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**"SHAMS" Center: The occupation's decision to shut down Palestine TV office in Jerusalem constitutes a gross violation of the principles of press freedom and free journalism**

Ramallah: The Human Rights and Democracy Media Center **"SHAMS"** strongly condemned the occupation forces' decision to extend for the 4<sup>th</sup> consecutive time a past decision to close down the Palestine TV office and prohibit its staff members from working in the occupied city of Jerusalem. The decision was issued by the Israeli Ministry of Interior and has extended the period throughout which Palestine TV has been banned in Jerusalem for two years. Along with the decision, the occupation forces raided offices that provide media coverage services, summoned a number of journalists, and threatened them against providing media services or working for Palestine TV in any possible capacity.

The center stated that this decision and the accompanying actions constitute a gross violation of the principles of press freedom and free journalism, which are guaranteed in international agreements, conventions, and customs like Article (79) of the Additional Protocol (I) to the 1949 Geneva Conventions and the Security Council Resolution No. (1738) which pertains to the protection of journalists. The center pointed out that this latest incident is but one of a long string of Israeli crimes committed against journalism with the intention of diluting the Palestinian identity and banning any coverage of the occupation's violations and facts on the ground.

**"SHAMS"** emphasized that Palestinian journalists are subjected to daily violations and particularly in Jerusalem, and that the rate and magnitude of attacks on the press increase during growing judaization campaigns and assaults directed by settlers, the army, and the police force against the local population. Violations against journalists include arrests, arbitrary detention, summons for interrogation, physical beatings, the use of journalists as human shields, death threats, destruction and confiscation of equipment, travel bans, invasion and closure of media institutions, censorship of websites, and others.

At the end of its press release, **"SHAMS"** called upon international institutions and frameworks, most notably United Nations special rapporteurs, the International Federation of Journalists, the Federation of Arab Journalists, and international civil



institutions to undertake immediate action and exert pressure to stop the systemic Israeli violations and assaults against journalism in Palestine and protect the freedom of journalism and the press. The center also calls for raising the issue of Israeli assaults on journalists with the international commission of inquiry that is set to be formed by the United Nations Human Rights Council and the International Criminal Court.