



2020/11/25

"SHAMS" Center

**On the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women:
Palestinian women are paying with their lives the price of the official delay in
issuing a law to protect the family from violence**

Ramallah: **"SHAMS" Center** addressed expressions of solidarity for Palestinian women who are under the weight of double the colonial-male violence: on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, which comes this year in special circumstances in which the conditions of women become more difficult. The Covid-19 pandemic has strengthened violence against them and doubled its levels due to the measures accompanying it in terms of isolation and social distancing. At a time when the government appealed to citizens to adhere to homes as they are the safest places in the face of the epidemic, the authorities ignored that these homes themselves are the most frightening for many of Palestinian women.

"SHAMS" Center stated that, with psychological pressures, these policies have caused an increase in the rate of domestic violence against women. The pandemic also increased the economic burdens on working women, especially in "Israeli" settlements, kindergartens and the tourism sectors. It also complicated the conditions of women-headed families, which amounted to about 11% of families in the year 2020, according to the Central Bureau of Statistics. The pandemic has created additional threats against women on the psychological level, as it was accompanied by an increase in general feelings of anxiety, loneliness, isolation and depression. In particular, the pandemic has doubled the household burdens that the male



community imposes on women, especially domestic work, with the disruption of the employment and educational sector.

In particular, **"SHAMS" Center** monitored the increase in hate speech against women in the digital space and cynical stereotyping of their roles. The risk of women being cut off from the official and civil institutions that provide them with psychological and legal support and advice as a result of the closure. In addition, women are marginalized and their roles reduced from participating in public affairs during the state of emergency declared due to the pandemic, such as emergency committees.

"SHAMS" Center stated that this year has been bad for Palestinian women by all standards, as the rates of violence against women have reached staggering levels, while the violence survey data issued by the Central Bureau of Statistics indicated that the Hebron governorate is one of the highest prevalence of violence in the West Bank governorates by husbands against women who are currently married or who have previously been married at the age of (18-64) years, which amounted to 37%, followed by Jenin governorate with 27%, and the lowest is Jerusalem governorate with 11%. At the level of the governorates of the Gaza Strip, the governorates of Khan Yunis and Gaza represented the highest prevalence of spousal violence against women who are currently married or who had previously married, reaching 41% and 40%, respectively, and the lowest was Deir al-Balah governorate by 30%. The crime rate, on top of which is the murder of women, which is increasing in quantity and quality, as the number of Palestinian women killed since the beginning of the year to date () in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.



"SHAMS" Center also warned of the entrenchment of a patriarchal societal culture that represses women, violence against them and discrimination in Palestinian society with the escalation of hate speech issued by fundamentalist Islamist forces, which benefit from the weakness of the political system and the fundamental defect inherent in it, represented by the absence of a parliament that has had genuine oversight and legislative competence 14 years ago disrupting the elections and stalling promises to hold them in their place.

The center said that this violent male culture is based on roots and nutrients which are customs, traditions, societal norms and strict religious interpretations, and it fills the void left by progressive political forces. The danger of the attack of hatred and the infidelity organized by the forces of political Islam, in particular the fundamentalist (Islamic Liberation Party), is increased by their alliance with the tribal forces with wide influence in the Palestinian street.

"SHAMS" Center stated that the Palestinian political system, despite the declaration of independence document, the Basic Law, and talk about the dream of a civil state with constitutional institutions in which the law prevails over all, is exercising patronage for conservative forces that are part of the pre-modern stage and the state, which means the absence of political will towards civilization, and it expresses the fragility, weakness, and confusion of the political system, which must be monopolized by the judiciary, legitimate violence, and governance. Whether the Palestinian political system did so consciously or unconsciously, its practices over the last 14 years have weakened civil forces and contributed to strengthening fundamentalist forces.



The center said that despite the escalation of civil society pressure to harmonize the "CEDAW" agreement, which the Palestinian Authority joined and publish it in the official gazette, and to approve the Law on the Protection of the Family from Violence, which has been on the government's table for many years, and to determine the age of marriage and without broad exceptions, it turned out to be the original age at eighteen years, with the increase in murders against women, violence against women, and against the rest of the family, the political system did not respond to these calls. Rather, it stood silent in front of the discriminatory and inciting speeches and hate speeches issued by the traditional forces that incited the closure and boycott of civil institutions and verbal violence against these institutions and their employees that reached the point of death threat through digital platforms. Hate speeches extended to media institutions and the regular judiciary in defiance of the political system that joined international conventions, and which merely practiced a suspiciously negative state of withdrawal in the face of the fundamentalist attack on civil society against the background of combating violence against women.

Human Rights & Democracy Media Center

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