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FOR NAHR EL-BARED, CJPME CALLS CANADA TO PROMOTE PROTECTION AND AID CIVILIANS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MONTREAL, Jun. 20 / – As renewed violence again erupts around the Nahr El-Bared refugee camp in northern Lebanon, CJPME calls all parties to take all measures necessary to protect civilians. “On both sides of the conflict, there has been a disregard for the civilian victims of the conflict,” says Jeff Ayoub of CJPME. “While international law requires the warring parties themselves to protect civilians, we also call Canada to use its influence to ensure respect for international humanitarian law.”

In addition to the frequent disregard for civilian casualties, there is a growing humanitarian need for both those civilians caught in Nahr El-Bared, as well as those civilians who have fled to neighbouring Beddawi refugee camp. “The humanitarian resources of UNRWA and other NGOs are stretched to the max,” says Rula Odeh of CJPME. “NGOs supporting the needs of these Palestinian refugees have appealed for emergency support. It is time for Canada as an international player to do its part to meet these humanitarian needs.”

CJPME points to the appeal by UNRWA earlier this month (“Flash appeal for immediate emergency needs for Palestine refugees in North Lebanon, June 2007”) as an indicator of the needs of the Palestinian refugees in the affected area. UNRWA is working with the ICRC, the Lebanese Red Cross, the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, and other local and international NGOs to meet the needs of the Palestinian refugees of Nahr El-Bared, both inside and outside the camp.

“CJPME deplores violence as a supposed solution to political issues,” says Ayoub. “All efforts should be made to ensure a negotiated resolution to the current standoff at Nahr El-Bared. We need to avoid the loss of life on all sides, and to avoid the widespread destruction of the refugee camp itself.”

See the UNRWA appeal at:

<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/EVOD-73UJNV?OpenDocument>

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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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