



Nobel Women's Initiative Update

July 13, 2009



News

Aung San Suu Kyi's Trial Lags On

Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and opposition leader of Burma, Aung San Suu Kyi, continues to be held in the notorious Burmese Insein Prison after she was taken from house arrest in May. Suu Kyi was charged on the grounds of harboring an uninvited foreign visitor. The trial is being drawn out indefinitely by the junta as Suu Kyi awaits a verdict. [Read more.](#)

In response to the democratic leader's wrongful arrest, her sister Nobel Peace Laureates issued a statement calling for the immediate release of Aung San Suu Kyi and the more than 2000 political prisoners in Burma. [Read the statement.](#)

As well, eleven Nobel Peace Laureates, including His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and President Jose Ramos Horta of East Timor, released an open letter to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon calling for Suu Kyi's release. [Read the letter.](#)

In the weeks leading to Suu Kyi's 64th birthday on June 19th, the international community responded with calls to action against the gross human rights abuses in Burma. [Read about the actions.](#)

[Read more about Burma and the trial of Aung San Suu Kyi.](#)

Nobel Laureates Call for End to Violence in Iran

In response to the Iranian authorities' crack-down on civil liberties since the June

12 elections, the women Nobel Peace Laureates issued a statement calling upon the government of Iran to immediately cease all violence and use of force against peaceful protests in Iran, and to release, without conditions, those demonstrators and activists who have been arrested following the elections.

[Read the statement.](#)

Ten Peace Laureates Urge Ban Ki-moon to Send Envoy to Iran

An open letter, signed by ten Nobel Peace Laureates, was sent to Ban Ki-moon, calling for a UN Human Rights Envoy to be sent to Iran to investigate the human rights abuses. The letter was also sent to a number of foreign ministers, asking them to use their influence to call upon Iran to fulfill its obligations under the international treaties to which it is a signatory.

[Read the letter.](#)

As well, Nobel Laureate Shirin Ebadi has herself called for an Envoy to be sent to Iran and for an end to state violence. Ebadi met with the European Parliament, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and a number of other governments and decision-makers. She also spoke with the UN Secretary-General by telephone.

[Read more in the Middle East News section of our website.](#)

Humanitarian efforts disrupted by Israeli naval forces, Mairead Maguire detained

On June 30th, Nobel Laureate Mairead Maguire and 20 other activists from the Free Gaza movement were taken into custody by Israeli officials. Their boat, the Spirit of Humanity, was headed to Gaza with construction and medical supplies for the Palestinians, when Israeli naval forces interrupted the mission and confiscated the boat.

Israeli officials detained the crew of 21 human rights activists, releasing and deporting the individuals in groups. Following a week of detention, Maguire and four other activists were the last to be released. Throughout their ordeal, Maguire and the Free Gaza activists continued to emphasize the plight of the Palestinian people who are suffering under the Israeli blockade.

Read more about the mission on the [Middle East News section of our website](#) as well as the [Free Gaza](#) site.

Seventeen Nobel Peace Prize Laureates sign to eliminate nuclear

weapons

In April, seventeen Nobel Peace Prize Laureates signed the Hiroshima-Nagasaki Declaration urging political leaders and citizens worldwide to act to eliminate nuclear weapons. The declaration was initiated by Irish Laureate, Mairead Maguire. As well, Jody Williams, Mairead Maguire, and Shirin Ebadi made video messages on the theme.

[Read the statement and view the videos.](#)

Nobel Laureates call on African leaders to support the International Criminal Court (ICC)

Nobel Laureates Wangari Maathai, Wole Soyenka and Archbishop Desmond Tutu penned an Opinion Editorial in the lead-up to a July summit of the African Union, urging support for the International Criminal Court's role in Sudan and its indictment of Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir. The Opinion Editorial was followed by a statement signed by the three Laureates along with 39 other prominent African civil society leaders and justice experts.

[Read the Op Ed in *Jeune Afrique*.](#)

[Read the Statement.](#)

Human rights and justice advocates worldwide were deeply disappointed by the joint resolution released by the African Union at the close of the summit, stating that they would not cooperate in the arrest of Bashir.

[Read more.](#)

Follow us on:

[Twitter](#)

[Facebook](#)

See Nobel Women's Initiative in the media on [Delicious](#)

Take Action

Break the Blackout in Iran

Following the elections, Iranian authorities have created an internet "crackdown." The media in Iran has been intermittently blacked out and cyber-surveillance threatens to stop all Iranians from communicating freely. Avaaz.org is helping to

break the blackout by re-opening secure and anonymous channels of communication through web proxy servers.

[Help break the blackout.](#)

Unite for Iran: Support Iranian Activists, Call for End to Violence

On July 25th, United 4 Iran is calling upon the international community to engage in a global day of action. People around the world will demonstrate in support of the Iranian people and in opposition to human rights abuses in Iran. Peace Prize Laureate, Shirin Ebadi is one of the sponsors of the event and is also calling upon the international community to show their support.

Find out more about the [Global Day of Action](#) at [United 4 Iran](#) and on [our website](#).

Act to End Femicide in Guatemala

Thirty-six years of internal armed conflict in Guatemala left more than 100,000 dead and 50,000 disappeared at the hands of government, police and military forces. Indigenous people, women and opposition parties were especially targeted. Over 350 indigenous communities were literally erased from the map, and clandestine cemeteries are still being uncovered, with countless human rights violations left unpunished.*

[Read about what you can do.](#)

*JASS

Events

Crisis in Darfur: Where are the windows to peace?

Jody Williams and Wangari Maathai of the Nobel Women's Initiative hosted a breakfast panel discussion featuring some of the leading experts on Sudan in Washington, DC on Tuesday, April 14th, 2009.

The panel offered a timely and frank assessment of the current crisis in that country: how the faltering peace process will fare following the International Criminal Court's arrest warrant for President al-Bashir, the subsequent expulsion of humanitarian organizations from the region, and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM)'s withdrawal from the Qatar peace table.

Panelists also explored the role of the Arab League countries in the crisis. Physicians for Human Rights released important new data on sexual violence in the refugee camps.

[View the webcast.](#)

[Read article on IPS.](#)

Prominent women gather to redefine democracy: Guatemala, May 10th-12th, 2009

The Nobel Women's Initiative hosted their second international conference, *Women Redefining Democracy for Peace, Justice and Equality*, in Antigua, Guatemala. The three-day conference convened over 100 women - Nobel Peace Laureates, activists, politicians, and journalists - from more than seventy countries to discuss policy, actions, and dialogue for the positive influence of human rights and social justice.

Hosted by Rigoberta Menchú Tum, the conference ended with a statement urging government and multilateral institutions to recognize the deficits in democracy as long as women are marginalized and denied their basic human rights.

A number of invited participants were denied visas to enter both transit countries and Guatemala, and were as a result unable to attend the conference. In addition, two of the Iranian participants, Ms. Nargess Mohammadi and Ms. Soraya Azizpanah, were at the last minute prevented from leaving the country to attend the conference. The two were banned from travel at the Imam Khomeini Airport. Their passports were confiscated by the Iranian authorities and they were issued a summons to appear in court.

[Read more about it.](#)

Learn more about the conference - [read blog posts](#), [view video clips](#).

See a [sample of media coverage](#) of the conference in English and Spanish.

Jody Williams Speaks at Global Summit of Women in Chile

Nobel Peace Laureate Jody Williams attended the Global Women's Summit in Santiago, Chile in May. The summit is an annual gathering of 1000 or more business women and political leaders from around the globe. This year it took place in Santiago de Chile and was hosted by President Michelle Bachelet.

Williams spoke about violence against women and the political, social and domestic aspects. She also provided concrete examples of what women in the corporate sector could do to promote a fairer world for women.

[Read the full report.](#)

Follow us on:

[Twitter](#)

[Facebook](#)

See Nobel Women's Initiative in the media on [Delicious](#)



To unsubscribe from NWI's newsletter e-mail list please [click here](#).

Thank you for your support