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International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists SHAMS Center: Escaping Punishment Will Not Reduce Crime and Punishment

Human Rights and Democracy Media Center- SHAMS, stressed that escaping punishment currently, will not reduce crime and punishment in the future. The Center affirmed that escaping punishment is a result of the political, legal, and diplomatic coverage some countries provide to the occupation state. Based on the mentioned coverage, the occupation state was enabled to proceed with its crimes and massacres against Palestinian civilians, including journalists. For that, the international criminal judiciary and the governmental/ nongovernmental legal organizations should pursue Israeli war criminal officers for their crimes against Palestinian journalists.

SHAMS Center affirms that the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists, which was declared by the United Nations to be on November 2 of each year, emphasizes the necessity to account for the perpetrators of the crimes against journalists. The crimes against the Palestinian journalists are within the ongoing aggression on Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. The Israeli army is going on with its aggression on Palestinians where there are currently 9159 Palestinian martyrs who fell down as a result of the Israeli attacks and the number is increasing every other minute. 38 of the martyrs are journalists in addition to demolishing approximately 50 journalism and media institutions. In addition to that, there are approximately 24 thousand persons who have been injured. Despite that, the major countries in the world are standing to the side of the occupation and encouraging the crimes against Palestinian civilians. These countries refuse to press on the occupation's state to cease-fire. The occupation is escalating targeting the journalists through murdering, demolishing their houses, and killing their families in order to hide the truth and silence the voices that publicize the crimes of the occupation against Palestinian civilians. Moreover, the Israeli occupation is disconnecting all the communication channels and the internet for the sake of preventing journalists from reporting to the world about the horrible situation inside the Gaza Strip.

SHAMS Center deplores the policies applied by some international American and European companies, which align with the occupation's narration in justifying and pursuing the journalists. In this regard, some social media companies are imposing restrictions on the content published by Palestinian journalists. There are restrictions imposed on the reports published by Palestinian journalists that contribute to publicizing the crimes of the occupation. Restrictions are imposed on the posts and tweets of Palestinian journalists to silence them. The various social media platforms became a tool utilized by the Israeli occupation to restrict the work of Palestinian journalists and ensure the hiding of the crimes committed against Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip.

SHAMS Center affirms that the attacks against Palestinian journalists in the Gaza Strip profoundly violate international humanitarian law, which provides journalists with special protection during wartime, armed conflicts, and urges to neutralize them during the fight. Article 79 of the Optional Protocol annexed to the Geneva Fourth Convention- 1949 states: "Journalists are entitled to all the rights granted to civilians under war and armed conflicts". The Israeli targeting of Palestinian journalists violates rule number 34 of the Customary International Law, which states that: "Civilian Journalists engaged in professional missions in areas of armed conflict must be respected and protected as long as they are not taking part in hostilities". Targeting journalists violates the International Humanitarian Law and the resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council regarding protecting journalists. The Security Council's Resolution number 1738/ 2006, condemns any attack against journalists during armed conflicts and



affirms the necessity to protect them. Additionally, the Israeli Occupation violates the Security Council Resolution number 2222/ 2015, which urges for the protection of the journalists and the technical teams working with them and stresses avoiding targeting the journalists' equipment, studios, and headquarters. Likewise, it violates the General Assembly's Resolution 68/ 163 of 2013, which condemns hostile attacks against journalists during armed conflicts.

SHAMS Center affirms the necessity to lodge cases against Israeli war criminals in front of the international courts and ensure that they do not escape punishment. There are many shreds of evidence and clues, which prove that the Israeli military officers and leaders committed war crimes against Palestinian civilians and journalists and crimes against humanity, in the Gaza Strip. Such a situation proves the credibility of the Palestinian arguing that the occupation is proceeding with the crimes because the Israeli leaders are sure that they will escape punishment and that they will not be accountable for their crimes. Those who are secure from punishment tend to proceed in the criminal acts. Such a fact is applicable to the Israeli occupation in its aggression on the Gaza Strip. SHAMS Center calls upon the International Criminal Court, in accordance with its judicial competence and its jurisdiction over Palestine, as The State of Palestine has acceded to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court- 1998, to start an investigation against the Israeli war criminals for the crimes they committed against Palestinians during the ongoing aggression on the Gaza Strip.

SHAMS Center calls upon the various international legal organizations and media organizations, as well as the International Federation of Journalists, to interfere immediately to obligate the occupying power to stop its crimes against Palestinians in general, and against journalists in particular, as the Israeli occupation is dealing with the journalists as military targets to be attacked directly.