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### An Immediate Press Release

Issued by Human Rights and Democracy Media Center "SHAMS"

**"Facilitating movement" on the occasion of Christmas is a desperate attempt to beautify the ugly face of occupation:**

**Restrictions imposed by Israel on the freedom of movement and freedom to practice religious rites in the occupied Palestinian territories are in violation of international laws and conventions**

Human Rights and Democracy Media Center "**SHAMS**" extends its sincere congratulations to Palestinian Christian citizens and to all Christian world, on the occasion of the Christmas and New Year's Day, and on this occasion, "**SHAMS**" center calls upon all Palestinian citizens to celebrate the occasion as an affirmation and expression of depth of the relationship between Muslims and Christians on this land, and as an expression of tolerance and brotherhood that prevails among the Palestinian "one" people, and that the Palestinian people, like other peoples of this earth, loves life, looking for joy and happiness despite the checkpoints and gates of occupation and guns pointed at chests of our children.

"**SHAMS**" reminds that the restrictions imposed by Israel on the freedom of access and movement on Palestinians in the occupied territories since the outbreak of the Intifada are unprecedented in the history of Israeli occupation in all respects in terms of length and severity of damages on life of four millions of Palestinian citizens . Although during the prolonged occupation, Israel has experienced several kinds of restrictions on freedom of movement on Palestinian citizens that range between the imposition of a comprehensive closure or by imposing a curfew on certain towns, but such sweeping and prolonged restrictions has never been imposed. The Centre calls upon the international community to compel Israel to abide with the international law and international conventions related to human rights and the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and establish their independent state on their national soil.

"**SHAMS**" center emphasizes that Israel's policy of imposing restrictions on freedom of access and movement in the occupied territories is purely established on the basis of blatant discrimination against the background of nationalism, as these restrictions apply to the Palestinian citizens only, while the Jewish settlers are enjoying full free movement to and out of their settlements. Moreover, the imposition of restriction of access and movement on Palestinian citizens is designed to ensure free movement of Israeli settlers throughout West Bank areas. It is worth mentioning that Israel imposed restrictions on the movement of Palestinian civilians by a number of means that allow it to control and direct the movement of Palestinians according to its needs and fantasy, these include fixed and temporary checkpoints, the separation wall, restrictions on certain streets routes, and the permits regime. In addition, Israel has completely prevent the free passage of Palestinians between the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which deeply damages and affects the lives of Palestinian citizens on different aspects (educational,



economical, health, religious and social life in general).

"SHAMS" center is gravely concerned about the Israel's violations against the freedom to practice religious rites in the occupied Palestinian territory, which are subjected to the provisions of public international law, international humanitarian law and human rights law, where occupations forces obstruct the access of the faithful Christians and Muslims to perform their religious rites in the holy places, at the time that Permitted Jewish extremists to pray at the Wailing Wall and in the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron. This indicates the serious discrimination faced by Christians and Muslims alike in the occupied Palestinian territories. The latest "initiative" of the Israeli occupation resembled in allowing some 550 Christian Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip to participate the celebration of Christmas in West Bank through the alleged "movement facilitation" is a desperate attempt to beautify the ugly face of the occupation that practices terrorism and discrimination against the Palestinians and violates the human rights contained in international conventions, in particular articles, "13 " and "18 " of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on freedom of movement, freedom of worship, and the article "12 " and "18" of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights on freedom of movement, and religious rites, and article "31 " of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

"End"