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"SHAMS" Center welcomes the president's issuance of a decree setting the date for elections

Human Rights and Democracy Media "SHAMS" received with great satisfaction and pleasure the issuance of President Mahmoud Abbas "Abu Mazen" a decree setting the date for holding the general and presidential elections and the National Council during the next few months. The center said that the importance of the elections lies in the fact that they activate the participation of citizens by granting the right to vote for the masses of voters (the people) who are the main source of authority, as it reduces the state of political vacuum and protects against its consequences. The elections play an active role in the development process in its various dimensions. It maintains civil peace and social cohesion through the peaceful transfer of power. It also avoids society from further crises, including the crisis of identity, citizenship and belonging, by accepting the results of the ballot boxes and its confidence in the election process and its active role in the secretion of the ruling class as an essential pillar of the democratic state.

"SHAMS" Center calls for the necessity to create conditions for holding elections, so that these elections are free, fair, transparent, and characterized by public and neutral participation, in order to achieve their goals, considering the elections are not a goal or an end in themselves as much as they are a means to reach and maintain a democratic society in terms of structural and cultural frameworks, legislation and practices, in addition to their periodicity and respect for constitutional and legal deadlines.



“SHAMS” Center stresses its great confidence in the Central Elections Committee, its administrative and technical staff, its expertise, neutrality and professionalism, its practical experience, and its ability to conduct the elections in its various stages according to the dates specified in the presidential decree. The Center commended the role played by the Chairman of the Committee, Dr. Hanna Nasir, and its Director General, Dr. Hisham Kahil, in bridging the points of view between the parties and working with all parties to conduct the elections throughout the past period, although this role is not their role according to the law, but the committee played this role in the absence of serious mobility from the factions, civil society, the private sector and universities. Since its establishment, the committee has distanced itself from the political differences between the parties, as it has never been a party to any political conflict, and it usually stands at the same distance from the parties without favoritism.

“SHAMS” Center believes that voter confidence increases more and more in the electoral process and its results, with the presence of a strong, independent, transparent and impartial judiciary, as this is considered one of the basic factors in ensuring the integrity and transparency of the electoral process. The rulings and decisions issued by them, the extent of their commitment and respect for the laws and the will of the legislator are other indicators of citizens' confidence in the judicial authority and its rulings. This would lead to more recourse by citizens and voters alike to the judiciary if there is a specific breach in any of the stages of the electoral process, and confidence increases even more if the judiciary is far from political and



partisan disputes, and is not a tool of the executive authority and when they find that its judges are independent, with no authority over them except the law.

“SHAMS” Center warns against going to Uncontested election (acclamation) through consensus lists, and not to hold elections.

Acclamation is the antithesis of the exercise of the right to vote and nomination and empty its content, confiscate and rob the will of the voters and candidates at the same time, impose names on citizens, and ignore the principle of the people, the source of authority, the crown jewel in the social contract. Elections may, in one way or another, be a tool of solution, and the most dangerous thing is that Uncontested election is one of the most important obstacles to the process of democratic transformation, and not holding elections or replacing them by acclamation may lead to undermining citizens' confidence in the political system and the feasibility of participating in elections.

“SHAMS” Center calls for the widest participation in the elections to be held, and in all its various stages, especially the stage of registration, publication and opposition, polling and oversight, and for activating the role of civil society institutions, especially those that have a supervisory capacity with the Central Election Commission, to take its role in seriously monitoring all stages of the electoral process, and to raise the awareness of citizens and citizens of the need to participate in all stages of the electoral process. It also calls for strengthening and activating the role of traditional and modern media in monitoring the electoral process, and in educating the masses of voters about the manifestations of electoral and political corruption and their oversight roles, raising their level of awareness and



educating them about the direct relationship between electoral corruption and the deterioration of internal conditions, in a way that contributes to making them more interested, effective and partnered in public affairs. The Center also calls on male and female citizens in general, and young men and women in particular, to participate in the electoral process as candidates.