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**Statement for immediate release****Issued by the Human Rights and Democracy Media Center "SHAMS"****On the International Day for the Elimination of Poverty****Occupation policies and measures aim to impoverish and starve the  
Palestinians**

"SHAMS" Center condemned "Israel", the occupying authority, pirating of Palestinian clearance funds, which average about \$ 200 million per month. In a crisis that has been going on for months, as the Occupation Electricity Company had previously, on July 28, pirated half a billion shekels of Palestinian tax funds under the pretext of electricity debts. The Israeli occupation seized \$ 138 million of monthly payments from clearance funds and tax revenues under the pretext that it is paid for the families of prisoners and martyrs. As for the most recent chapter of piracy, the decision to deduct new sums of money from the Palestinian clearance funds, in mid-August 2020, when about (13) million shekels were transferred to the execution office in occupied Jerusalem by the Ministry of Finance under the pretext of the intention to distribute them to those suspected of having dealt with the occupation, They had filed cases before the Israeli courts against the background of the Palestinian security services' arresting them in earlier times. In addition to the continuous efforts to deduct parts of Palestinian funds under various pretexts. In conjunction with the financial blockade of the Palestinian Authority, a desire to push it to accept the American "peace plan" that contradicts international law and ignores Palestinian rights, and with the spread of the Coronavirus around the world and the creation of deep and complex economic crises in all sectors.

"SHAMS" Center stresses that the Israeli measures and the financial blockade cannot be read in an isolated context. Rather, they must be observed in proportion to the harm they cause to Palestinian families, and an unprecedented increase in poverty and in proportion unemployment levels, which have reached unprecedented rates. The Ministry of Social Development anticipates



the poverty rate in Palestine to reach 50 per cent in the coming months. Also, new analysis from Oxfam and International Development Finance pointed that the income of 42% of Palestinian families decreased by half during the closure period from March to April 2020 compared to February of the same year. It is a crisis that led to the marginalized groups bearing the brunt of the burden and lowered the level of social protection to unprecedented levels, placing more than 53,000 Palestinian families below the poverty line. The epidemic put a great deal of pressure on the Palestinian economy, which was already suffering, with unemployment reaching 25%, which is considered one of the worst rates in the world.

**"SHAMS"** Center asserts that poverty is a violation of human rights and the human right to live in dignity. Therefore, the occupation policy based on impoverishing the Palestinians by besieging them and preventing them from investing and exploiting their natural resources has increased the seriousness and difficulty of reality. This reality has increased the rates of poverty and unemployment In the Gaza Strip, which reached nearly 75% during the year 2019, and 70% of the population of the Gaza Strip is food insecure. 33.8% of the Gaza Strip community is below the extreme poverty line, according to the data of the Palestinian National Program for Social Protection. The number of families benefiting from the program's services reached 70,645 families, with 425,292 individuals representing 20% of the population of the Gaza Strip who fall under the extreme poverty line. Thousands of Palestinian families are registered on waiting lists to benefit from the programs of the Ministry of Social Development. The number of unemployed persons 15 years and more overreached 343,800 in 2019, of which 215,100 people in the Gaza Strip and 128,700 people in the West Bank, the disparity in the unemployment rate between the West Bank and Gaza Strip remains large, with the rate reaching 45% in the Gaza Strip. Compared to 15% in the West Bank, and at the gender level, the unemployment rate for females was 41% compared to 21% for males in Palestine.

**"SHAMS"** Center calls on the Palestinian government to set a general, realistic and measurable strategy according to a specific time frame. The strategy to be based on the vision of liberating the Palestinian economy from deciphering the dependency on the Israeli economy through realistic



and cumulative steps that provide alternatives to political level options and take the form of strategic action, not volatile reactions. Considering that poverty constitutes a very serious and fundamental violation of the basic human rights to housing, health, education, mobility, movement, decent living, welfare and others. It must be viewed from a strategic perspective in terms of the dangerous repercussions that marginalization and discrimination create on civil peace and citizenship.