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**Statement Issued by Human Rights and Democracy Media Center (SHAMS)**

**On the Occasion of the International Day against Death Penalty**

"SHAMS" stresses that the death penalty, which is seen as a legitimate deterrent method of fighting crime, actually reflects the deficiency and impotence of the authorities in confronting and solving the causes of crimes. Before punishing the perpetrator, the authorities should diagnose the personal, family and social reasons that pushed the perpetrator to commit his crime. The state should have a policy of ensuring security by solving the problem of unemployment, fighting corruption and improving the health and social condition of the individual and raising his living standards. This can be done by ensuring the necessary conditions of life exemplified in good social security, the right of expression and physical safety. Such steps would help lower crime rate by reducing its causes.

"SHAMS" confirms that the death penalty constitutes a major violation of the right to life, and so it shouldn't be applied against the perpetrator regardless of the degree of the crime. The right to life is sanctified and can't be compromised in the context of incrimination and punishment. This punishment is cruel and degrading, causing spiritual and physical pain to the person sentenced before and during its execution.

"SHAMS" admonishes that death penalty is the only kind of penalty which cannot be reversed and that its consequences are permanent. Practical experience has proved that the penal policy, which is based on the physical isolation of the criminal, has never been a success. The crime rates in the countries that adopt the death penalty have always been on the rise compared to those of the countries that don't adopt it.

"SHAMS" calls for substituting the death penalty with life sentence in prison, disseminating and promoting the culture of tolerance, amending the laws to the lessened sentence. It also calls for strengthening the Arab Alliance against the death penalty and cancelling the Palestinian legislation that allows it. It also demands that initiatives should be taken and activities should be organized to raise public awareness about the importance of cancelling the death penalty.

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"SHAMS" condones the position of the President of the Palestinian National Authority for refusing to approve of death sentences by his constitutional jurisdiction and forming certain committees to reconsider some discriminatory laws, at the top of which is the law of personal affairs.

"SHAMS" calls on the deposed government in Gaza to stop carrying out death sentences, because such behaviour contradicts the international law of human rights. It is noteworthy here that carrying out such sentences contradicts the provision of the Palestinian penal code number 3 of 2001, which stipulates that no death sentence can be carried out without the approval of the President of the PNA.

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