

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

CJPME Supports Reconciliation and Unity in Lebanon

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MONTREAL, May 12, 2008 / – CJPME would like to affirm its support for unity between the various political groups in Lebanon and support for the inclusion of all significant political groups. Lebanon has erupted in civil strife this past week between pro-government forces and the Lebanese opposition.

The opposition – a coalition of Shia, Sunni and Christian groups – which views the current government as an agent of foreign powers including Israel, began to mobilize after the government targeted the telecommunications network of the armed group Hezbollah, as well as sacking the head of airport security at Beirut international airport, Brig Gen Wafiq Shuqeir.

The Lebanese PM Fouad Siniora called the recent violence a coup-attempt and promised Lebanese citizens that, “Your state will not fall under the control of the coup implementers,” during a televised address reported by the BBC on Saturday. The head of Hezbollah, S. Hassan Nasrallah assured that Hezbollah’s actions were a defensive measure against government attempts to dismantle its telecommunications network, which it considers essential to its security. Hezbollah was instrumental in ending the 22-year Israeli occupation of Lebanon from 1978-2000, and considers its arms essential to preventing another Israeli occupation.

CJPME believes it is best for all political groups to come to the negotiation table themselves rather than have any direct external overtures from foreign powers to bolster the credibility of any agreements. “The best thing is to allow the Lebanese to work out their issues in the context of their sovereignty,” Asma Ishak of CJPME said Saturday. “We hope Canada and the international community will support political unity in Lebanon to stave off a disastrous civil war at this time, even if it does not entirely accept all the factions.”

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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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www.cjpme.ca