



20/11/2023

**In Recognition of Children's Day
SHAMS Center Addresses the International Community:
How Many Palestinian Children Should Be Killed and What Color Their Blood Should Be,
To Awaken the World's Conscious and Stop the Massacres?**

Ramallah: Human Rights and Democracy Media Center- SHAMS deplored the international community's silence towards the massacres and atrocities, committed daily, by the occupying forces against innocent civilians, especially children, as a matter of great concern. Shams Center has called on the international community, particularly international institutions, including the United Nations and its agencies, mainly the UNICEF, the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights, the High Contracting Parties to the Geneva Conventions, and governmental and non-governmental international organizations to prioritize the need to provide protection for Palestinian children in the face of the crimes committed by the Israeli war machine against them. On the occasion of International Children's Day, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on November 20, 1954, and the declaration of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child on the same day in 1989, the world celebrates the innocence, spontaneity, love for life, and the beauty of the souls of children. However, Palestinian children continue to suffer due to the Israeli war machine's crimes against them. While children around the world enjoy their childhood with their families and at their school desks, playing in parks and children's playgrounds, Palestinian children endure the hardships of occupation, including killing, destruction, forced displacement, and the deprivation of basic necessities like water, food, medicine, and electricity.

In contrast to the joy and carefree nature of childhood, Palestinian children face the harsh realities of the Israeli occupation, witnessing the destruction of their homes, schools, and hospitals. The international community's selective approach and double standards in dealing with human rights violations based on the nationality of the victims or perpetrators are evident. The crimes committed against Palestinian children are a stain on humanity, revealing the inconsistency and lack of credibility in addressing human rights when it comes to the rights of Palestinian children.

Shams Center also condemned the heinous crimes committed by the (Israel), occupying power, and aggression against the Palestinian people through the excessive use of force against civilians and civilian buildings, in the Gaza Strip since 7/10/2023. These acts constitute a war crime and a form of collective punishment against civilians, especially children. The number of martyrs since the beginning of the aggression is approximately (13,000) martyrs, including about (5,500) child martyrs. The number of missing persons is more than (6,000), including about (4,000) missing children and women. The number of wounded is about (30,000), with almost half of them being children, as announced by the Gaza Government's media office.



Shams Center emphasized that the treatment of Palestinian children, especially in the Gaza Strip, by the Israeli occupation army, constitutes acts described in international law as war crimes and crimes against humanity. These actions represent serious violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention and its Second Optional Protocol, which affirm the provision of special protection for children during both international and non-international armed conflicts, considering them civilians and a category not participating in warfare. Article 14 of the Fourth Geneva Convention states, "High Contracting Parties shall, both in peacetime and in time of armed conflict, in their respective territories or in occupied territories, if need be, set up relief and protection zones for the benefit of wounded, sick, disabled, elderly, and children under fifteen, expectant mothers, and mothers of children under seven". Article 17 further stipulates that "Parties to the conflict shall facilitate the local search for the wounded, sick, disabled, elderly, children, and women from besieged or encircled areas". Article 24 requires conflict parties to take all necessary measures to ensure that children under fifteen, who are orphaned or separated from their families, are not left to their own devices and to guarantee their care, maintenance, and education. These actions also constitute a blatant and major violation of international human rights law, particularly the 1989 International Convention on the Rights of the Child, which ensures the protection of children, preventing them from exposure to risks and providing means for a decent living, security, and care. Article 38 of the Convention states, "States Parties undertake to respect and to ensure respect for rules of international humanitarian law applicable to them in armed conflicts which are relevant to the child and to ensure that States Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure protection and care of children who are affected by an armed conflict". This is also a violation of the United Nations Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict of 1974, which "prohibits attacks against civilians and their bombing, causing immeasurable suffering, especially to women and children, who are the least immune members of society, and condemns these acts".

Shams Center emphasized that the ongoing violations against Palestinian children, by the Israeli occupation, reflect the extent of hatred, brutality, and criminality practiced by the various components of the occupying governments. It is a systematic and deep-rooted policy in Zionist thought based on Talmudic references, considering non-Jewish souls as demonic and similar to the souls of animals. According to this ideology, killing non-Jews is not considered a crime but rather a means of drawing closer to God. They base this on the Book of Joshua in the Torah, which serves as a reference for violence, terrorism, and destruction in Zionist thought grounded in this Torah-based scripture.