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A statement for immediate release

Issued by Human Rights and Democracy Media Center "SHAMS"

On the occasion of World Day against the Death Penalty

"Children are invisible victims of the death penalty"

"SHAMS" Center **views** with concern the continuation, issuance and execution of death sentences in the Gaza Strip and the prevalence of the inhuman death penalty within the legislative system in the Palestinian territories, contrary to international conventions. Despite the passage of one year since the State of Palestine's accession to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty on 6/6/2018, which reflects that efforts to harmonize national legislation with Palestine's international obligations, fell short of expectations.

"SHAMS" Center **confirms** its consistent, principled and categorical positions rejecting the death penalty, as it constitutes a blatant violation of human rights, especially the right to life, and the psychological pain, inhuman and degrading torture that the death row is subjected to. This year in particular highlights the children and families of those convicted or who have been executed. The capital punishment represents a form of collective punishment that executes a whole house and family, not just the person who committed the crime, a violation that coincides with the fact that most of those sentenced to death are poor, marginalized, minor, disadvantaged and low-income people. The state shall rather combat the causes of crime, rehabilitate and reintegrate them. "SHAMS" Center **reminds** all parties that Life is an inalienable right, a right not allowed to waiver, derogation or a breach of any cause, No one may grab anything unless it is given from the beginning.

"SHAMS" Center **underlines** that the challenge for all Palestinians is to achieve justice and equality among all citizens, and to find a decent means of livelihood to reduce the sources of crime and eliminate its causes from the roots. Besides, to invest in the economy, education and morals which represent a more fair choice rather than being silent witnesses to the environment where the roots of the crime are growing and extending. And then eliminate those who emerge from such environment by killing them, after everyone allowed disregarding tribal control through a collective mistake.



"SHAMS" Center **reminds** that a state that is passionate about life and struggles for it as a Palestine shall no longer keep the death penalty in its cultural, legislative or structural system, hence "SHAMS" center recommends:

1. Providing the necessary psychological support and care for children sentenced or executed, their families, ensuring their economic empowerment, and strengthening their efforts to integrate them in society thus confronting the social stigmatization against them and the calls for segregation.
2. The need to complete the positive step by acceding to the Protocol, and to harmonize national laws with the Protocol as well as with other international treaties & conventions to which Palestine has acceded, by abolishing the death penalty from Palestinian legislation, which confirms the eligibility of the State of Palestine to join the international community with full membership.
3. The President shall issue a Decree-Law to stop the execution until the Legislative Council convenes. Given the fact that abstinence from ratification is merely a postponement of its implementation, and to issue pardons for those sentenced to death so as to reduce the penalty to life imprisonment.
4. To push for changes and reform in the judiciary and justice institutions, with a view of achieving further guarantees of justice and fair trial in all trials, and calls on the courts of the Gaza Strip to stop inflicting death sentences for its violations of Palestine's international obligations.
5. Generating ongoing debate and discussion on death penalty at all cultural, societal and religious levels, allowing for a reconsideration of its implementation, and correcting the misconception of the illusion between the execution and public and private deterrence.
6. Palestinian media outlets shall address and discuss the capital punishment through traditional & modern media outlets represented in social media applications, and shall work to launch information campaigns at multiple levels to achieve a public opinion against the death penalty.



7. The Palestinian media should work on discussing the death penalty through the traditional and modern media, such as social media platforms, and launching media campaigns at various levels to reach a public opinion against the death penalty.
8. Human rights organizations shall intensify action on the organization of activities against the death penalty, and intensify overseeing justice institutions, including overseeing the work of the courts, to ensure the protection of the human right to life, and strengthen cooperation and coordination with relevant regional & international organizations.

"END"