



– FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE –

Gaza Photo Expo Threatened with Closure

Montreal, Feb. 16th, 2010 – On Monday, Feb. 15th, the critically acclaimed *Human Drama in Gaza* Photo Exposition in Montreal was threatened with closure by Gestion Redbourne PDP Inc., the real estate management firm owning the property housing the Exposition. A legal representative of Redbourne, Lieba Shell, sent an email late in the day to the exposition host, Cinema du Parc, ordering the removal of the exposition and threatening legal action if the exposition were not taken down by evening. Cinema du Parc and Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) – the producer of the exposition – asserted through their legal advisor, Mark H. Arnold, that such threats from Redbourne were not lawful.

Human Drama in Gaza was launched in mid-January, and received very positive reviews in several media. Redbourne, however, demanded the removal of the exposition based on a paragraph in the lease that Cinema du Parc has with Redbourne relating to “purely cinematographic use” of the premises. Arnold, however, asserted that the cinema’s hosting of a photo exposition would very much constitute cinematographic use of the premises. Officials with Cinema du Parc also pointed out that the cinema has hosted dozens of photo expositions in the past several years, and has never had a complaint from Redbourne, the landlord.

“This move on the part of Redbourne is clearly political,” declared Thomas Woodley, President of CJPME. “Cinema du Parc is known for its ongoing expositions which touch on important issues of social concern, and Redbourne never had an issue in the past.” Last week, both Cinema du Parc and Place du Parc (the shopping mall housing the cinema and owned by Redbourne) received emails and calls from individuals unhappy with the *Human Drama in Gaza* exposition. The complaints accused the exposition of being anti-Israel, but stopped short of questioning the credibility of the exposition content. “The suffering of the 1.5 million people of Gaza is an important social issue like any other,” asserted Woodley. “The fact that certain people wish to stifle open discussion on Gaza is even more a reason to bring the debate out into the open.”

According to CJPME, the exposition itself seeks to put a human face to the misery of the people of Gaza, and the poignant resilience of a people facing severe adversity. The captions accompanying the photos cite statistics and legal analyses of Israel’s 22-day assault on Gaza of last winter. The legal advisor to CJPME pointed out that if security forces from Redbourne were to attempt to forcibly remove the exposition, they would be considered trespassers. As such, Arnold concluded, the “Cinema staff have been advised to immediately call the police.”

About CJPME – *Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) is a non-profit and secular organization bringing together men and women of all backgrounds who labour to see justice and peace take root again in the Middle East. Its mission is to empower decision-makers to view all sides with fairness and to promote the equitable and sustainable development of the region.*

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