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CJPME Stresses Respect for Resolution 1701 on Anniversary of Ceasefire in Lebanon

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MONTREAL, August 14, 2008 – Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) stresses the need to encourage respect for UN Security Council Resolution 1701 on the second anniversary of the landmark ceasefire resolution. The resolution went into effect on August 14th, 2006 defining the ceasefire between Israel, Lebanon and Hezbollah in 2006. War had broken out between the two parties in the summer of 2006 when Israel began a massive military invasion of Lebanon that resulted in the deaths of roughly 1000 Lebanese civilians and some 40 Israelis.

“While the Security Council was carelessly slow in imposing a ceasefire in 2006 and 1701 has its flaws, it was key to stopping the deaths on both sides of the conflict,” said CJPME’s Asma Ishak. “Innocent people from both sides of the conflict needlessly lost their lives. Resolution 1701 should stand as a reminder of the need for engaged international diplomacy, and Canadians should take steps to ensure the terms of 1701 are respected on an ongoing basis.”

Despite its ability to bring an end to the bloodshed in 2006, key aspects of Resolution 1701 continue to be disregarded two years later. A UN status report issued on June 27 detailed issues of ongoing non-compliance by Israel, and potentially Hezbollah, to the terms of the resolution. According to the report, Israeli aerial violations of the Blue Line have increased to previously unprecedented numbers, to an average rate of 20 violations per day through the months of March and April. The report confirmed that “[a]ll overflights by Israel of Lebanese territory constitute violations of Lebanese sovereignty and of resolution 1701.”

The UN report also called attention to the fact that Israel has still not provided technical data on its cluster bomb strikes as required under the terms of Resolution 1701. According to the report, ordinance clearance teams in Lebanon estimate that Israel blanketed the equivalent of 40 square kilometres in cluster bombs in southern Lebanon.

The report also noted that Israel claimed that Hezbollah was continuing operations in the area surveyed by the UN mission, but provided no evidence for this claim. For its part, the UN mission noted that, “To date, [the UN observer mission] has found no evidence of new [Hezbollah] military infrastructure in the area of operations.”

Earlier this summer, Israel and Hezbollah resolved an ongoing dispute by negotiating an exchange of the remains of soldiers killed from both sides of the conflict – 199 Lebanese soldiers for two Israeli soldiers. The negotiations stand as a testament to the benefits of persevering diplomacy.

CJPME supported Resolution 1701 in 2006, and continues to track noncompliance with the resolution.

“CJPME does not believe that violence offers solutions, and heartily supported the ceasefire that 1701 implemented,” CJPME president Thomas Woodley said Wednesday. “Nevertheless, the ongoing, documented noncompliance by all parties should be taken very seriously by the international community, including Canada. Now is the time to address the abuses; not when we have another conflict raging on our hands.” CJPME encourages Canada and the West to oblige all parties to respect the full terms of the resolution.

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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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