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## Shams Center Warns of Voluntary Transfer Plan After Occupation Fails in Achieving Forced Displacement in the Gaza Strip

Human Rights and Democracy Media Center– SHAMS, warns against the policy pursued by the Israeli occupation government under the so-called "voluntary migration," which is considered another form of forced displacement but organized in cooperation with some countries where some citizens from the Gaza Strip are living currently. This was expressed through consecutive statements by several ministers of the Israeli occupation government, such as the Israeli Finance Minister Betsalel Smotrich, who said, "Israel should work to find countries willing to receive the Gazians on its territories." This is in addition to other ministers and parliamentarians of the occupation who called for the voluntary displacement of Palestinian citizens from the Gaza Strip through three stages, including the establishment of tent cities in the in Sinai (southwest of the Gaza Strip), the creation of a humanitarian corridor to assist the residents, and the construction of cities in the northern Sinai desert. Statements by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu are consistent with the statements of his ministers regarding the displacement of Palestinians from the Gaza Strip. He clarified that there are negotiations with several countries to accommodate Palestinians from the Gaza Strip, indicating a new chapter of Nakba and displacement for Palestinians. The occupation government is trying to absolve itself of legal and ethical responsibility for the displacement process, as "voluntary migration" of Palestinians from the Gaza Strip does not pose embarrassment for the occupying state in front of the international community. This enables the Israeli occupation government to empty the Gaza Strip of its residents without any criticism or embarrassment in front of the international community, and it allows them to evade legal and ethical responsibility for that displacement, as they claim it is based on a "voluntary" decision.

SHAMS Center emphasizes that displacement, even if disguised under any other pretext, constitutes a serious violation of international law and international human rights law. This is especially true for the Fourth Geneva Convention, which protects civilians in armed conflicts, ensuring their special protection and calling for their neutrality from places of conflict and military operations. The individual and collective displacement carried out by the occupying state is a grave violation of Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, which prohibits individual or collective deportations regardless of motives and justifications. Those who engage in such acts are subject to trial under universal jurisdiction. Forced



displacement of civilians is considered an act that establishes the crime of ethnic cleansing and genocide, a violation of the Rome Statute of 1998, which constitutes the foundational framework for the International Criminal Court. The Rome Statute affirmed that deportation, displacement, and forced transfer of civilians are crimes against humanity, as stated in Article 7 of the Convention. Any widespread or systematic attack against civilian populations, involving their removal from their homes or forced transfer, is considered a crime against humanity. Article 8 further emphasized that the deportation, displacement, and forced transfer of civilians by issuing orders to displace civilian populations for reasons related to the ongoing conflict are war crimes.

SHAMS Center affirms that the steadfastness of Palestinians on their land, despite the horrors of massacres and acts of genocide committed by the Israeli war machine in the Gaza Strip, has thwarted all attempts of forced displacement of Palestinians from their land and homeland. The steadfast positions of the Palestinian leadership and some Arab countries that reject displacement have had a clear impact in changing the initially supportive American stance for forced displacement at the beginning of the Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip to an (opposing) position against displacement. The policy of forced displacement by Israel is fundamentally linked to Zionist ideology based on ethnic cleansing, genocide, and forced displacement to empty the land of its inhabitants, establish settlements, and bring Jewish settlers. This is done through deliberate and pre-planned policies.

SHAMS Center emphasizes that the policy of forced displacement has been a fundamental pillar of the Zionist project in Palestine since the days of British colonization. During that period, all Zionist literature was based on the principle of forcibly displacing Palestinian citizens from their land, bringing Jews from all corners of the world, and settling them in Palestine before the establishment of the occupation state. This was clearly evident in the speeches of David Ben-Gurion when he said, "When implementing forced displacement operations, we will have vast spaces for establishing settlements for Jews, and I support the forced deportation of the population, seeing nothing unethical about it, and considering it a pressing necessity for the establishment of the state of Israel"

SHAMS Center condemns the positions of some Western countries that align with Israeli policies in implementing what has become known as the "voluntary migration" plan to empty the Gaza Strip of its residents and send them to other countries voluntarily. Canada announced its willingness to allow relatives of Canadian citizens of Palestinian origin residing in its territories, holding Canadian citizenship, to come along with their families and to provide all possible means to assist in this regard. This Canadian stance



is considered a form of facilitating the displacement process for Palestinians from the Gaza Strip, albeit in a less severe form. The call by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to the necessity of reoccupying the Salah al-Din Axis, known as the "Philadelphia Axis," and controlling it, which extends along the border between the Gaza Strip and the Arab Republic of Egypt for a length of 14.3 kilometers, is nothing but the first step in the implementation of the plan to displace Palestinian citizens from the Gaza Strip