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SHAMS Center**Targeting Martyrs' Memorials and National Monuments, Will Not Forge History for the Transients Through Our Land**

Human Rights and Democracy Media Center- SHAMS affirms that targeting the martyrs' memorials and national monuments in the public yards and the entrances of the Palestinian cities, will not forge a history for the transients passing through our land. Demolishing martyrs memorials and national monuments/symbols in the Palestinian towns, villages, and cities, by the Israeli occupation, which increased since the beginning of the Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip- October 7, 2023, will not create a history for the occupier. The Israeli army demolished the memorial of Martyr President Yasser Arafat in Tulkarem City and the memorial of Martyr Journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, in Jenin Refugee Camp. Additionally, the Israeli forces demolished the memorial of Martyr Muhammad Lafi in Abu-Dees- Jerusalem, the memorial for Jabalia Martyrs, and the memorial of Marmara Ship Martyrs in the Gaza Port. Additionally, the Israeli army demolished the memorial of Martyr Omar Al-Qasem in Arraba-Jenin, the memorial of Martyr Bayan Iseili in Hebron, and many other memorials in other localities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Furthermore, the Israeli army demolished the national memorials that symbolize the resilience and steadfastness of Palestinians, such as the Horse Square at the Eastern Entrance of Jenin City. This memorial symbolizes the resilience of Jenin residents where it stands looking toward Haifa City, from where the majority of Palestinian refugees in Jenin refugee camp, were uprooted. The practices of the Israeli army are extension of the policies of the various precedent Israeli governments' tendency, which used to demolish the memorials and symbols that highlight the history of Palestinians and the Palestinian national figures who sacrificed their lives in defending their land and resisting the enemies and conquerors. Palestinians recorded a great history and championship in defending their land and protecting their national identity, individually and collectively. Palestinians resisted all the attempts to uproot them from their land and abolish their national question despite all the oppression and atrocities they were subject to. Palestinians invented several forms of resistance and struggle to protect their national rights and Palestinians managed to protect and maintain their national identity despite all the challenges they faced.

SHAMS Center affirms that attacking the Palestinian national identity is a systematic policy that has been practiced since the beginning of the occupation. Since the first Intifada, the Israeli occupation used to practice such a policy including dropping down the Palestinian flag and erasing the national slogans that used to be written on the walls as well as removing all the symbols related to the national question. The occupation used to remove all the symbols related to the national history of Palestinians. The occupation interfered in the schools' pedagogy, especially history books, where Palestinian students were banned from learning the history of their nation and the national movement. The occupation tried to wipe out the individual and collective memories of Palestinians. However, the Palestinian National Movement and the Palestinian Liberation Organization, managed to maintain and protect the Palestinian national identity and history and protect the identity against the attempts of abolishing, practiced by the Israeli occupation. The research centers, universities, prisoner movement, and student movements, managed to play a role in embodying the national identity and maintaining it within the collective awareness and mentality of all Palestinians. The political factions contributed to creating a spiritual homeland for Palestinians. These powers had a significant input in maintaining the Palestinian national identity and personality. The



Palestinian national factions contributed noticeably to maintaining the political entity of Palestinians and functioned as legal political representatives of the Palestinian people. This role was distinctly manifested through engagement with international organizations and entities, notably within the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The focus was on emphasizing and documenting Palestinian historical and religious sites, including but not limited to Al-Aqsa Mosque, Dome of the Rock, Nativity Church, Church of the Resurrection, Church of the Annunciation, and various other religious and historical landmarks throughout Palestine. Some Palestinian sites were endorsed within the Global Heritage List of UNESCO. Such facts indicate that Palestinians have never disconnected from their land and they remained living on it historically and they maintained their national identity, culture, and symbols. The practices, military orders, and policies of the occupation will never change reality and will never push Palestinians to disconnect from their land and abandon their national identity. All the laws and military orders will never lead to abolishing Palestinians' belonging to their land and attachment to their national land and history. Palestinians are strongly attached to their identity and land and they feel belonging to their national question.

SHAMS Center affirms that the Palestinian people's historical connection to their land, homeland, identity, and national heritage has been evident throughout the years. To this day, Palestinians continue to recall and recite the Red Tuesday poem on various occasions, mourning the martyrs of Acre Prison on June 17, 1930 (from Acre Prison, the funeral of Mohammed Jumjoui and Fuad Hijazi took place). These martyrs remain etched in the Palestinian collective memory, serving as an enduring beacon from which the Palestinian youth learn the noble meanings of heroism and loyalty.

Palestinians still hold their martyrs, who sacrificed their lives on the altar of freedom and independence, in deep reverence. This includes figures like Abu Kamal Abdul Rahman, the leader of the 1936 Palestinian revolution, Sheikh Farhan al-Saadi, Abu Jilda, and Al-Armit. The presence of these leaders remains strong in the Palestinian collective and individual memory, passed down from generation to generation without interruption. Only those who lack history and heritage, the transients from various corners of the earth and from all over the world, share no language, history, identity, or commonality. The attempts by the British occupation in the 1930s to replace the Palestinian Kufiya with the Fez (Tarboosh) failed when the Palestinian response was resolute. The entire Palestinian population embraced the Palestinian Kufiya as a symbol, signifying their collective revolutionary spirit and allegiance to the revolution and revolutionaries.

SHAMS Center condemns the Israeli occupation's attempts to falsify facts, steal Palestinian historical artifacts, cultural symbols, traditional attire, and heritage cuisine. These desperate endeavors aim to erase the history, civilization, and culture of the Palestinian people, but they have failed. This failure underscores that the Palestinian national identity is deeply rooted in the soul of every Palestinian and is impervious to erasure or forgery despite the aggressiveness and hostility of the occupier.

SHAMS Center asserts that the destruction of historical and archaeological symbols by the Israeli occupation is a violation of international humanitarian law. The Hague Convention on the Laws and Customs of War on Land of 1907, provides specific protection for historical and archaeological symbols, as articulated in Article 27, which stipulates that in cases of siege or bombardment, all necessary measures should be taken to spare buildings dedicated to worship, arts, sciences, and charitable purposes, as well as historical monuments. Article 56 of the same convention emphasizes treating municipal and charitable



properties, as well as historical, artistic, and scientific monuments, as private property. It prohibits any deliberate seizure, destruction, or damage to such sites, artifacts, and historical, artistic, and scientific monuments, with legal actions taken against perpetrators of such acts.