

10/10/2017

A statement for immediate release
Issued by Human Rights and Democracy Media Center "SHAMS"
On the occasion of World Day against the Death Penalty

"There is no connection between the prestige of the state and death penalty"

"SHAMS" Center strongly **condemns** the crimes committed by the Israeli occupation forces and settlers against the Palestinian people, in terms of field executions and physical extermination since the state of the occupation infringes upon International Humanitarian law and Human Rights Law. Israeli practices represented in field executions or bodies' distortion are considered as war crimes and violations against international and human laws. Israeli government doesn't only implement such practices, but also covers the soldiers and settlers politically and legally in addition to practice regular violence provocation against Palestinian people and killing Palestinians. The state of the occupation made killing Palestinians its first choice, which is clearly proved by daily crimes in the occupied Palestinian territories. Cameras of Palestinian journalists and eye witnesses have documented executing Palestinians in cold blood and murders from a distance of zero, which assure that "Israel" is the only state implements death penalty unlawfully.

"SHAMS" Center reminds that death sentences have been issued in an alarming rate in the Palestinian territories. In 2017 particularly until 26/9/2017 almost (30) death sentences were issued, including (18) new sentences and (12) sentences were issued to ratify earlier sentences, and in 2017 (6) death penalties were issued. Since the inception of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in 1994 until 26/9/2017, it has inflicted (192) death penalties upon citizens accused of different crimes.

It is worth noting that (20) sentences were inflicted in the West Bank, while (172) ones were inflicted in Gaza Strip among which, (114) sentences were inflicted only in 2007. In addition, (PNA) implemented (41) death penalties (39) ones in the Gaza Strip and (2) in the West Bank. And among penalties issued in Gaza Strip, (28) ones were executed only in 2007 extra-judicially without the ratification of the Palestinian president. 3 sentences were implemented on May 31st of 2016, 3 sentences were implemented on April 25th of 2017, which represent 3 sentences implemented firstly without ratification of the Palestinian president and following National Consensus Government formulated in June 2014. Additionally, military courts and field court grounded on texts and articles of Revolutionary Penal Law issued by the Palestinian Liberation Organization in 1979 breaking the Palestinian Basic Law. Since Revolutionary Penal Law is unconstitutional

due to not being endorsed by the PLC, and it includes articles against International Charter of Human rights and related conventions.

“SHAMS” Center **calls** the National Consensus Government for significantly reviewing all death sentences inflicted in Gaza Strip upon a group of citizens during the period of division. The center urges authorities to repeat prosecutions for all who faced death penalty and to provide guarantees of fair trials in line with Palestinian laws and related international conventions. This implies unifying the judicial power as the first step, conducting reforms within judiciary system, activating the PLC, presenting decree-laws or other laws issued during the period of division to be ratified or abolished.

“SHAMS” center **assures** its support and solidarity with families and parents of victims. It clarifies that calling for abolition of the death sentence against perpetrators in serious crimes doesn't indicate tolerating them, but replacing the death sentence with other punishment to respect individuals' humanity and dignity. The capital punishment represents the cruelest form of intentional murder. It is irreversible; the risk of executing an innocent person can never be eliminated. Furthermore, people who were sent to death row have later been exonerated sometimes.

“SHAMS” center **requests** the abolition of death penalty from Palestinian legislations and to sign the Second Optional Protocol Annexed to the International Covenant on Political and Civil Rights of 1989 regarding the abolition of the death penalty. The center also calls upon the Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas “Abu Mazen” so as not to ratify death sentences, and to significantly employ his constitutional powers to abolish death penalty from legislations.

"END"