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**A statement for immediate release****Issued by the Human Rights & Democracy Media Center "SHAMS"****On the occasion of International Women's Day****"SHAMS" Center calls for ending the state of judiciary backlog in Sharia courts**

The Human Rights & Democracy Media Center "**SHAMS**" underlines the importance of uniting and keeping up the national official, civil and societal efforts with the aim of ensuring the Palestinian women's equity and intensifying their presence in the Palestinian scene at the political, economic, social, cultural and human rights' levels in the way of justice and equality. Primarily, citizenship as the incubator of democratic values and its foundations. This came in a press statement issued by the center on the 8<sup>th</sup> of March, to mark International Women's Day .

"**SHAMS**" Center **stresses** that heading down the unknown path, establishing oppression in consciousness, collective practice and self-destruction continue. Despite Palestine's signing of a number of international conventions and treaties, foremost of which is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Civil Rights, and the International Covenant on Social Rights Economic, Cultural, and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, "CEDAW", which remained inoperative, was not published and was subjected to a systematic smear campaign, while associations supporting women's rights were attacked under false pretenses based on conspiracy theories that are stemming from isolationism. These speeches of hatred against civil society organizations represented a serious case of violence that falls on women as well as the hate speech and discrimination they suffer from, and civil society organizations in support of their rights, which were targeted by systematic campaigns led by the traditional and conservative power centers.



"SHAMS" Center **condemns** the Israeli colonial violations against Palestinian women, which are represented in destroying and demolishing property and not providing decent housing, assaulting and targeting civilians, both by field executions and extrajudicial killings, forcibly evicting Palestinian women from East Jerusalem, placing them under house arrest, depriving women from the exercise of the right to of worship, violating the right to freedom of movement, and restricting their freedom and arrest.

"SHAMS" Center **invites** the United Nations and international organizations to assume their responsibilities to compel the occupying power to respect international humanitarian law and human rights law and provide protection mechanisms for Palestinian female civilians, given the results of the recent Israeli elections and the victory of the settlement, annexation, racism and apartheid plan represented by the extreme right government that refuses to abide by treaties & International conventions on the rights of women, foremost of which are the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the Security Council Resolution No. (1325) on women, peace and security. Under an intransigent produced by international politics, favoring the Israeli apartheid regime and disregarding the described war crimes committed in the occupied Palestinian territory decades ago.

"SHAMS" Center **recalls** the need for reforming legislative frameworks and aligning them with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Optional Protocol annexed to it, the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women, and the Agreement on Consent to Marriage and Age of Marriage in the year to which Palestine has acceded. The center also demands the need to expedite the enactment of a law to protect the family from violence, and to adopt a modern and modern Personal Status Code that is compatible with human rights, adheres to international standards, and covers key issues about women's economic and social rights. As well, to promulgate modern Palestinian Penal Code that heavily sanctions the penalties against killers of women.

Also, the center demands a development of a wide-ranging plan (official in partnership with civil society) to put an end to the state of judicial backlog in Sharia courts, besides enhancing the



presence, participation, and efficiency of women in the justice sector (the Ministry of Justice, High Judicial Council, Police Law Enforcement Agencies, Public Prosecution, and Bar Association). The center calls on Palestinian government and its official institutions to take responsibility for confronting hate speech and violence from reactionary forces that target civil society organizations against the background of their progressive positions in defending the rights of women and girls. The center requires ensuring women's access to justice, enhancing their political participation and decision-making positions, and empowering them economically.

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