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SHAMS Center On World Children's Day:**Palestinian Children: Childhood Embodying a Continuous Humanitarian Tragedy Under Aggression and Genocide.**

Ramallah: The Human Rights and Democracy Media Center "SHAMS" stated that Palestinian children live under the burden of a long-term occupation, leaving deep impacts on their childhood and dreams. The center mentioned that their suffering is not limited to deprivation of basic rights such as education and play, but extends to the dangers of killing, arrest, and forced displacement. The stories of Palestinian children in Gaza Strip and throughout the occupied Palestinian territories embody a continuous humanitarian tragedy, where childhood itself becomes a victim of the occupation and its racist policies. The center also stated that Palestinian childhood remains stolen under the continued brutal Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people in Gaza Strip. While the world celebrates Universal Children's Day on November 20 each year, a day that marks the adoption of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989, which emphasizes all children's rights, especially the right to life, good healthcare, nutrition, education, and protection, the Israeli occupation continues to violate the rights of Palestinian children in clear defiance of this convention and all the rights it includes, which are mandatory for all countries and governments.

"SHAMS" Center emphasized that the genocide war waged against the Palestinian people and the systematic targeting of children is a disgrace on the forehead of this occupation and the criminal, and on the forehead of all the countries that support it and align with its aggressive plans. Since October 7, 2023, the number of martyrs in Gaza Strip has reached approximately 43,922, including about 17,385 children and 11,891 women, which confirms the systematic targeting of children by the occupation, manifested in killing, destruction, annihilation, terrorism, and genocide without any humanitarian or moral considerations. This is under a more fascist and right-wing government dominated by religious parties imbued with Zionist ideology based on Talmudic Torah references, which consider non-Jewish souls to be demonic and akin to animal souls, and that killing a non-Jew is not considered a crime but a way to get



closer to God. They base this on the Book of Joshua in the Torah, which represents a reference for violence, terrorism, and destruction in Zionist thought.

"SHAMS" Center warned of the humanitarian catastrophe experienced by children in Gaza Strip due to the collapse of the health system and the widespread outbreak of epidemics, especially hepatitis and cases of diarrhea, in addition to skin diseases due to lack of hygiene and bathing. This is a result of the ongoing Israeli aggression on Gaza Strip, accompanied by difficult conditions and severe overcrowding in shelters and refugee camps, lack of access to clean drinking water and water for personal hygiene, lack of food, medicine, and medical supplies, destruction of sewage networks, lack of personal hygiene tools, spread of waste in displacement centers and camps, and disruption of municipal services.

"SHAMS" Center condemns all acts of organized violence and terrorism carried out by the Israeli occupation government against Palestinian children, whether in the West Bank or Gaza Strip, which deprive them of all their rights, foremost among them the right to life, education, and play. Palestinian children, like all children around the world, have the right to life, education, and to play in parks, playgrounds, amusement parks, and recreational areas. Their families have the right to fill their homes with joy, love, and a passion for life for their children.

"SHAMS" Center condemns the international governmental and institutional silence regarding the crimes of the occupation against Palestinian children, who are being killed, deprived of life, medical care, and treatment, and are dying of hunger due to the blockade and closure imposed by the Israeli occupation on the Gaza Strip. This international silence reveals the selectivity and double standards with which these countries and institutions deal with children's rights, based on the nationality of the victim and the perpetrator, rather than the serious violation of children's rights. When it comes to Palestinian children, these countries and institutions remain silent, which exposes these entities and reveals the extent of their hypocrisy and lack of credibility in dealing with human rights, especially when it comes to the rights of Palestinian children.

"SHAMS" Center emphasizes that what Palestinian children are subjected to constitutes a grave violation of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, especially the Fourth Geneva Convention and its Second Optional Protocol, which ensures special protection for children in armed conflicts of both international and non-international nature, as they are civilians and belong to categories not participating in



hostilities. Article 14 of the Fourth Geneva Convention states, "The High Contracting Parties may, in peacetime, and the Parties to the conflict, after the outbreak of hostilities, establish in their own territories or, if necessary, in occupied territories, hospitals and safety zones and localities organized in a manner that ensures the protection of the wounded, sick, disabled, elderly, children under the age of fifteen, pregnant women, and mothers of children under the age of seven". Article 17 of the same Convention states that: "The Parties to the conflict shall endeavor to agree on local arrangements for the evacuation of wounded, sick, disabled, elderly persons, children, and women from besieged and encircled areas.

Article 24 of the same Convention states that the Parties to the conflict: "Shall take all necessary measures to ensure that children under the age of fifteen who have been orphaned or separated from their families are not neglected, and to guarantee their care, support, and education." This is also a grave and blatant violation of international human rights law, particularly **the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child**, which ensures the protection of children, shields them from harm, and provides them with the means for a dignified and safe life, as well as proper care. Article 38 of the Convention states: "States Parties undertake to respect and ensure respect for rules of international humanitarian law applicable to them in armed conflicts which are relevant to the child, and to take all feasible measures to ensure the protection and care of children affected by an armed conflict. "Additionally, it violates the **1974 United Nations Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict**, which: "Prohibits attacks on civilians and the bombing of civilian populations, causing untold suffering, particularly to women and children, who are the most vulnerable members of society. Such acts are strongly condemned."

"SHAMS" Center commends the UN Secretary-General for placing the occupation army on the blacklist of countries that violate children's rights due to its grave violations of international humanitarian law and crimes against Palestinian children in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This honorable stance is symbolic but carries strong and significant implications internationally in exposing and refuting the Israeli narrative before the world.

"SHAMS" Center calls on the UN Security Council, the High Contracting Parties to Geneva Conventions, the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights, the Special Rapporteur on the right to education, the Special Rapporteur on the right to health, the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the International Red Cross, and both governmental and non-governmental organizations to fulfill their humanitarian and moral obligations and



compel the occupation government to stop targeting children and neutralize them from conflict zones and military operations.