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A statement issued by “SHAMS” Center: the Palestinian political system is moving towards solidifying itself as an oppressive police regime.

Ramallah: the Human Rights and Democracy Media Center “SHAMS” follows with immense concern the horrifying developments that have taken place in the city of Ramallah on 5/7/2021 on Monday (yesterday), in which a peaceful assembly was violently broken up and a large number of political activists, dissidents, and human rights activists were arrested. Among those arrested were academics, members of political movements, civil institutions’ staff members, former prisoners in Israeli jails, journalists, and lawyers, all of whom were severely beaten and physically dragged in the streets. The barbaric assaults and arbitrary arrests also included families of political prisoners who convened in a spontaneous manner in front of the police department in the Al-Balou’ neighborhood in Al-Bireh to demand that their arbitrarily arrested sons, daughters, parents, and family members be released. Furthermore, a number of prisoners have been subjected to torture, prompting their transfer to hospitals. Many of them are still under detention nonetheless.

These events occurred just a few hours after the Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Dr. Mohammad Shtayyeh spoke in a delivered speech of “a complete respect for the freedom of expression, freedom of opinion, and the journalists’ freedom to perform their job without being subjected to any impediment that hinder their tasks and be given the chance to perform their work freely and professionally.” Dr. Shtayyeh had also said that he listened to complaints voiced by female journalists and assured that “what happened to them will not take place once again.”

“SHAMS” Center emphasized that the political system and its tools must take into consideration that suppression and security-based solutions will neither work out nor succeed in muffling voices that demand justice, rights, as well as private and public freedoms. Rather, this approach will perpetuate further congestion in light of the recurrent suppressive measures that have taken on a methodical nature. The



foundations of the regime should have instead pondered with seriousness and intent possible means through which it could answer demands of justice as doing so would have been the easiest way to extinguish the flames of sedition.

“SHAMS” Center called in its statement for respecting the Palestinian Basic Law (interim constitution) and the international agreements, documents, and conventions to which the State of Palestine has acceded, including the two International Covenants on Human Rights and the United Nations Convention against Torture (UNCAT), all of which guaranteed the right to free assembly, freedom of expression, freedom of the press, freedom of political activity, freedom of professional and union activity, and physical and mental health. The center called for the embodiment of that respect in the form of actions through the immediate release of all prisoners and detainees who have been put in jail due to their practice of free assembly, expression of opinions, or their practice of political and union activity and holding all perpetrators in the string of violations witnessed by the West Bank since the murder of the political activist Nizar Banat accountable.

“SHAMS” Center emphasizes that it is crucially important to immediately form a committee for national dialogue comprised of representatives of civil society, national factions and movements, political parties and activities, individuals from civil and security governmental institutions, independent activists, intellectuals, and academics to immediately launch a comprehensive national dialogue that yields conceptions and solutions that serve as an exit point from the current crisis on the basis of democracy and respect for rights and freedoms.