



2021/12/5

## A statement for Immediate Release

Issued by "SHAMS" Human Rights and Democracy's Media Center

**On international volunteers' day: "SHAMS" center calls to approve a national comprehensive plan to activate voluntary work and motivate volunteers.**

**Ramallah:** Human Rights and Democracy Center "SHAMS" greets volunteering individuals and organizations, for their contributions in local development, combating poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental deterioration, and marginalization, especially against women and children as well as elders, in the press statement issues by the center on the international volunteer day in Dec 5<sup>th</sup>.

The Center stresses on the importance of voluntary work in the Palestinian community, considering volunteering culture an original value to its history, the voluntary work grown in the Palestinian context with the different and on-going phases of the Palestinian cause, and the liberational route of it, it contributed traditionally in maintaining the Palestinian existence, and it peaked in the absence of any official or formal bodies, when the Palestinian community organized itself as a mechanism of preserving identity and culture, it took many forms, such as "Ouna" in the Palestinian rural communities, and it was seen in the work with refugees and refugee camps after the Nakba, to finally start to establish voluntary work committees in the Palestinian cities, villages, and camps in the late 70s and 80s, and then to be put into framework and systematic visions through Palestinian universities and Palestinian civil society organizations.

The center stated that the volunteering culture faces Stagnation and imitation in discourse, and the lack of ability to expand and gain new societal roots due to these problems, moreover, the values of individual salvation contributed to this state, which made voluntary work imprisoned and lacking the ability for interaction, in addition to that, the culture of volunteering is till underrepresented by females, while the Palestinian community is considered a young community, regarding age groups, the power of youth is still not sponsored or put into the right context that can help in development and building the society and the country.



“SHAMS” Center recommended the need to develop a comprehensive national plan that integrates volunteer work into a comprehensive and holistic development perspective, motivates volunteers and enhances their capacity building. And creating effective and sustainable coordination mechanisms between official and civil institutions with regard to voluntary work. Giving the opportunity for youth contributions to make and approve official policies in a way that enhances their citizenship and belonging and reflects positively on their community participation. And the development of laws and legislation regulating voluntary work, allowing its activation and guaranteeing the rights of volunteers, taking into account the privacy of voluntary work and the free will of volunteers.