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Within the Ongoing Aggression on the Gaza Strip: Journalists are targeted directly by the Israeli Occupation Air Strikes

Ramallah: Human Rights and Democracy Media Center- SHAMS, called upon the International Federation of Journalists and both the governmental and non-governmental international legal organizations, to initiate immediately in efforts to press on the occupation's state to stop its aggression against the Palestinian journalists in the Gaza Strip. The Center affirms that the International Community should fulfill its moral and legal responsibilities to enable Palestinian journalists to fulfill their duties in reporting about what is going on in the Gaza Strip. SHAMS Center stressed the necessity to implement the UN Security Council Resolution (2222) related to protect journalists, to ensure accounting the Israeli army and Israeli settlers for their crimes and that they would not escape punishment. The Center confirmed that the journalists are targeted by the Israeli air forces while they are on duty. It seems that the Israeli occupation believes that targeting the journalists would lead to cover the truth and ensure that none would report about the massacres and crimes committed by the Israeli army; and the profound violations of the International Law committed against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip

SHAMS Center added that the systematic targeting of the journalists in the Gaza Strip and in the West Bank reveals the Israeli tendency to blind the truth and ensure that the international community would not see what is going on. According to a statement issued by the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate, 19 Palestinian journalists have been killed since the beginning of the Israeli aggression, on October 7, 2023. In addition to that, another 20 journalists were wounded due to the Israeli attacks. Moreover, there are still two journalists missed. On a related level, the Israeli army targeted and demolished 50 media institutions in the Gaza Strip that included: Al- Aqsa Media Network, Sawa News Agency, Shihab News Agency, Al-Quds Newspaper, Baladna Radio Station, Zaman Radio Station, Wataniya News Agency, Khabar News Agency, Al- Ayyam Newspaper, Event Company for Media Services, Fadel Shanaa Media Institution, Koran Kareem Radio, APA Office, Al-Jazeera Office, Palestine Television, Shams News Agency, and French News Agency Office. In the West Bank, the Israeli violations against the Palestinian journalists



ranged between detention and extend detention (of already detained journalists) as well as holding custody and wounding with live ammunition. Additionally, some journalists were assaulted and others were banned from covering the actions. The houses of some journalists were raided and others were summoned to show up in front of the Israeli intelligence services. Teargas was sprayed towards the journalists to prevent them from working. The Israeli soldiers, in many cases, confiscated the equipment of journalists in the field. The personal social media pages of many journalists were blocked based on reporting to the International Social Media Platforms by the Israeli government. Moreover, the Israeli media launched a heavy incitement campaign against the Palestinian journalists.

The Emergency Government that came into power in Israel, drafted a law to restrict freedom of press as a step within its efforts to mislead the international public opinion. The new law allows closing offices and cancelling the license of any media agency found to be threatening the security of the occupation's state through its informative activities. The Israeli new law was issued within the period of escalation in the racism Israeli policy and shrinking the space in the face of Palestinian, Arabic, and International Media Agencies.

The new Israeli law reveals the real face of the occupation and the Israeli policy to hide the truth and its reveals the fascist aggressive reality of the Israeli policy against journalists.

SHAMS Center states that the Israeli attacks against journalists and media agencies in the Gaza Strip is a clear violation of the International Law and the International Humanitarian Law. The International Law affirmed the necessity to develop appropriate mechanisms to protect journalists and media work. Such mechanisms were interpreted in several international conventions and treaties. The International Law humanitarian law distinguishes between two types of journalists: war correspondents accredited by the armed forces and specified in the 1949 Geneva Conventions, and civilian journalists undertaking hazardous missions in areas of armed conflict, as outlined in Article 79 of the 1977 Additional Protocol relating to international armed conflicts. Those working in the field of journalism are considered civilians, and the same protections apply to them as to other civilians in armed conflict. Direct attacks on civilian individuals are prohibited, and the arbitrary use of force against them is forbidden.



The United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1738 in 2006, condemning any attacks on journalists during armed conflicts and emphasizing the need to protect them. The United Nations General Assembly also passed Resolution 68/163 in 2013, condemning acts of violence against journalists during armed conflicts and calling for their safety. Security Council Resolution 2222 in 2015 calls for the protection of journalists, media personnel, and individuals associated with them. The resolution reaffirms that media equipment, tools, offices, and studios are civilian assets and should not be targeted in acts of revenge or attacks during times of war and military operations.

The center emphasized that the systematic targeting of journalists in the Gaza Strip reflects the Israeli occupation's policy to conceal the truth from the world and silence all voices that speak out. In the face of this brutal aggression carried out by the Israeli war machine against civilians in the Gaza Strip, international bodies and institutions are urged to take action and exert pressure on the Israeli occupation government to cease its targeting of journalists and media organizations. This includes the International Federation of Journalists, UNESCO, the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Palestinian territories, and all international and regional entities and institutions concerned with human rights.

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