

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Matt Quinn, 816-729-9102

Area Peace Groups Begin Humanitarian Relief for Palestinians in Gaza

January 22, 2009 –Citizens for Justice in the Middle East will host a fundraiser dinner on Friday, January 30 at 6:30 pm. All proceeds will benefit Palestinians living in Gaza through the **United Nations Relief Works Agency (UNRWA)**. The dinner will feature two Palestinian native speakers and take place at the **Holy Land Café**, 12275 W 87th Street Parkway, Overland Park, Kansas.

Mubarak Awad, an internationally known peace advocate and Palestinian-American, will speak at the event. Dr. Awad is the director of Nonviolence International in Washington, DC, which promotes nonviolent action and seeks to reduce the use of violence worldwide. "Nonviolence always works," Dr. Awad said. "The government and the military will try to tell you that you have to kill for your country, your flag, God. But education can change that."

Mohammed Atwa, who will also speak at the event, is a Kansas City resident with Palestinian family members in Gaza. His story was featured on a radio program on KKFI-FM 90.1. Mr. Atwa's mother lives in Gaza, while his brother is a journalist for Ramattan, the only news organization reporting live on events in the Gaza Strip during the recent crisis.

The fundraiser benefit will provide medical and food relief for Palestinians affected by the latest crisis. According to UN sources over 5300 Palestinians have been killed or wounded, nearly half of the casualties are women and children. Thirteen Israelis have been killed, including three civilians. 35,000 Palestinians have been forced to flee their homes. 4000 Palestinian homes were destroyed in the 22 days of attacks. "Three shells hit the Al Quds hospital in the neighborhood, settings its pharmacy building ablaze, trapping 400 patients and staff inside the main hospital building," according to a Associated Press story on January 15, 2009.

The fundraiser dinner cost is \$25 per person, \$40 per couple, and \$50 for a family. The dinner will consist of a four-course dinner buffet. Benefit participants are encouraged to make reservations by calling Ginger at 913-362-8362, or purchase tickets by sending a check made out to "UNRWA," and send a check to Ginger Kenney, 9000 Mullen, Lenexa, KS 66215. Seating at the restaurant is limited so participants are encouraged to make their reservations early.

The event is also sponsored by two other organizations in Kansas City -- **Muslim American Society (MAS) Freedom and Peaceworks**.

About Citizens for Justice in the Middle East – <http://www.cjme.org>

Since 2003, Kansas City-based Citizens for Justice in the Middle East has educated the American public about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The group believes U.S. policy should recognize the rights and aspirations of both Israelis and Palestinians; only by respecting the need to provide both peoples in the conflict with security and self-determination can a viable and just peace be assured.