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In Recognition of the 75th Anniversary of Nakba
SHAMS Center: Palestinians Right to Self- determination is Political and Legal Right
The Occupation is Denial of Palestinians' Right to Self- Determination

Ramallah: in Recognition of the 75th anniversary of the Nakba, **Human Rights and Democracy Media Center- SHAMS stressed** that right to self- determination is a basic right within the collective human rights set. Right to self- determination represents the aspirations of the groups and nations regarding the nature of life they look for and determine their political future. Additionally, it contributes to achieve the national hopes and protects national identity and national independence. In this sense, right to self- determination is not a political right only, but also a inalienable legal right and includes right to return, liberation, independence, sovereignty, and build the Palestinian independent state on the entire Palestinian territory, in accordance with the international legacy resolutions, mainly resolution number 181 and resolution number 194 as well as resolution number 2326 (1974). The latest Resolution, in particular, states that: "Palestinians as a nation have fixed rights, including right to return and self- determination. Palestinians are entitled to the right to apply all means to achieve their rights including, national political and military resistance to eliminate all the impacts of the Israeli colonial occupation of the Palestinian territory. The Israeli occupation should bear the legal and political responsibility of the Nakba and the scourge that Palestinians faced". Palestinians are still suffering from the impacts of the Nakba that took place 75 years ago. SHAMS Center emphasized that the occupation in itself is denial of Palestinians right to self-determination.

SHAMS Center emphasized that the manifestations of the Nakba are still alive within the Palestinian consciousness. The wound that resulted from Nakba is still bleeding and refugees are still living under oppression and displacement. Palestinian refugee families are still living the torment in the dark refugee tents and there is an old woman who is still keeping the key of her house. Palestinian refugees are still able to see the ruins of a demolished village whose stones are still there and remind with the destruction that it passed through and the ethnic cleansing of its residents as well as reminding with the crimes committed by the Zionist Groups during the Nakba. Palestinians are still sacrificing for their land and holy places and are still attached to their right to return to their villages and towns from which they were uprooted. Regardless how long the Occupation would last, yet, the dawn of freedom is undoubtedly coming soon or later. Palestinian land would, for sure, enjoy freedom despite the tragedies resulting from the occupation and Palestinians would realize their right to self- determination and national independence.



SHAMS Center welcomes the success of Palestinians in lobbying to issue an advanced resolution from the United Nations General Assembly to commemorate the 75th anniversary of Nakba on 15/5/2023. The Resolution was issued on 30/11/2022 and serves as advanced step in recognizing the oppression that Palestinians are subject to, due to the Nakba. Although the given Resolution is a symbolic step, yet it bears important political and legal indications and it stands as a step on the right path where president Mahmoud Abbas will address the General Assembly with a speech in recognition of the Nakba Anniversary on that date.

SHAMS Center calls upon some European countries, who are still bias to the occupation, to revise their political position regarding the Palestinian Question. The Center calls upon these countries to respect the international legacy and the International Resolutions as well as respecting the international human rights law and the United Nations Charter that ban occupying the land of others by force and using or threatening to use force in terrorizing nations. SHAMS Center added that in case we revise the history of voting on these resolutions, we will find out that there are some European countries that are still bias to the occupation. In this regard, 90 states voted in favor of the resolution while 30 countries voted against and 47 countries abstained. It was clear that the countries against the resolution from the European countries are from those who enjoy political and economic power such as the United Kingdom, Italy, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Greece, and Hungary. In addition to these countries, there are other countries whose position accords with the position of the European countries such as the United States of America and Canada alongside with some far countries (Island countries) and some Latin American countries. As for the countries that abstained, the majority was European countries, which indicates that the European position is still bias to the occupation and supports the occupation's state on the account of the legal rights of Palestinians.

SHAMS Center affirms that what the European countries did during the previous century, where all kinds of support were provided to the Zionism Movement to establish its state in Palestine and to serve as functional state in the region, represents clear bias to the occupation and violation of the international law. Additionally, supporting the Zionism Movement expressed the European tendency to ban developing any Arabic Renaissance project and keep the various Arabic countries under control. All these practices mount to political crimes that the European countries are responsible for due to their support to the Zionism Movement. Among the major manifestations of the European countries support to the Zionism Movement is Sykes–Picot Agreement and Belfour Declaration that resulted from these agreements. Belfour Declaration came as the crown of the Zionism Movement Project to establish Western Colonial State in Palestine. Britain played a role in facilitating for Jews to immigrate to Palestine and provided them with pieces of land and weapons and provided all needed protection in order to start establishing colonies in Palestine. The United Kingdom paved the road in the face of the Zionism Movement to impose control on the Palestinian land and establish its state on the ruins of Palestinians. Despite all that, Palestinian



struggle process is still going on and all the attempts of the Zionism Project failed. The Zionism Movement depended on lies and falsifying history to justify their right in Palestine but all that failed. All the lies on which the Zionism Project was built were created by the European colonialism states in order to get rid of the Jews who represented a problem in these countries. Palestinians, through their steadfastness and sacrificing, managed through over the years to defeat the Zionism Project and continued resisting the occupation through all available means. Palestine is still presence in the international political fields as one of the major issues in the world where masses and popular movements are working to support.

SHAMS Center emphasizes the international legal reference of right to self- determination as a basic right for all nations and ethnic, lingual, or cultural groups that might be under oppressive occupation. Right to self- determination is a collective right affirmed by several international human rights conventions and treaties. Right to self- determination was affirmed through the United Nations Charter and the related General Assembly's resolutions. Additionally, it was confirmed through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the two UN Covenants on Civic, political, social, economic, and cultural rights as well as within the UN Declaration on Indigenous people and many other instruments that all affirmed the free right of nations and groups to self- determination. Palestinians are still denied such right and are still living under the disasters of the Nakba as a result of the support of the colonial countries to the occupation's state that denies Palestinians rights and impose on them colonial occupation as well as applying clear Apartheid Regime against all Palestinians in their entire country while the world stands watching with no steps.

SHAMS Center salutes Palestinians who are steadfastness on their land and in their cities, villages, towns, and refugee camps and face the oppression of the occupation all the time. SHAMS Center salutes Palestinians in the refugee camps who are still loyal to their homeland and reject any violation of their right to return to the land from which they were uprooted. Those Palestinians were uprooted from their localities under the threaten of force and after massacres committed by the Zionism Groups against innocent armless Palestinians during the Nakba, which stands as profound violation of all the international conventions and treaties and all the international ethical standards.

SHAMS Center emphasizes that the anniversary of Nakba this year comes while Palestinians are still facing its consequences. The crimes and practices of the occupation during the Nakba are still going on where evicting people and home demolishing as well as destroying the environment and other war crimes are still part of the daily scene. Field execution and arrest campaigns are still going on in repetition of the acts that accompanied the 1948 Nakba. The occupation is still going on in confiscating Palestinians land and building colonies as well as applying Apartheid Regime against Palestinians in the entire occupied



Palestine. Palestinians are still denied right to return to their homeland though the international human rights law recognizes such right for all Palestinians and their descendants.

SHAMS Center calls upon the international community to fulfill its legal and moral responsibilities to lift the oppression imposed on Palestinians and end the ongoing Nakba imposed on them by the Zionism Occupation. The Center calls upon ensuring sustaining the UNRWA to pursue its services to Palestinian refugees, especially that it is currently subject to sanctions and restrictions of fund by some countries whose policies harmonize with the Israeli Colonial Regime where the Occupation seeks dismantling the International Agency and stop its services to Palestinian refugees.

In conclusion, **SHAMS Center calls** upon unifying the Palestinian efforts to adopt a unified informative strategy in addressing the international community to highlight the impacts of the Nakba and the applied policies of the occupation. Palestinian institutions should focus on promoting right to return as a collective right to all Palestinians and ensure addressing this right without delay or shifting it to the future phases of negotiations. Additionally, there is a need to intensify the efforts to identify the legal reference of the right to return based on the resolutions of the internal legacy in order to be the base for any future discussion regarding the given right within any political process. SHAMS Center calls upon giving preference for the national interest but not the political groups and factions interests, through ending the political division and achieving the National Unity. There is a need to achieve coincide among all Palestinians to activate the democratic life and return to people as a resource of legitimacy through elections. SHAMS Center calls upon the necessity to reactivate the role of PLO as a political representative of Palestinians inside and outside Palestine. Moreover, SHAMS Center stresses the necessity to unify the discourse once addressing the international public opinion and international organizations where Palestinians are all one nation and have unified rights and demands.

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