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In Recognition of World Health Day,

SHAMS Center:

Violating Palestinians' Right to Health is a Tool of the Genocide War.

Human Rights and Democracy Media Center- SHAMS, asserts that at the time the world celebrates the World Day for the Right to Health, which marks the emergence of World Health Organization (7/4/1984), the Israeli occupation insists on violating Palestinians' Right to Health. The Israeli occupation is violating Palestinians' right to health in the Gaza Strip, mainly the right to medicine, treatment, and normal growth. The Israeli occupation imposes a restricted siege on the Gaza Strip and bans the entry of food, water, medicine, and medical supplies. Furthermore, the occupation targets the hospitals and medical centers leading to the collapse of the health system in the Gaza Strip and so, infectious diseases and epidemics spread in the Gaza Strip, warning of the emergence of a human disaster. The disaster started already in the Gaza Strip where there are 700 thousands of persons suffering from infectious diseases including 8 thousand suffering from Hepatitis (7 thousands of them are children). 234 thousand cases are suffering from Respiratory Tract Infections. Moreover, there are around 17 thousand cases of Diarrhea. On a related level, 14 thousands cases were identified to be suffering from diseases resulting from the lack of showering and cleaning (skin diseases).

The spread of epidemics is a result of the Israeli occupation crimes where Palestinians are displaced from their cities, towns, and refugee camps and they are pushed in crowded shelters and gathering facilities. The heavy crowd and the polluted water and the lack of water for cleaning as well as the lack of medicine and medical supplies, contributed to the spread of diseases and epidemics. The occupation demolished the infrastructure of the sewage systems, especially in Rafah Governorate, which increased the spread of diseases. The shelters lack any sewage systems and garbage spreads in these localities, which contributes to an increase the health disasters. Furthermore, as the shelters are small and crowded, then it is not possible to isolate infected persons and so, diseases spread among all those around them.

SHAMS Center asserts that violating Palestinians' right to health by the Israeli occupation takes a series of crimes committed intentionally. In this regard, the occupation is systematically demolishing the hospitals and health centers as well as shelling the vehicles of the paramedical and civil defense teams alongside targeting and detaining the medical cadres, including physicians and nurses. As a result, the health system in the Gaza Strip is unable to respond to the needs emerging from the spread of infectious diseases and epidemics. According to the official reports of the Palestinian Ministry of Health, the Israeli occupation killed 484 of the medical teams and specialized physicians. Another 310 persons from the medical cadres are arrested. On a related level, the Israeli aggression destroyed more than 155 health institutions while 32



hospitals and 53 medical centers were pushed out of service. More than 126 ambulances were destroyed as a result of the shelling and direct attacks. The Israeli aggression caused the killing of more than 32 thousand persons (males/ females) and around 74 thousand wounded persons (males/ females). The number of the cases referred to receive treatment abroad, through Rafah Crossing Border Point, reached only 3283 cases. Since the middle of February up to date, 28 deaths have been recorded as a result of starvation and malnutrition (the majority of them are children below 12 months of age). The occupancy of the hospitals in the Gaza Strip reached 318% with the occupancy of intensive care units that reached 283%. Ten thousand wounded persons are waiting to be allowed to travel abroad to receive treatment. In the Gaza Strip, there are currently, 9 thousand cancer patients who are at risk of death. People are still forcibly displaced from their houses towards shelters and gathering places such as UNRWA Schools that lack any kind of health services. Such a situation warns of the spread of a horrible human disaster that might cause the death of thousands of persons.

SHAMS Center reminds that the world countries emphasized, through the constitution of the World Health Organization that right to health is among the fundamental human rights. Right to health is one of the major guarantees for international peace and security and it is a common responsibility among all parties to ensure accessing health services in all circumstances. World Health Organization is the tool of the United Nations to coordinate and lead international efforts to develop health services and ensure that all nations worldwide have access to decent health systems. The Organization is responsible to deal with global health issues and develop the appropriate health programs to serve human beings. Furthermore, it documents the development of the health situation in all the countries and provides support to the countries that pass through natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes as well as supporting the health systems in countries under armed conflicts. The Israeli occupation is neglecting all these international regulations of the World Health Organization and proceeds with its crimes and violations against Palestinians' health rights.

The Center condemns the policy of imposing a restricted siege and denying freedom of mobility in the Gaza Strip and preventing wounded persons and patients from traveling outside the Gaza Strip to receive treatment though there are many countries, that welcome the idea of receiving patients and wounded persons from the Gaza Strip to be treated. The Occupation government bans the entry of human relief aid, especially food, medicine, and medical supplies needed to operate hospitals and health centers. The occupation prevents the entry of medical supplies needed to treat wounded persons and patients although these supplies are still on the Egyptian side of the borders waiting to be allowed to enter. Due to these policies, hospitals and medical centers in the Gaza Strip fall behind the ability to provide any medication for patients and wounded and they are left to slow death. In response to the absence of medical supplies, the physicians are forced to refer to traditional means of treating wounded persons, such as amputating limbs without Anesthesia. Many other wounded persons kept bleeding while doctors



could not do anything to stop it and so; many wounded lost their lives while doctors stood helpless.

The Center condemns the international community's silence in front of the Israeli violations of the Palestinians' right to health. Additionally, SHAMS Center denounces the silence of the international organizations that work in the field of promoting health rights, as they are silent while the Israeli occupation is proceeding in violating Palestinians' health rights. There is silence while Israel is violating the rights of patients and disabled persons as well as violating the rights of wounded persons and patients with chronic diseases. Moreover, the Israeli crimes against the health system target premature babies and infants as well as pregnant women and elderly people who require medical support. In this regard, the occupation targets hospitals and medical centers while banning the entry of medicine and medical supplies. The silence of the international community and the international organizations interested in advocating health rights manifest the applied double standards in dealing with universal human rights, and universal health rights, and providing the health services per the constitutions and principles of these organizations. The silence of these organizations indicates that they are subject to the pressure imposed by the occupation's government and they are aligned with the Israeli pressure and the pressure from the countries that align with the Israeli occupation, including the United States of America and some European governments that are partners in the genocide war committed against Palestinians.

SHAMS Center confirms that the ongoing Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip caused the collapse of the entire health system and people live with no health services and their right to health is systematically violated. The crimes of the Israeli occupation violate the international humanitarian law. In particular, the occupation is violating Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states: "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services". Additionally, the occupation is violating the International Covenant on Economic and Social Rights. Article 12 of the Covenant states: "The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health". Likewise, the occupation is violating the international human rights law, mainly the Geneva Fourth Convention (dated 12/8/1949). Article 16 of the given Convention states: "The wounded and sick, as well as the infirm, and expectant mothers, shall be the object of particular protection and respect". Article 17 of the same Convention states: "The Parties to the conflict shall endeavor to conclude local agreements for the removal from besieged or encircled areas, of wounded, sick, infirm, and aged persons, children and maternity cases, and for the passage of ministers of all religions, medical personnel, and medical equipment on their way to such areas". In the same regard, Article 24 of the First Geneva Convention states: "Medical personnel exclusively engaged in the search for, or the collection, transport or treatment of the wounded or sick, or in the prevention of disease, staff



exclusively engaged in the administration of medical units and establishments, as well as chaplains attached to the armed forces, shall be respected and protected in all circumstances”.

SHAMS Center urges the states members of the United Nations and noble parties signatories of the Geneva Conventions to act. It also calls upon the secretary-general of the United Nations, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Right to Health, and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights, as well as the World Health Organization, UNICEF, International Committee of the Red Cross, Doctors without Borders Organization, and Governmental/ Nongovernmental Organizations. Their responsibility is to meet their legal and moral obligations and to exert pressure on the occupation’s government. This pressure aims to halt the occupation’s crimes and violations against Palestinians’ right to health. There should be pressure on the occupation’s government to allow the entry of medicine and medical supplies as well as allowing the entry of medical teams into the Gaza Strip. Moreover, these parties should obligate the occupation to allow the traveling of the wounded and patients to receive medication abroad and at the same time, halt the process of demolishing the hospitals, medical centers, and health facilities. The occupation should stop targeting the medical and paramedical teams as well as stop targeting ambulances and civil defense teams.