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**SHAMS Center: In Recognition of Land Day;
Palestinians Will Remain Resolute in Their Land Despite Occupation Crimes and Enemy
Conspiracies**

Human Rights and Democracy Media Center- SHAMS, affirms, in recognition of Land Day (March 30), that this anniversary is one of the most significant anniversaries among Palestinians all over the world. Land Day started on 30/3/1976 when six Palestinians were killed inside 1948 territory, during clashes with the Israeli forces to protest against confiscating 21 thousand Donums of Palestinians' land. Land Day is a symbol of Palestinians resolute in their land and that Palestinians were and are still rooted deep in their land despite the horrific crimes committed by the occupation. Palestinians' steadfastness on their land led to the defeat of all the occupation's attempts to uproot Palestinians from their land and end their existence. Land Day marks Palestinians' will to pursue their national struggle to achieve freedom and the right to self-determination as well as establish an independent state on their national land. The Center added that the anniversary this year passes while Palestinians are living under exceptional circumstances and ongoing attempts to displace Palestinians and push them out of their land. The anniversary this year comes while the genocide war against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip is going on as well as the ongoing crimes of ethnic cleansing crimes in the Gaza Strip. In addition to that, the Israeli occupation is going on in expanding the settlements – in the West Bank and confiscating more areas of Palestinians' land.

The Center asserts that the Zionism Project was based originally on imposing control on the land and forcibly displacing Palestinians while increasing Jews' immigration to Palestine and establishing Jewish settlements on the ruins of Palestinians. Such strategy is rooted deeply in the Zionist ideology, especially among thinkers like Herzl. In his diaries, Herzl wrote: "The purpose of the Zionism Movement from the beginning is to control the widest possible area of Palestinians land to establish a Jewish State". In the same regard, Caltcher in his book "Seeking Zion", emphasized that: "The Salvation of Jews is through the efforts of Jewish people and establishing a Jewish Community that is connected with the land where Jews cultivate it and it is their national home; this land is the land of Palestine- Promised Land". At the same time, the constitution of the Jewish Agency emphasizes such a fact where the third Article of the Constitution states: "The state should possess the land as Jewish property and register it under the ownership of the National Jewish Fund and this land remains registered so eternally and its ownership is only for the Jewish Nation and should not be transferred to others". In addition to that, there are the Tora and Talmud beliefs that Palestine is the promised land for the Jewish people as they are the Chosen People according to the promise given from God to the Jews (according to the Jewish Doctrine). According to this ideology, the land of Israel (Promised Land) given to Jews, is the area between the Jordan Valley and the Mediterranean.



SHAMS Center affirms that seizing the land by the Israeli occupation and building new settlements and expanding the existing ones, doubled several times since the Oslo Accords were signed between the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the Israeli Government. The number of the Israeli settlements and military basis in the West Bank reached 483 localities including 151 settlement, 25 inhabited settlement spots, which are considered as quarters annexed to nearby settlements, 163 settlement spots, and another 144 locations that have different classification (industrial, tourism, services, and military zones for the Israeli army).

On a related level, the number of the Israeli settlers in the West Bank reached 745467 settlers. According to the official reports, the majority of the settlers are in Jerusalem Governorate (336272) representing 45.1% of the total settlers in the West Bank, including 246990 settlers in the area termed J1, which is part of Jerusalem that Israel annexed by force following the 1967 war. In Ramallah, there are 149143 settlers. In Bethlehem, there are 98348 settlers and there are 53455 settlers in Salfet Governorate. The least governorate that has settlers are Toubas and northern Jordan Valley (2717) settlers.

The percentage of settlers compared to Palestinians in the West Bank is 23 settlers for each 100 Palestinians where the highest percentage is in Jerusalem (69 settlers compared to each 100 Palestinians). The year 2023 witnessed an escalation in expanding and building the settlements. The Israeli government approved structural plans of the settlements to build more than 18 thousand settlement units in the various parts of the West Bank including Jerusalem. The Israeli occupation is using more than 85% of the entire area of historic Palestine though since the British Mandate Era till the year 1947, Jews used only 1682 square kilometers (6.2%) of the entire area of Palestine.

SHAMS Center stresses that seizing land, using it, building settlements, and evacuating its original citizens, represent violations of international law and international human rights law. In particular, these practices violate Article 49 of the Geneva Fourth Convention (12/8/1949). The given Article states: "Individual or mass forcible transfers, as well as deportations of protected persons from occupied territory to the territory of the Occupying Power or to that of any other country, occupied or not, are prohibited, regardless of their motive". Additionally, Israel violates Rule 130 of the Red Cross of the Special ICRC study of international and customary law. The mentioned rule states: "States may not deport or transfer parts of their own civilian population into a territory they occupy". The Occupation violates International Human Rights Law, mainly the Rome Statute (1998), which serves as the basis for the International Criminal Court. Article 8 of the Statute states: "Establishment of the occupation state by causing extensive destruction and appropriation of property not justified by military necessity and carried out unlawfully and wantonly, transferring parts of its own population into the territory it occupies, or the deportation or transfer of all or parts of the population of the occupied territory within or outside this territory, constitutes a war crime". Likewise, Israel violates the United Nations Security



Council Resolution number 2334 (dated 23/12/2016), which urged Israel to stop settlements in the West Bank and stop the process of legalizing the settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Moreover, it violates the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (13/9/2007), where Article 8 of the declaration states: "States shall provide effective mechanisms for prevention of, and redress for any action which has the aim or effect of dispossessing them of their lands, territories or resources".

SHAMS Center calls upon the permanent states members of the Security Council, countries signatories of the Geneva Convention, countries signatories of the Rome Statute, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Housing, and Governmental/ Nongovernmental international organizations, to exert pressure on the Occupation State to halt confiscating Palestinians lands and building settlements and to take all needed measures to account the occupation for these crimes in accordance with the international law.