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**A Statement for Immediate Release  
issued by the Human Rights and Democracy Media Center "SHAMS"**

**"SHAMS" Center: what happened to the activist Nizar Banat is a message of  
intimidation directed by the political system against its opposition**

With immense anger and condemnation, the Human Rights and Democracy Media Center "SHAMS" received the shocking news of the death of the detained political activist, notable human rights defender, and former candidate in parliamentary elections Nizar Banat a few hours after he was arrested by the security forces. According to testimonies delivered by Banat's family, he was subjected to a vicious physical beating by members of the security forces who raided his home at dawn and blew out its doors and windows.

"SHAMS" Center emphasizes that Nizar Banat is the most recent victim of a long, extended, and systemic campaign of suppression directed by the security forces against voices of opposition in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and an overall integrated suppressive system that devours on a daily basis the space allocated for rights and liberties. "SHAMS" Center warns against the ramifications that these suppressive practices inflict upon rights, public and private freedoms, civil peace, and social cohesion and affirms that what occurred to the activist Nizar Banat is a message of intimidation directed by the political system against its opposition. The center calls for the following:

1. The integrous, objective, and transparent formulation of an independent investigation committee that must include a medical examiner that represents Banat's family. The investigation must be responsive, effective, and thorough. The investigation's conclusions and recommendations must be published and the public must be granted access to them in accordance with its right to access information. In addition, the committee's conclusions and recommendations must be fully implemented, perpetrators must be held accountable in a manner that achieves private and public deterrence, and procedures must be undertaken to ensure that similar incidents never occur again in the future.



2. The complete suspension of political arrests, arrests motivated by the expression of opinions, and the targeting of human rights defenders and political activists.
3. The re-consideration of the security establishment's policy of systemic targeting of political and human rights activists through the re-construction of the establishment's ideology on a new basis that respects rights and freedoms.
4. The resumption of the electoral process and organization of public, inclusive and simultaneous elections through an agreed-upon elections law and a transparent elections court. Such steps must be undertaken to respect the principle of peaceful transition of authority and the people's right to grant legitimacy to the governing authorities. They would also require the establishment of a transparent and free electoral environment where the democratic process is enhanced.
5. The center calls upon all governmental institutions to honor Palestine's legal obligations as per the international agreements, conventions, and documents to which it has acceded including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT). Doing so means retracting all legislations and practices that hinder democracy and human rights.

## The End