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CJPME OPPOSES CANADA'S INTENT TO COOPERATE WITH ISRAEL ON "PUBLIC SAFETY"

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MONTREAL, April 23 / – Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) strongly disagrees with Canada's intent to cooperate on 'public safety' with Israel, convinced that Israel is no model for Canada on issues of "public safety."

On March 23, 2008 Minister of Public Safety Canada, Stockwell Day and Avi Dichter, Minister of Public Security of the Government of the State of Israel signed a Declaration of Intent to further cooperation on public security. The declaration states Canada and Israel's intent to collaborate on issues related to law enforcement, correctional services, prisons and emergency management. This agreement comes fresh off the heels of the United Nations Human Rights Council's condemnation of Israel's response to recent rocket attacks from Gaza a war crime and "collective punishment against the civilian population" in a resolution on 6 March, 2008.

Of the recent collective punishment of Gaza, Malcolm Smart, director of Amnesty International's Middle East and North Africa Program has called the Israeli attacks "disproportionate" and that they, "go beyond lawful measures which Israeli forces may take in response to rocket attacks by Palestinian armed groups." CJPME believes that given Israel's reckless violence against civilians in its charge, Canada would want to avoid agreements with Israel relating to law enforcement.

CJPME calls on the Canadian government to clarify the extent to which public safety coordination is possible with Israel given its use of widely condemned practices in the Occupied Territory and more recently in Gaza, which have been a detriment to public safety in the region. "It is inconceivable that Canada, a nation that respects human rights and international law, could have any public safety coordination with the State of Israel" CJPME's Thomas Woodley said Tuesday.

"On what basis has Canada chosen Israel for such a partnership?" asks Grace Batchoun of CJPME. "Amnesty International and other human rights organizations have identified Israel as the perpetrator of innumerable human rights crimes. Canadians need an explanation as to why Israel and not, for example Norway – with an exemplary human rights record – was chosen for this partnership."

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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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