



Betty Williams, Ireland - 1976  
Máiread Corrigan Maguire, Ireland - 1976  
Rigoberta Menchú Tum, Guatemala - 1992  
Prof. Jody Williams, USA - 1997  
Dr. Shirin Ebadi, Iran - 2003  
Prof. Wangari Maathai, Kenya - 2004

*united for peace with justice and equality*

STATEMENT TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL  
SPECIAL SESSION ON BURMA  
BY JODY WILLIAMS, NOBEL WOMEN'S INITIATIVE

(1 October 2007) In March of this year, I stood before you to report to the Human Rights Council after heading its High Level Mission to Darfur. That report was framed in terms of the Responsibility To Protect, endorsed by all nations in the Declaration of the UN World Summit. Recognizing that the Government of the Sudan had failed to protect the people of Darfur from Ethnic Cleansing, War Crimes, and Crimes Against Humanity, our report made various recommendations to this Council, as well as to others, about how better to protect the people of Darfur.

Today I am calling, on behalf of my sister laureates in the Nobel Women's Initiative, for meaningful action from the Council to protect the human rights of the people of Burma. The ruling regime in Burma clearly does not exercise its Responsibility to Protect the Burmese people – quite the contrary, it attacks and murders nonviolent monks and others demonstrating for their freedom and national reconciliation. Since Burma fails in that responsibility, the responsibility falls to the international community. Protecting the people of Burma requires strong, concerted and decisive action from the UN Security Council, the Human Rights Council, and the Secretary General. If the words of the UN World Summit Declaration are to have meaning, it is up to Council members to help put them into force.

We stand with all those who are nonviolently exercising their political rights in Burma, and call on the Human Rights Council to strongly condemn the violence against, and imprisonment of, the protesters.

The Human Rights Council should also call for the immediate release of all political prisoners in Burma, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. The Council should play a decisive role in pushing for a national reconciliation commission to support a peaceful transition to democracy in Burma, and support efforts for an arms embargo against Burma.

The Human Rights Council must remain seized of the situation in Burma. It must carry out consistent and meaningful action to ensure the rights of the Burmese people to live in freedom and democracy.

*Only 12 women in its more than 100 year history have been recognized with the Nobel Peace Prize. Of these, 7 women are still living. In 2006, sister Nobel Peace Laureates Jody Williams, Shirin Ebadi, Wangari Maathai, Rigoberta Menchú Tum, Betty Williams and Mairead Corrigan Maguire united to form the Nobel Women's Initiative- a united effort for peace with justice and equality. Aung San Suu Kyi is the only woman laureate who is not free to join the group.*