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Statement for immediate release**Published by the Human Rights and Democracy Media Center "SHAMS"****Colonial "Israel" continues its war against human rights defenders**

Human Rights and Democracy Media Center "SHAMS" condemns in the strongest terms the refusal of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Israeli occupation state to process requests for renewal or granting residency visas to United Nations employees, as the step targeted (12) international employees affiliated with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Human Rights Committee. This step forced (9) of them to leave the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and will force (3) others to do so within months.

"SHAMS" Center views the new Israeli move is not coming in an isolated context, as the occupation authorities had previously prevented a UN committee affiliated with the Human Rights Council that was preparing a report on the Israeli war on the Strip in November 2014 from entering the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and prevented The United Nations Special Rapporteur for Human Rights from entering into OPT in January 2016. Israel also launched a continuous war against the judges of the International Criminal Court against the background of the intention to open an investigation into possible war crimes committed by "Israel". In addition to many restrictive practices of movement and the prohibition of working against local and international human rights defenders. And Israeli campaigns to liquidate the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees, "UNRWA". In highly coordinated and systematic steps aimed at making the crimes of "Israel" in the Occupied Palestinian Territory unchecked and at intimidating human rights organizations and those working in human rights issues.

"SHAMS" Center reminds the United Nations and peace-loving countries that the suffering of the Palestinian people has continued since before the Balfour Declaration. Since that date, the Palestinian people have suffered from the scourge of the Israeli occupation. The occupation was not satisfied with uprooting



thousands of safe Palestinians from their villages and cities in the largest forced displacement process that targeted safe people. The suffering of the Palestinians did not stop at this point. Rather shameful violations and atrocities were practiced against the Palestinians, especially in light of the oppressive practices of the occupation forces and settlers, in the killing, displacement, attacks on houses of worship, building settlements, confiscation of lands, destruction, intimidation. In addition to the robbery, building the apartheid wall, dismembering the homeland, and establishing barriers, the prevention of freedom of movement and access to places of worship, the closure and blockade of the Gaza Strip, the demolition of homes, the uprooting of trees, the denial of the rights of the Palestinian people, and the continuation of the occupation to occupy their lands in a shameful violation of international humanitarian law and human rights law.

"SHAMS" Center stresses that this behavior, in addition to defaming human rights defenders, travel bans, arrests, and violation of digital privacy, is another expression of ingrained arrogance that does not respect international law and human rights standards and practices of the occupation authorities and the colonial system. Among its goals is the removal of Palestine from the permanent agenda of the United Nations. And a miserable attempt to stay outside the circle of punishment and the continuation of impunity, and to reduce the civilian space originally limited by the violent colonial presence.

"SHAMS" Center calls on the UN agencies and institutions working in the Occupied Palestinian Territory to continue carrying out their work in documenting human rights violations in accordance with international law. It also calls on Palestinian civil society organizations, particularly those that have special advisory membership in the United Nations Economic and Social Council, to intensify their work in monitoring, documenting, publishing and reporting human rights violations, and enhancing networking and the international presence, in a way that forms an umbrella that protects, promotes and defends human rights and confronts the systematic Israeli targeting of the human rights sector.