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Statement issued by the

Human Rights and Democracy Media Center "SHAMS"

On the occasion of the Eighth of March, International Women's Day

"Woman is the essence of life and without her life wilts..."

"SHAMS" center salutes the growing contribution of Arab women in various fields of life and highly appreciates their active participation in the process of change, where conservative customs and traditions didn't preclude them from participating in support for the Arab revolutions. Their participation played an important role in inflecting positive change towards the cause of women by the international organizations and world public opinion and significantly pushed for the recognition of their status and role after prevailing of previous outlook marred by a lot of negative perceptions and confusion. This growing contribution of Arab women coupled with growing recognition to their role is a testament to the signs of transformation within Arab societies on the road to work for the realization of women's civil rights and equality with men and to abandon the patriarchal authoritarian hegemony in the Arab countries. "Growing conviction" is that clinging to outdated customs and traditions is greatly contributing to practice discrimination against Women and resulting to more marginalization of their political, social and economic roles which poses major risks on the active role of half of the society, perhaps the most dangerous side in this fact is that this "half" bears the most important task for humanity which is the breeding responsibility of the future generations.

The marginalization of women and denial of their rights are not only denial of the most basic elements of modern societies, but also denial to development and progress and evolution in any certain society, moreover, it is simply the victory of all political and social retarding forces that

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adhere to obsolete and destructive practices and culture, forces and alliances that are still proactively working on hindering women's rights in an attempt to retain the current societal and political structure that is based on guardianship, tyranny and dictatorship, which continues to impose hegemony on the majority of Arab countries.

“SHAMS” center confirms that the future of women's rights and their development depends on the suitability of existing domestic legislation with international standards of human rights, and the ability of the State of Palestine to respond to requirements of legislative change that contradict with women rights. This requires the state to fast acceding to international treaties and immediate ratification and lifting reservations on adoption of women rights. Moreover, international conventions and treaties should be included in security and police related curricula and in mechanisms designed for grievances and complaints. A national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 should be developed through assistance of local and international institutions and researchers taking into account the special needs of women in cities, villages, refugee camps and women prisoners addressing a wide range of devastating factors such as family division, barriers that impede movement, barrier to women's physical and psychological health, economic situation and access to education. Development of educational curricula on the basis of gender to address the negative stereotypes around women, in addition to activating role of the media, role of universities and academic institutions on highlighting the importance of articulating the SC resolution 1325 in the curriculum are all important steps to empower women and raise e their status.

“SHAMS” center emphasizes that it is no longer acceptable nor palatable -on the onset of the third millennium- to get caught up in barren dialogue that already overtaken by humanity and democratic societies such as suitability of women to participate in political action or their capacities to manage public affairs, at a time where women have already assumed advanced positions in the administration of the their countries in many societies. Thus, we are still caught up in a vicious controversial circle such as eligibility of women to drive a car, the right to travel alone, whether they can work in shops selling women's underwear, and marriage of Sunni girl with Shiite man while more important issues deserve attention such as women illiteracy, health, education and other intractable problems that need urgent solutions.



"SHAMS" center calls upon the international community to compel the Israeli occupation to respect international law applicable to the rights of women and girls and the need to offer them protection as civilians, in particular, the obligations applicable under the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and its Additional Protocol of 1977, the Refugee Convention of 1951 and its 1967 Protocol, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of 1977 and its Optional Protocol of 1999, and the United Nations Convention rights of the Child in 1989 and the two Optional Protocols thereto of 25 May / May 2000, and to bear in mind the relevant provisions of the Rome Statute of the international Criminal Court; and UN Security Council Resolution 1325 as binding international instruments.

The **center** demands the need to strengthen women's participation in the embassies and consulates, in political parties, in local bodies and in all components of the Palestinian political system. That is to emphasize the importance of the role of women consistent with the decision taken by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 2011 on women and participation in political life (A/RES/66/130), which emphasizes that active participation of women on equal terms with men in decision-making at all levels is essential to the achievement of equality, sustainable development, peace and democracy.

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