



2019/11/4

**"SHAMS" Center: setting the age for marriage and opening banks accounts for minor children
represents a step in the right direction**

Ramallah: the Human Rights and Democracy Media Center "SHAMS" welcomed and appreciated the Decree-Law issued by the president Mahmoud Abbas of setting 18 years as the age of marriage, and the Decree-Law which allows mothers to open bank accounts, deposit in it or withdraw from it and close it for minor children. "SHAMS" Center commends this Decree-Law which is in harmony with the international conventions and obligations of Palestine, with international human rights standards, and with the repeated demands of the UN Human Rights Council to all Member States to prevent and eliminate the practice of child, early and forced marriage. This step is part of the legislative measures that States shall take to address the practice. Thereby, improving the image of Palestine before the world as a democratic civil state that protects and fosters human rights.

"SHAMS" Center calls for the completion of this step and promoting the rights of women in all areas, as a permanent approach and strategy at the political level, rather than being be isolated steps of a seasonal nature, which will address all the problems related to women and girls in Palestine from the roots. In this sense, and despite the progress made, the "SHAMS" Centre for recommends following:

1. Adoption of a Palestinian modern Personal Status Code to be in conformity with human rights and to comply with international standards.
2. The approval for the draft resolution on protecting the family from violence with a view to the fulfillment of Palestine's obligations under conventions to which it has acceded. In particular, the recommendations of the UN CEDAW Committee allowing the authorized law enforcement agencies to take urgent action within the parameters of an effective response to violence, especially domestic violence.
3. Defining criteria for exceptions granted under the Decree-Law on setting the age of marriage in a thorough and clear way, with the minimum possible discretion and in accordance with the legal



requirements and international best practices and not according to opinions vary from person to others according to their viewpoints or intellectual background.

4. Having greater openness to civil society organizations and involving them in the discussions and formulating the drafts when issuing decisions and laws concerning women as experts in this field.