



2022/10/17

On the Occasion of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
“SHAMS” Center: From the Colonial Legacy to the Free Market Economy: The Increasing Manifestations of Poverty and its Socio-Economic Repercussions on the Palestinians

"SHAMS" center stresses that the main cause of poverty in the occupied Palestinian territories is the continuity of the occupation, and the inability of the Palestinian people to determine their own destiny, and to exploit their natural resources, especially in the classified lands (C). This also leads to the dependence of the Palestinian economy on the Israeli economy throughout the years of occupation.

In fact, the Israeli occupation forces have attached the Palestinian economy to the Israeli economy as a subsidiary to it, so that the West Bank and the Gaza Strip turn into a market for Israeli products and a source of cheap labor.

Furthermore, the occupied territories have become the second most important importer of Israeli goods after the United States of America as the occupation policy has prevented the establishment of an advanced industrial base in the Palestinian territories.

This led to the distortion of the Palestinian economy, which consists mostly of small enterprises of a family and local character. In fact, Israel is still continuing its policy of destructiveness to the Palestinian economy to control Palestinian commercial transactions by controlling the crossings and borders and restricting the movement of Palestinians between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. This impedes the geographical and economic contiguity between the areas of the Palestinian National Authority 47/196 of January 22, 1992.

“SHAMS” center urges the United Nations and the international community to pressure the occupying power to lift the siege imposed on the Gaza Strip since 2007 until now. This leads to an increase in the rates of poverty, unemployment, destitution and food insecurity. Such situation reached unprecedented levels among the Palestinian citizens.

In addition, the Israeli occupation imposed a naval cordon on the Gaza Strip, through which it prevented fishermen from exceeding the fishing areas stipulated in the Oslo Accords, which exceed 22 nautical miles. This has strengthened their persecution and violation of their freedom to work within the area designated for fishing. Consequently, unemployment in the Gaza Strip is still significantly high reaching 47% compared to 14% in the West Bank,

As for gender, the unemployment rate for males in Palestine has reached 21% compared to 41% for females. The number of the unemployed reached 378,000 in the first quarter of 2022 (244, 000 in the Gaza Strip and about 134, 000 in the West Bank). In the past, poverty rates were less than 30%, however, they exceed more than 60% nowadays. In fact, the rate of food insecurity reached 79% among the population of 2.048 million people.



"SHAMS" Center confirms the absence of a Palestinian development strategy that will keep the Palestinian economy hostage to the Israeli economy, so the development process will remain stagnant increasing the number of the poor. In order to achieve comprehensive development and reach a Palestinian development model, it is necessary to address the various distortions that resulted from the occupation in the structure of the Palestinian economy.

In other words, it is imperative to address the determinants and obstacles to development in general and human development obstacles in particular.

Besides, the sectors that must be focused on in advance to know which should bear the burden of development so that a Palestinian development model can be found based on the leading sectors.

Also, determining the realistic goals of the Palestinian economy can be done by increasing the growth rate of national income and achieving justice in the distribution, reducing the level of unemployment by creating new job opportunities, improving the balance of payments situation and increasing the percentage of self-financing within the general budget.

"SHAMS" center calls on the Palestinian government to combat poverty and reduce unemployment among young people and graduates by providing the necessary infrastructure to facilitate the process of developing economic sectors. Furthermore, it is necessary to pay more attention to the countryside in general and the agricultural sector in particular.

Still, the industrial sector should be focused on through the use of the strategy of industrialization for the sake of industrialization and the education and vocational training sector taking into account the legalization of education.

Finally, the culture and media sector should be signified because of its enormous impact on changing the prevailing pattern of awareness and creating the general climate for the development process, and focusing the attention on establishing chain projects instead of setting up scattered projects.

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