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

“Violations and restrictions are still continuing”

"SHAMS" center emphasizes that the crime of killing journalists and violation of their right for protection is considered in accordance with the principles of international humanitarian law as a war crime, and attacking media headquarters and other civilian targets, is also perceived as a war crime, which entails to bring perpetrators whether civilian or military personnel, regardless of their ranks and positions, in front of international criminal courts without grating them any impunity. This requires the concerted efforts of the international organizations, concerned governments, institutions and trade unions where these journalists belong and particularly the International Federation of Journalists to uncover the perpetrators and those responsible for killings, torture and imprisonment of journalists and for the destruction of media headquarters.

"SHAMS" center reminds that the celebration of the World Press Freedom Day aims to remind the distinguished role played by the "fourth power" to promote democracy and good governance and promoting development around the world. It is an occasion to highlight the experiences of journalists and their sacrifices and to evoke the formidable tasks that they hold while doing their part in facts-finding in order to provide the public with objective and accurate news around the world. This occasion is also an opportunity to remind governments of the need to respect their commitments to press freedom and protection of journalists, in addition to inform the public on nature of violations being perpetrated against the right of freedom of expression and also to remind them of the suffering of journalists due to violations they are exposed to in defense of neutrality and credibility, where murder, imprisonment, torture or kidnapping are often a price they pay while exercising their duties.

"SHAMS" center calls the Palestinian journalists' syndicate for the advancement of its role as a trade union entitled to protecting journalists and defending them and adopting their concerns, it is requested also to suggest a law project that protects the rights of the journalist in obtaining information, and to pay attention to raising the efficiency of journalists and build their capacities in accordance to the values and work ethics of press, and address the situation of media and journalism graduates through the creation of an institute for training and raising the efficiency of the new graduates and prepare them for the labor market and to consolidate the values of freedom of press as it is indispensable condition for a free and independent media.



"SHAMS" center demands the need to work towards directing all energies to address the concerns of the media community and its growing needs, and to give a wide area of freedom for the different media means and to guarantee the right of access to and dissemination of information transparently, without any restrictions. It is also important to urge all state and non-official institutions to facilitate the work of media institutions in order to ensure freedom of press, in addition to re-drafting all legislation that looking at the area of freedom of opinion and the press, including the law of publishing and publications of 1995 to ensure the application of media rights and freedoms and achieve consistency with the amended Basic Law, in addition to the international standards of human rights. The centre calls upon the need for official and public attention to media needs, and facilitating licensing procedures and providing full protection and immunity to reporters.

"SHAMS" center emphasizes that despite the regional and international emphasis on press freedom, the freedom of press still witness flagrant violations and a serious setback, especially in the last decade, despite the existence of the resolution (1738) issued by the UN Security Council, which condemned intentional attacks against journalists and calling for those responsible to stop these practices, as journalists are considered civilians that must be respected and protected and that their equipment are civilian objects may not be the target of any attack or of reprisals.

"SHAMS" center expresses its grave concerns regarding violations against press workers and condemn all kinds of violations that have been monitored in the occupied Palestinian territories in the past short period, including the detention and censorship, harassment and physical assaults, calling at the same time to take decisive action to end the harassment of journalists as they are in great violations with the international standards of freedom of press and other relevant resolutions.

Finally, "SHAMS" center tributes all journalists, bloggers and other press workers who are defending truth and performing their duties objectively and transparently, and salutes all 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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