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Statement for Immediate Release**Issued by Human Rights and Democracy Media Center "SHAMS"****On the Occasion of the World Day against the Death Penalty****What after Palestine's Accession to the Second Protocol of 1989 on the Abolition of the Death Penalty ?**

"SHAMS" Center welcomes the signature of Mr. President Mahmoud Abbas on the State of Palestine accession to 7 international conventions and treaties on 6/6/2018, including the Second Protocol of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights on the abolition of the death penalty of 1989 which entered into force in 1991 as well as the great and positive development on the State of Palestine's trends to accede further international conventions and treaties. The Center also highly appreciates the historic position of President Abu Mazen not to ratify any of the death sentences since his election as President in 2005, despite the fact that the Palestinian courts issued a number of death sentences in the previous period. This position is in full conformity with UN General Assembly Resolutions calling on states to abolish the death penalty as well as the calls of Palestinian human rights organizations to the President not to ratify any death sentences issued by Palestinian courts.

"SHAMS" Center warns that increasing death sentences and their execution do not solve the problem and do not deter the perpetrators. Since 1994 until 9/9/2018, civil and military courts have issued 208 sentences (178) in the Gaza Strip and (30) in the West Bank. (120) sentences were issued in the Gaza Strip since 2007. The executed death sentences were (41), including (39) in the Gaza Strip and (2) in the West Bank. Among the sentences executed in the Gaza Strip, (28) have been carried out since 2007 without ratification by the Palestinian president in violation of the law. In 2017, (6) death sentences were executed.

The number of death sentences issued in 2017 has amounted to (32), (12) of which were reiterating of previous sentences. Such reiteration sentences were issued by regular and military courts. In 2018, the number of executed sentences was: one death sentence, but the number of sentences issued in 2018 has amounted to (6), including (5) sentences issued after Palestine deposited its accession instrument to the Second Protocol of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights last June. It is worth mentioning that the first execution of the death sentence after the establishment of the PNA was on August 30, 1998 in the Gaza Strip, against two brothers convicted of killing two brothers from Deir al-Balah district.

"SHAMS" Center calls upon the Palestinian National Authority to harmonize the Palestinian legislations after accession to the Second Protocol of the International Covenant on Civil and



Political Rights on the abolition of the death penalty of 1989, Article 1 of which states that "No person under the jurisdiction of a State Party to this Protocol shall be executed and each State Party shall take all necessary measures to abolish the death penalty within its jurisdiction". We therefore need a strong, supportive human rights and anti-death penalty movement by human rights activists, writers, clergy, politicians, artists, judges, lawyers and Bar Association, journalists, human rights organizations, members of the Legislative Council, political parties and government officials. We need politicians, parliamentarians and specialists to answer the following question: Is death penalty feasible, does it prevent the occurrence of crimes and does it provide protection to the society?

"SHAMS"Center reminds that a country that is passionate about human values, human dignity and sanctity of life, like Palestine, can no longer keep the death penalty in its legislative system, not only because the human life, including the criminal life, is sacred, but also because science proved the absence of any causal link between the evolution of the crime and the existence or absence of the death penalty. Such penalty, in addition to passing the sequence of penalties, it does not have any similar penalties in any penal code, which would render the judge's discretion to impose appropriate punishment through reviewing the circumstances of each case. It also prevents the judge from the right to consider mitigating reasons – in accordance with the Penal Code- which requires the legislative authority to amend the death penalty and replace it with the penalty that follows in the penal scale, which is life hard labor.

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