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## A statement for immediate release

Issued by Human Rights and Democracy Media Center "SHAMS"

### **International day for human rights defenders passes with desolation to the Palestinian civil society: Colonial "Israel" reduces the civil society space in the Palestinian territories, which requires an international confrontation and protection for defenders**

Human Rights and Democracy Media Center "SHAMS" greets human rights defenders on their international day, who carry out their work in consolidating the human rights system at the international and local levels with professionalism, and courage, paying the price for this by death threats physical assault, detention, arbitrary arrest, ban on movement, and denial of travel, systematic defamation, confiscation and vandalism of property, breach of privacy, espionage, extortion and other abusive practices targeting them.

On the International Day of Human Rights Defenders, "SHAMS" Center stresses on the importance of strengthening Palestinian civil society and providing it with freedom and space without restriction or harassment, protecting and supporting human rights defenders, and promoting media freedom, which are essential requirements for defending human rights and democracy and ensuring its prosperity. Especially in light of the existing relationship that cannot be ignored between international peace and security, human rights and fundamental freedoms and justice.

"SHAMS" Center confirms that this year comes in light of very special events that afflicted Palestinian civil society, after Israeli occupation, designated six prominent Palestinian human rights and civil organizations as terrorist organizations in accordance with Israeli colonial legislation, against the background of the role of these institutions in supporting and defending Palestinian human rights, exposing the occupation's practices in international forums, supporting the steadfastness of farmers and citizens in areas classified as "C" in the face of settlement internationally classified as a war crime, and defending detainees, prisoners and children.

So that the arbitrary, intimidating and extremely dangerous Israeli decision targeted: Al-Haq Foundation, the International Movement for the Defense of Children - Palestine, and Addameer Foundation for Prisoner Care and Human Rights; The Union of Agricultural Work Committees, the Union of Palestinian Women's Committees, and the Bisan Center for Research and Development. Subsequently, the so-called Commander of the Central Region in the Israeli



occupation army issued a military order banning the six Palestinian civilian institutions, giving the green light to the occupation forces to immediately move against these institutions, raiding their offices and confiscating their contents, raising the possibility of arresting their employees, and confirming that colonial Israel is moving forward in targeting all Who is Palestinian, without any considerations, based on national, racist and colonialist premises.

"SHAMS" Center renews its full solidarity with the targeted institutions against this latest Israeli intimidation within ongoing systematic practices aimed at breaking the power of Palestinian civil society, which comes within the framework of a comprehensive and systematic campaign of distortion and defamation launched by the colonial regime with all its tools against Palestinian civil organizations, the Ministry of Affairs implements this Israeli strategy, as well as the racist Israeli organization funded by the extreme right (NGO MONITOR) played a major role in the decision.

"SHAMS" Center reminds that the colonial Israeli practices to restrict human rights work and human rights defenders, which are not limited to Palestinian jurists, but extend to international and international defenders, where the Foreign Ministry of the occupation previously refused to process requests for renewal or grant residence visas to international staff of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Human Rights Committee, preventing the international committees from entering the occupied Palestinian territory, and the ongoing war The media and diplomatic tools of the occupation launched against the judges of the International Criminal Court, against opening an investigation into war crimes committed or being committed in the occupied Palestinian territory by the Israeli's.

"SHAMS" Center condemns the continued detention of a group of prominent human rights defenders, including Ms. Shatha Odeh, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the NGO Network and Director General of the Union of Health Work Committees, who has been detained since 7/7/2021 after storming and searching her house, tampering with its contents and confiscating her personal car. She suffers from inhumane and extremely difficult detention conditions and has been subjected to long and harsh investigation sessions despite her special health condition that requires continuous medical and treatment care, in highly coordinated targeting steps aimed at making the crimes of the occupation unsupervised, and to intimidate human rights organizations and human rights defenders, stemming from the principle of impunity.

### On the International Day of Human Rights Defenders, "SHAMS" Center calls for the following:

1. That the United Nations, its institutions, and the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders assume their responsibilities in defending civil space and human rights work in the occupied Palestinian territory, and take the necessary steps to activate the 1998 Human Rights Defenders Declaration and turn it into a tangible reality.



2. Local and international human rights bodies and NGOs unite efforts to counter Israeli intimidation and provide protection and support to human rights defenders.
3. Provide political support and an economic coverage for the International Criminal Court and support its investigations into Israeli war crimes that have been or are being committed, especially from European Union countries and democratic parties in the world.
4. Intensify all human rights bodies and international human rights defenders to document, monitor and follow up on Palestinian human rights, and publish and report on them to ensure that the message of Palestinian civil society and Palestinian defenders reaches its ultimate goals and objectives in implementing human rights and consolidating its system.
5. Strengthening international alliances between Palestinian official and civil institutions and their international counterparts, leading to the creation of an umbrella that advocates and protects Palestinian human rights, defends them, confronts any violation against them, and creates new work tools commensurate with the seriousness of the stage.
6. Activating the role of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union to defend the Palestinian civil space and human rights defenders at the level of parliaments and different governments, and pressure towards taking decisive measures against the occupying power.
7. International Federation and the Arab Union of Lawyers take effective steps in defending the Palestinian civil space and human rights defenders, and the formation of permanent teams to provide support and advice to civil actors and defenders working in the occupied Palestinian territory.

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