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## **CJPME and Cinema du Parc win battle to host Gaza Exposition**

Montreal, Feb. 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2010 – It was with great satisfaction and relief that Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) received the news Wednesday that its Photo Exposition *Human Drama in Gaza* would continue until its scheduled closing on Feb. 28<sup>th</sup>. Around noon, an email from legal representative Lieba Shell advised the management of Cinema du Parc, the exposition host, that after “reviewing its options,” Management Redbourne retracted its previous position and was no longer seeking to close the photo exposition on Gaza. Given the lack of justification for its demand, Redbourne backed down on its request when hundreds of emails of support from the public were received.

Two days earlier, on Monday, Feb. 15<sup>th</sup>, the real estate management firm owning the shopping center housing the Cinema du Parc – one of whose shareholders is based in Israel – had indeed ordered Cinema du Parc to dismantle the exposition immediately, failing which it threatened to use legal action. Citing a clause in its lease, Redbourne had argued that the Cinema du Parc had violated the terms of the lease with the Photo Exposition. This claim, however, was contradicted by the preceding clause, which clearly mentions the possibility for Cinema to host all kinds of related activities, such as “presentations, meetings, viewing, or other similar activities.” Cinema du Parc had frequently exercised this right in the past, with the hosting of nearly forty exhibitions of a socially progressive nature, without there ever having been a problem in the past.

“People should know what happened,” said Thomas Woodley, the President of CJPME. “Redbourne sought to intimidate the Cinema du Parc into shutting down the Exposition. This behaviour is unacceptable and had absolutely no legal basis. It was clearly a political manoeuvre intended to block access to information regarding the Israeli assault on Gaza last winter, and during which several violations of human rights have been identified.” CJPME had hoped that the dialog around the Exposition would help Canadians grasp the gravity of crimes committed during the Israeli assault, and would facilitate a free public debate on the incidents. CJPME was naturally alarmed when Redbourne, prompted by pro-Israeli voices, sought to shut down this free exchange.

As publicized since its inception, *Human Drama in Gaza* sought to transcend labels and stereotypes, and wanted to help people understand the human catastrophe unfolding in Gaza. The Exposition aimed to put a human face on the misery of the people of Gaza, and to show 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.

**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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