

Contact: Grace Batchoun
Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East
Telephone: (514) 745-8491

Anniversary of Resolution 478 reaffirming the international status of Jerusalem

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MONTREAL, August 20, 2008 – Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) reiterates its support for UN Security Council Resolution 478 adopted 28 years ago today, on August 20, 1980. This resolution condemned the passage of a law by the Israeli Knesset proclaiming Jerusalem to be the “eternal and unified capital” of the Jewish state. CJPME believes that Resolution 478 is essential because it maintains a place for Palestinian statehood, with East Jerusalem as its capital – a key element for regional peace to take root in the Middle East.

One of the central obstacles to a resolution of the Israel-Palestine Conflict is the ongoing seizure and colonization of Palestinian land by the State of Israel – including East Jerusalem. This land is considered Palestinian territory under international law. UNSC Resolution 478 confirms that Israel's annexation of Jerusalem is “a violation of international law,” and asserts that Israel’s actions do not affect the continued application of the Fourth Geneva Convention to any of Israeli-occupied Palestine or Syria, including Jerusalem. Resolution 478 stands as an important fixture of international consensus that helps dispel confusion regarding the status of Jerusalem. The status of Jerusalem was also considered in the World Court’s 2004 advisory opinion which reaffirmed East Jerusalem as Occupied Palestinian Territory and reiterated Israel’s responsibilities as an Occupier to respect UN resolutions on the matter.

“Jerusalem is a shared cultural centre for Christians, Muslims and Jews, whether they are ethnically Arab or Israeli.” CJPME President Thomas Woodley said Wednesday. “478 affirms that it is illegal under international law for one party—the State of Israel—to forcibly appropriate all of Jerusalem. It was also key in ensuring that other nations – including Canada – do not give legitimacy to Israel’s illegal claim by moving their embassies there. We hope that 478 will be remembered and its principles applied.”

CJPME stands by 478 and continues to support the primacy of international law and human rights in resolving conflicts in the Middle East, especially the Israel-Palestine conflict. By stating in its preamble that the “acquisition of territory by force is inadmissible,” Resolution 478 upholds the framework of international law protecting the legal human and humanitarian rights of the Palestinians.

####

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 values Canada’s historical role as a neutral broker in the Middle East, and wants to foster a better understanding among Canadians of Middle Eastern issues and dynamics.

For more information, please contact:
Contact: Grace Batchoun
Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East
Telephone: (514) 745-8491
www.cjpme.ca