just because of belonging to one religion or the other and because of the existence of the field of religion within their personal identities and official documents.

"SHAMS" center **stresses** that the decision as well protects the structure and harmony of the Palestinian community from dividers or conspirators headed by the Israeli occupation which attempts to divide the people according to the field of religion mentioned in the personal identity. The Israeli discriminatory policy hasn't only divided the Palestinian people on religious bases, but also divided them according to ethnic sectarian bases

"SHAMS" center **reminds** that the existence of the field of religion within identities represents a sign of discrimination and bias among individuals of the same people and it is originally unnecessary because the Israeli occupation has worked to employ information for achieving discriminatory purposes.

"SHAMS" center **looks** forward to achieving positive impact resulting from the decision as well as good reflections on other rights like right to work, right to competition, equality of opportunities and right to receiving services. This comes in line with the Palestinian Basic Law in particular caption (2) rights and freedoms.

"END"