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“SHAMS” Center: *Agence France Presse*’s decision to sack the president of the Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate from his job is an act of bias that favors the Israeli narrative

Ramallah: the Human Rights and Democracy Media Center ”SHAMS” condemned with the strongest and harshest terms the decision of *Agence France Presse* to arbitrarily sack the journalist Nasser Abu Bakr, the president of the Palestinian Journalists Union, from his job due to his stance against the practices of the Israeli occupation after working with the agency for over 20 years.

Agence France Presse should have sided with the principles of the profession of journalism, the freedom of press, the principles of the French Revolution, and Declaration on the Citizens' Rights, which designated the freedom of press as a fundamental human right. Instead, we were taken aback by its unprofessional and arbitrary action, which is a form of bias that favors the Israeli narrative and constitutes a direct complicity in the efforts to cover-up war crimes and the system of apartheid committed by the colonial occupation authorities against Palestinian civilians and particularly journalists, which was especially prevalent in the latest aggression against the Gaza Strip and the continuous assaults in the West Bank including Jerusalem, and the occupied 1948 territories.

“SHAMS” Center also praised the efforts of the Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate headed by its president Nasser Abu Bakr to expose the practices of the occupation, shed light on the plight of our people, and provide coverage of their suffering to the international audience. These efforts succeeded in confronting the National Federation of Israeli Journalists and ultimately expel its envoy from the International Federation of Journalists. Their efforts also included intensive work to channel Palestinian voices in the Federation of Arab Journalists, and a push for the prosecution of the occupation leaders before international courts for their crimes against Palestinian journalists.

“SHAMS” Center stated that it values the role played by male and female Palestinian journalists, media personnel, and bloggers in covering circumstances on the ground



with total professionalism and objectivity and effectively defending human rights despite the dear prices they pay in their quest to do so.

“SHAMS” emphasized that the freedom of press, journalism, union activities, and the freedom of political expression are all guaranteed in all international agreements and conventions. Therefore, we call upon the *Agence France Presse* to immediately retract its arbitrary decision. Additionally, we call upon the International Federation of Journalists and the Federation of Arab Journalists to exert the utmost pressure to push the agency to retract its arbitrary decision and reinstate its correspondent in the West Bank the journalist Nasser Abu Bakr.