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**A Statement for Immediate Release issued by
Human Rights and Democracy Media Center "SHAMS"
on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day**

"We seek for media that reveals the truth and continuously investigates it"

"SHAMS" center **reminds** that the value of freedom of opinion, expression and press represent a basic right enhanced within Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Convention on Civil and Political Rights, regional accords and the Palestinian Basic Law, and the freedom of opinion, expression and press are actually one of the most valuable rights. World Press Freedom Day is an annual occasion aiming at reminding of the noticeable role of the press in promoting democracy and encouraging development all over the world, and it is an occasion to put the highlight on the experiences and sacrifices of journalists as well as the serious tasks they perform while investigating the truth for supplying the audience with news on daily bases. As well, this day is considered as an occasion to inform the public about violations against the right to express the opinion and to remind them with the suffering of journalists due to abuses they face while practicing their duty.

"SHAMS"center **requests** international foundations to immediately work to stop Israeli planned violations and abuses against journalists through measures of shooting, injuring, arresting, assaulting them and preventing from traveling besides confiscating and destroying their devices, breaking through media institutions and closing some of them. While the Israeli soldiers also infringe upon Arab and foreign journalists working within Arabic or international mass media, and they also follow a series of measures so as to prevent journalists from practicing their occupational duty in covering events and they target them intentionally in spite of having signs and cards of their work as journalists.

"SHAMS" center **stresses** the importance of having a democratic plural media which conveys and analyzes news as we look for unlimited freedom of media without having obstructing laws or control, and we also look for effective media which reveals and searches for the truth. We look for media that represents the community and combats all abuses and violations practiced

by the political system accordingly; the role of mass media isn't only conveying news and events, but also educating for restructuring awareness and providing it with means of thought and the vision to formulate opinions and trends.

"SHAMS" center **calls for** releasing political and civil freedoms headed by freedom of opinion, expression and press, respecting the right to freedom of peaceful assembly as well as the right to formulate, join and participate in associations, strengthening legal guarantees secured by International Bill of Human Rights and the Palestinian Basic Law headed by the Second Caption "Rights and freedoms". Besides removing obstacles which hinder the track of the development and growth for media institutions, headed by laws and legislations which obstruct freedoms and hinder the work and the establishment of media institutions, and the importance of having mass media which are controlled and abide by occupational principles, values and ethics as well as the standards of the job-related conduct, and inform that jurisdiction is restricted by legal texts to be applied and operated.

"SHAMS" center **perceives** that the real contribution and role of media in defending human rights requires primarily strengthening and empowering the Palestinian Syndicate of Journalists in order to advance its role as a syndical institution in protecting and defending journalists as well as adopting their issues. Then handling the situation of students who have graduated from the department of journalism and media through establishing a training institute for them so as to upgrade their qualification and preparing them to enter the labor market, and enhancing the values of freedom of press considering it as indispensable condition for building free national mass media which contribute to creating a well-aware audience who believe in democracy and human rights. Besides, training journalists and media figures as a mechanism to develop media and press work to serve the issues of human rights as well as basic freedoms and setting appropriate training and rehabilitation programs and training journalists who work in the field of electronic press so as to be able to use this technique in producing media materials as well as setting a legislation and law for organizing this new kind of press without limiting its freedom.

Finally "SHAMS" center **sends** greetings to all journalists, bloggers and other press workers who are defending truth and performing their duties objectively and transparently, and salutes the local and foreign reporters and journalists, at various news agencies for their keen work and for exposing abuses of the occupation forces against the Palestinian people.

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