



– FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE –

## **United Church committee recommends boycott of Israeli settlements**

Montreal, May 7, 2012 — The United Church of Canada (UCC) has released a report calling for a boycott of Israeli settlement products. The report, prepared by a high-level working group which has been studying the issue for over two years, will be debated at the church's General Council meeting in Ottawa in August 2012.

The report recognizes Israel's 45-year occupation as the primary contributor to the injustice that underlies the violence of the region and calls on Israel to dismantle the settlements and the separation barrier. It calls on the United Church to avoid all settlement products and to divest from companies that profit from or support the occupation. It calls on the Canadian government to ensure that all settlement products be labeled clearly and not be given preferential treatment under the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement. The report expresses regret at the church's past policy of calling on Palestinians to acknowledge Israel as a Jewish state, affirms the importance of a just resolution of the Palestinian Right of Return, and denounces Christian Zionism for the role it has played in legitimizing the occupation.

"Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East welcomes this principled report, the product of thorough research, consultation with affected parties and expert witnesses, and a fact-finding mission to the Holy Land," states CJPME President Thomas Woodley. CJPME applauds the church's courage in commissioning and releasing it, in light of the foreseeable attacks which have already begun to emerge. CJPME commends the report to all church members for reflection and debate.

The UCC is one of many church denominations in North America to have considered boycotting Israeli companies. Israeli companies which profit from Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory are in violation of the UN *Norms on the Responsibilities of Transnational Corporations and other Business Enterprises with Regard to Human Rights*. These norms forbid companies from engaging in and profiting from war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other violations of international law. There are many Israeli companies (e.g. Ahava, Naot Shoes, etc.) which are directly involved or linked with Israel's occupation and colonization of Palestinian land, and would therefore fall under the UCC's boycott designation.

**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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