



15/1/2024

SHAMS Center Condemns the Occupation Army's Raid on An-Najah National University and the Arrest of Several of its Students

Human Rights and Democracy Media Center- SHAMS, strongly condemns raiding An- Najah National University, early dawn, on Monday 15/1/2024. The Israeli soldiers arrested 20 students from the university including the head of the Student Council, Muhammad Salama, and other members of the council alongside some representatives of the student blocs. The Israeli soldiers destroyed the external gates doors and broke through the campus where the contents of the headquarters of the student blocs were damaged. The behavior of the Israeli army is similar to the behavior of the military groups and militias. An- Najah University has been a permanent target by the Israeli forces where the first time the university was raided was during the first Intifada in the year 1992, after sieging the students inside the campus for several days, at that time.

SHAMS Center affirms that raiding An- Najah National University is a manifestation of the aggression that the Israeli occupation is commencing against Palestinians. At the time the Israeli army is targeting schools and universities in the Gaza Strip, it escalated its arrogance procedures against the high educational institutions in the West Bank, including An- Najah National University, to destroy the academic life in Palestine.

SHAMS Center stresses that raiding An- Najah National University is a profound violation of International Law and International Humanitarian Law. The Hague Convention on Respecting the Rules and Customs of the War on Land- 1907, affirmed special protection of the educational institutions. Article 27 of the Convention states: "In sieges and bombardments all necessary steps must be taken to spare, as far as possible, buildings dedicated to religion, art, science, or charitable purposes, historic monuments". Article 56 of the Convention states: "The property of municipalities, that of institutions dedicated to religion, charity, and education, the arts and sciences, even when State property, shall be treated as private property. All seizure of, destruction or wilful damage done to institutions of this character, historic monuments, works of art and science, is forbidden, and should be made the subject of legal proceedings". Targeting educational institutions violates the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Covenant on Economic and Social Rights, which affirms the right to education as a fundamental Human Right.

SHAMS Center calls on the International Association of Universities, the Federation of Islamic Universities, the Union of Arab Universities, and UNESCO, as well as the International Campaign for the Academic Boycott of Israeli Universities, to urgently take action to halt these violations. It urges exposing the occupation's policies towards Palestinian universities and the educational process, along with the academic community in Palestine, to the international public. The Center advocates for exerting more pressure through effective international institutions to compel the Israeli occupation to cease its crimes against the Palestinian educational movement and its targeting of universities and academic institutions

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