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SHAMS Center: The Israeli Justice Minister's Statements on West Bank Annexation Expose Blatant Ignorance of International Law and Reflect an Urgent Need for Legal Literacy within the Israeli Government

Human Rights and Democracy Media "SHAMS" Center expresses its strongest condemnation and deep concern regarding the statements made by the Israeli Justice Minister, Yariv Levin, in which he openly called for the annexation of the occupied West Bank, declaring that "the time has come to apply Israeli sovereignty" over these Palestinian territories. Such statements, made during his meeting with a settler leader, represent a blatant violation of international law and the United Nations Charter and constitute direct incitement to breach Israel's international obligations.

"SHAMS" Center stresses that these statements are not merely political rhetoric but a direct assault on the international legal system and an outright violation of peremptory norms (*jus cogens*) of international law, which strictly prohibit the acquisition of territory by force, criminalize the annexation of occupied lands, and affirm the illegality and nullity of any measures aimed at altering the legal status of occupied territories.

"SHAMS" Center emphasizes that the Israeli Justice Minister's call for the annexation of the West Bank reflects not only an aggressive colonial policy but also a shocking ignorance of international law and a deliberate disregard for the global legal order. This underscores the urgent need for legal literacy within the Israeli government, starting from its highest legal office.

"SHAMS" Center reminds the international community that the West Bank, including occupied Jerusalem, is an integral part of the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967, in accordance with numerous United Nations resolutions, foremost among them the successive Security Council resolutions, which demand Israel's complete withdrawal from territories occupied by military force and affirm the inadmissibility of acquiring territory by war. Furthermore, United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334(2016) unequivocally reaffirmed the illegality of Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, and considered all measures aimed at changing the demographic or legal



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character of these territories, including settlement expansion or annexation, as grave violations of international law.

"SHAMS" Center asserts that the Israeli Justice Minister's claim of a so-called "historic opportunity" to annex the occupied Palestinian territories does not alter their legal status in any way. On the contrary, it exacerbates Israel's ongoing breaches of its international obligations. Under international law and the UN Charter, no occupying power can claim sovereignty over territories acquired through military force. The UN Charter explicitly obliges all states to respect the territorial integrity and political independence of other states and strictly prohibits the use or threat of force to alter borders or seize territory.

In this regard, "SHAMS" Center reminds the international community that Israel itself, under UN General Assembly Resolution (181) (the Partition Plan) of 29 November 1947, committed to the establishment of two states on the land of historic Palestine and to respecting the sovereignty and independence of both. Yet, since 1967, Israel has systematically violated this commitment, entrenching its policy of creating facts on the ground through settlement expansion, creeping annexation, and altering the geographic and demographic character of the occupied territories, in flagrant breach of UN resolutions, international law, and the 1949 Geneva Conventions, which explicitly prohibit an occupying power from annexing occupied territory or transferring its civilian population into it.

"SHAMS" Center reaffirms that Israel's attempts, including those by its Justice Minister, to portray annexation as a "sovereign right" are nothing more than a desperate attempt to legitimize its unlawful military occupation. These attempts are unequivocally rejected and condemned by the international community and produce no legal effect that could alter the status of the occupied Palestinian territories. International law is clear: there is no sovereignty for occupiers, no legitimacy for settlements, and any unilateral actions are null and void and cannot be recognized under any circumstances.

"SHAMS" Center emphasizes that the Justice Minister's statements constitute a clear and grave violation of the principles of the UN Charter, of the peremptory norms of the international legal system, and reflect an entrenched Israeli policy aimed at dismantling the Palestinian cause, destroying any prospects for an independent Palestinian state, and imposing a de facto, coercive, colonial reality that



entrenches a system of apartheid and systematic oppression against the Palestinian people.

Accordingly, "SHAMS" Center calls on the international community, particularly the UN Secretary-General, the UN Security Council, and the High Contracting Parties to the Geneva Conventions, to assume their legal and political responsibilities, to take immediate and concrete measures to halt these violations, to impose effective sanctions on the occupying power, and to ensure the implementation of relevant international resolutions, especially those reaffirming the illegality of annexation and settlements and upholding the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and the establishment of their independent state on the June 4, 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

"SHAMS" Center further stresses that the continued impunity and the deafening silence of the international community in the face of such dangerous statements will only embolden the Israeli government to proceed with its annexation and settlement project, to further violate Palestinian rights, and to undermine regional and international stability, posing a serious threat to global peace and security.