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SHAMS Center**Persons with Disability are the Most Affected Group by the Israeli Aggression on the Gaza Strip**

Ramallah: Human Rights and Democracy Media Center- SHAMS, emphasized that persons with disabilities are the most affected group by the aggression committed against the Gaza Strip by the Israeli occupation. The persons with disabilities are among the weakest social segments and are unable to fulfill their basic needs unless external support is provided to them. Additionally, those persons are in need of medicine and supportive tools to help them in their daily lives. Many of them lost their homes as a result of the Israeli shelling in addition to demolishing the hospitals and medical centers to which they usually refer to get treatment and medicine. Therefore, the suffering of this social segment increased noticeably during the previous weeks as a result of the Israeli ongoing aggression.

SHAMS Center denounced the ongoing crimes committed by the Israeli occupation against civilians in the Gaza Strip that target the vulnerable social segments including persons with disabilities among whom are women, children, and aged persons. The Israeli forces are intentionally targeting the houses and civic establishments. Persons with disabilities are unable to escape and rescue themselves as a result of the attacks and shelling. They cannot leave their houses or the places where they might be, in case there is shelling. Some members of the mentioned social segment have a physical disability that bans them from moving away while others are deaf and cannot understand what is going on around them. Some persons with disabilities cannot even realize what is going on around (medtal retardation disabilities) and so, they become direct victims of the attacks.

SHAMS Center emphasizes that imposing a siege on the Gaza Strip and denying the entry of life essentials (food, water, medicine, fuel, and so on) stands as a form of collective punishment that harms civilians in general. At the same time, targeting the hospitals and medical centers as well as the ambulances and paramedical teams, affects all civilians in the Gaza Strip and mainly the persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities are the most affected group due to the fact that they are in need of care and support from others to fulfill their basic needs. The overall situation of the persons with disabilities witnessed horrible deterioration because of the ongoing Israeli aggression.

SHAMS Center affirms that targeting persons with disabilities by the Israeli army is a violation of all legal, ethical, religious, and human values. Additionally, it is a profound violation of the International Law and the International Humanitarian Law. The Israeli crimes violate the resolutions of the General Assembly, especially Resolution number 2856/ 1974 Regarding the Rights of Persons with Mental Retardation and Resolution number 3447/ 1975 regarding the equal rights of persons with disabilities. Additionally, the Israeli occupation violates Resolution number (37/52/ 1982), regarding the International Working Program of Persons with Disabilities. At the same time, the Israeli forces violated the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities issued on 14/7/2021. The Preamble of the Convention emphasized that state members: (Bearing in mind that conditions of peace and security based on full respect for the purposes and principles contained in the Charter of the United Nations and



observance of applicable human rights instruments are indispensable for the full protection of persons with disabilities, in particular during armed conflicts and foreign occupation). Article 10 of the Convention states: "States Parties reaffirm that every human being has the inherent right to life and shall take all necessary measures to ensure its effective enjoyment by persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others". Article 11 states: "States Parties shall take, in accordance with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, all necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of natural disasters". The Israeli crimes violate International Humanitarian Law, mainly the Geneva Fourth Convention, which urges the state parties to neutralize civilians during armed conflicts and wars.

SHAMS Center calls on the United Nations, World Health Organization, International Red Cross Committee, governmental and non-governmental Organizations, Medicines Without Borders Organization, and Amnesty, to initiate immediately to press on the Occupation State to end its aggression and stop targeting persons with disabilities in particular. The Center calls upon these organizations to ensure that the Israeli forces stop targeting the hospitals and medical centers, mainly those that provide support and care for persons with disabilities.