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## **CJPME remembers the tragedy of the Destruction of Lebanon**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

MONTREAL, July 25, 2008 – Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) commemorates the tragedy of the Destruction of Lebanon which occurred two years ago, from mid-July through mid-August. While civilians on all sides were killed during the conflict, the casualties on the Lebanese side were much more disproportionately civilian, and roughly ten-fold greater in number.

Among the approximately 1000 Lebanese civilians killed by Israel during the conflict, there were three fatal incidents that involved Canadians:

- The July 15<sup>th</sup> killing of eight Lebanese-Canadians as they waited out the war in the village of Aytaroun.
- The July 19<sup>th</sup> killing of five members of the family of a Lebanese who had been granted refugee protection by Canada.
- The July 25<sup>th</sup> killing of a Canadian peacekeeper working for the UN in southern Lebanon.

“We express our deepest sympathy for all Canadians impacted by the 2006 Destruction of Lebanon. While our deepest sympathy lies with those who lost loved ones, hundreds of other Canadians were recklessly endangered, and hundreds more suffered significant property losses,” said Thomas Woodley of CJPME. “And while there was a certain ‘fog of war’ during the war itself, Canada and the West have largely ignored scathing reports on Israel by human rights organizations like Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International.”

Human rights reports issued during and soon after the conflict found no evidence for many of the Israeli claims during the war (e.g. Hezbollah use of human shields.) Those same reports also repeatedly found clear evidence of reckless and disproportionate use of force by Israel throughout the conflict.

“Both out of respect for the Canadians and others who lost their lives in the conflict, and out of respect for international law, Canada and the West should do more to ensure that such a foolish war never occurs again,” asserted Woodley. “The Canadian government should have been at the forefront of pushing the UN Security Council for a ceasefire.” The war was allowed to continue for over a month (July 12<sup>th</sup> through August 14<sup>th</sup>), leading to about 1000 civilian deaths in Lebanon, and over \$4B damages before the Security Council imposed a ceasefire through resolution 1701. In continued contravention to Resolution 1701, Israel continues to violate the Blue Line today with almost daily military flights over Lebanon.

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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.*

For more information, please contact:

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