



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

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Nobel Laureates to Sudan: Face the International Criminal Court

*Release Report on Crisis in Darfur and Burma, Call on International Community to
Boost Support for ICC and Peace Process in Darfur*

(New York) Nobel Peace Prize Laureates Jody Williams (1997) and Wangari Maathai (2004)—along with actress-activist Mia Farrow—released a report today about two of the world's worst crises: the violence and repression in the Darfur region of Sudan and in Burma, stressing the dire impacts on women in both regions.

Returning from their recent delegation to the Thai-Burma border, South Sudan and Eastern Chad at the close of the General Debates of the UN General Assembly, the women called on world leaders and the Security Council not to bow to pressure and delay justice to the people of Darfur.

“Of course we’d prefer the African Union and heads of state in Africa to deal with atrocities like those occurring in Darfur,” said Professor Maathai, founder of the Green Belt Movement and an outspoken advocate for democracy in Africa. “But the leadership of Africa must not allow the people to continue suffering.”

The fact-finding mission, organized by the Nobel Women’s Initiative, also included the Chair of Afghanistan’s Independent Human Rights Commission, Dr. Sima Samar and Reverend Dr. Gloria White-Hammond, the founder of My Sisters’ Keeper and other organizations working with women in Sudan. The report makes recommendations, aimed particularly at the international community, to improve the situations in Darfur, Sudan and Burma.

The group traveled for three weeks to countries that are directly linked to the crises in Burma and Darfur, meeting with women's groups, government officials and representatives from international organizations, and visiting clinics and refugee camps to hear first-hand what is required to bring a sustainable peace to these areas.

“The inspirational efforts for peace by women on the ground--made at a huge risk to their personal safety--deserve the support and recognition of the international community,” said Williams, who won the Nobel Peace Prize for her work on banning antipersonnel landmines. “It is inexcusable for certain nations to directly support regimes that are oppressing their people and committing systematic, widespread violence against women. The use of rape as a weapon of war must be stopped.”

During their trip to Sudan, the delegation found the peace process in Darfur at a standstill. The North-South peace deal remains fragile, and broader stability in Sudan depends on its timely and full implementation. The report also highlights the fact that the on-going crisis in Darfur causes regional instability, including in Chad and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

“We are calling for all parties to come to the negotiating table, put aside their differences and focus on peace for the whole of Sudan,” said Professor Maathai. “In this way, they can achieve more sustainable peace.”

In Burma, the delegation found that the international response to Cyclone Nargis, which hit Burma's Irrawaddy Delta in May this year, has inadvertently strengthened the hand of the ruling junta. For example, aid has been channeled through the regime, and an estimated 25 percent of the aid has been skimmed off the top by the military. Since May, the junta has arrested at least seven people who delivered humanitarian aid, the group found.

The delegation also found the regime is not loosening its grip on democracy activists, citing more than 2000 political prisoners in Burma—half arrested in the wake of the September uprisings.

“We are calling for the release of political prisoners in Burma, including Aung San Suu Kyi, the cessation of campaigns of violence against ethnic nationalities and dialogue leading to real democracy in the country,” said actress-activist Mia Farrow. “We are also calling for the delivery of humanitarian relief post Cyclone Nargis directly to the people in Burma. We must keep up the pressure on the world's superpowers to ‘do the right thing’ in Darfur and Burma—and create the conditions for long-lasting peace and democracy.”

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