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## **CJPME does not believe that Israel deserves Canada's "unshakable" Support**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

MONTREAL, May 12, 2008 / – On the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the founding of Israel, and of the Palestinian Nakba (catastrophe), Prime Minister Harper stated that Canada's support for Israel is "unshakeable," and that "those who threaten Israel also threaten Canada." Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) rejects these assertions.

Thomas Woodley, president of CJPME says, "How can Prime Minister Harper say that Canada supports a country that flouts international law and human rights at every turn? Israel has enemies because it has militarily occupied its neighbours, and ethnically cleansed the Palestinian people. These enemies of Israel only risk becoming a threat to Canada in so much as Canada unquestioningly supports Israel's illegal actions."

The United Nations, as well as many international and Israeli human rights organizations, has extensively documented Israel's repeated human rights violations, war crimes and lack of adherence to UN resolutions. CJPME believes that a solution can happen only when these violations cease, and the illegal occupation ends.

"What is so appalling," says Jeffrey Ayoub, CJPME leader in Ottawa, "is that on the one hand, this government will criticize China for its human rights record and tells it in no uncertain terms to improve its record, while on the other hand, it blindly supports the government of Israel, without once mentioning the myriad of documented human rights abuses it has perpetrated on the Palestinian people."

CJPME does not believe Canada's interests are well-served with such an alignment with Israel. Israel should earn Canada's support by acting like a responsible international partner. Canada should not give its support away, to a country that throughout its history, has not demonstrated the values that it claims it shares with Canada. CJPME also believes the Canadian government should rebuke comments made by the Israeli Ambassador to Canada, who claimed he feared that the influx of Muslim immigrants might sway the current government's support for Israel. We believe that support for Israel should only be given when it begins to respect international law and the human rights of Palestinians, and begins to negotiate peace in good faith.

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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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