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OPC PRESS RELEASE BECOMES EXAMPLE OF SHODDY JOURNALISM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MONTREAL, Mar. 15 / – In an Ontario Press Council (OPC) press release issued Wednesday, March 14th, the OPC cited the wrong Website as the crux of its decision. Although the mistake was pointed out to the OPC by Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) when a draft for review was issued on Thursday, March 8th, the OPC chose to issue the press release publicly without the correction.

In its press release, in referring to the sole news source for a February 15th, 2006 Globe and Mail editorial, the OPC spoke of “Palestine Media Watch” and quoted CJPME representative Campbell Robertson as saying that the site, “is known for promoting one-sided, hateful views of Palestinians.” In fact, “Palestine Media Watch” (www.pmwatch.org) is a Website run out of Philadelphia which provides media resources for individuals interested in promoting balanced Middle East coverage in North America.

The actual Website used by the Globe for its 2006 editorial, “Palestinian Media Watch” (www.pmw.org.il), is indeed an Israeli right-wing Website which misrepresents elements in Palestinian media, and promotes hateful one-sided views of Palestinians. “By connecting my quote with the wrong Website, the OPC has caused confusion and misunderstanding about me, and the issues of justice which I stand for. It’s ironic that the very organization charged with newspaper accountability in Ontario can’t be bothered to get its facts straight,” said Mr. Robertson.

At a minimum, the OPC’s press release, with the wrong Website references, was repeated in the Toronto Star, as well as The Canadian Press (cnews.canoe.ca). CJPME has asked the OPC to issue a correction.

“This reflects a pattern of disrespect that we have detected with the OPC through this process,” stated Rula Odeh of CJPME. “The OPC decision itself ignored the four breaches of professional conduct from its own Website that CJPME cited as the basis of its original April, 2006 complaint. How the OPC can dismiss a complaint without even mentioning the breaches of conduct originally cited in the complaint is unfathomable.”

CJPME has asked for a new decision with a point-by-point discussion of the alleged violations of professional conduct, whether each is upheld or dismissed, and the reasons why.

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About CJPME

CJPME is a pan-Canadian grassroots advocacy organization uniting Canadians of all backgrounds who believe in justice, peace and security for all people in the Middle East. CJPME seeks to positively influence Canadian foreign policy in the Middle East and Canadian media coverage of the events and peoples of the region. CJPME values Canada's historical role as a neutral broker in the Middle East, and wants to promote better understanding among Canadians of Middle Eastern issues and dynamics.

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