



THE INTERNATIONAL  
CAMPAIGN TO  
STOP RAPE & GENDER VIOLENCE  
IN CONFLICT



NOBEL  
WOMEN'S  
INITIATIVE

*Advocating for peace, justice & equality*

NOBEL WOMEN'S INITIATIVE DELEGATION TO LIBERIA  
AND THE 20TH AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT | ETHIOPIA 2013

# WOMEN FORGING PEACE



Nobel Women's Initiative Delegation to Liberia  
and the 20th African Union Summit in Ethiopia 2013:

## Women Forging Peace



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 StopRapeInConflict

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>DEDICATION</b> .....	2
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	3
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	4
<b>BACKGROUND ON THE CONFLICT IN LIBERIA</b> .....	5
<b>FACTS AND DATES</b> .....	7
<b>“WOMEN FORGING PEACE” DELEGATION TO LIBERIA</b> .....	8
AMPLIFYING WOMEN’S VOICES IN THE MEDIA .....	13
THE IMPACT OF THE DELEGATION TO LIBERIA .....	14
<b>REACHING AFRICAN LEADERSHIP:</b>	
<b>THE DELEGATION TRAVELS TO THE AFRICAN UNION</b> .....	16
PRE-SUMMIT DELEGATION .....	16
AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT .....	17
<b>ITINERARY</b> .....	19
<b>ENDNOTES</b> .....	20

A large, light green, stylized graphic of an olive branch with several leaves and a single olive fruit, extending diagonally from the bottom right towards the top left, serving as a background for the text.

## DEDICATION

**T**his report is dedicated to the courageous women of Liberia whose demands for peace helped bring an end to the Second Civil War. They are doing remarkable work to rebuild their country in the face of ongoing violence and injustice.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**T**he Nobel Women's Initiative extends our deepest thanks to our hosts in Liberia, **Nobel Laureate Leymah Gbowee** and the staff at the **Gbowee Peace Foundation**, for welcoming us to their country and sharing their experiences and expertise with us. **ActionAid-Liberia** also extended to us a great welcome to Liberia and graciously organized an invaluable half-day briefing session.

We also thank the other Nobel Peace Prize Laureates of the Nobel Women's Initiative who joined us on our journey:

*Mairead Maguire, Nobel Laureate 1976, Northern Ireland*

*Jody Williams, Nobel Laureate 1997, USA*

*Shirin Ebadi, Nobel Laureate 2003, Iran*

We gratefully acknowledge the generous support of the following delegates. Without their dedication and collaboration, this delegation and the positive outcomes that emerged from it would not have been possible:

*Ann Patterson, Trustee, Peace People, Northern Ireland*

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*Lisa VeneKlassen, Executive Director, JASS (Just Associates), USA*

*Lynne Twist, President, Soul of Money Institute, USA*

*Margot Pritzker, Chair, Zohar Education Project Incorporated  
and President and Founder, WomenOnCall.org, USA*

*Nancy Word, Co-Founder, Impact Austin, USA*

*Sara Vetter, Soul of Money Institute, USA*

*Sarah Cavanaugh, Curator, Jini Dellaccio Collection, USA*

*Seema Mathur, Journalist and Filmmaker, USA*

*Trea Yip, CEO, TY Commercial Group, USA*

*Zaynab El Sawi, Coordinator, Sudanese Women Empowerment for Peace, Sudan*

# INTRODUCTION

From January 18 to January 28, 2013, a Nobel Women's Initiative delegation of Nobel Peace Prize Laureates, philanthropists, women's rights advocates, journalists and members of the International Campaign to Stop Rape & Gender Violence in Conflict travelled to Liberia. From there, they travelled to the 20th Summit of the African Union that took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The delegation was organized in partnership with the Leymah Gbowee Peace Foundation. It was led by Laureate Leymah Gbowee, our host in Liberia, and sister Laureates Jody Williams, Mairead Maguire and Shirin Ebadi.



The purpose of our journey was to meet with women who are on the forefront of peace and reconciliation work in Liberia — extraordinary grassroots leaders who played a key role in helping stop the violence unleashed by years of brutal civil war in the country. The delegates bore witness and provided support to these women activists by spotlighting their work with Liberian decision-makers, increasing media engagement in Liberia and internationally, and amplifying activists' messages to a broader network of women's organizations around the world.

The delegation met with a range of actors, from women grassroots peacebuilders and community groups to representatives of international organizations and high-level government officials. We supported the mobilization of real change, grounded in experiences and perspectives of African women, by ensuring that what we learned was communicated directly to those making decisions that shape women's lives in the region. We also called for leadership and immediate, effective responses by policymakers and the international community.

The women of Liberia are doing important work in the areas of trauma healing, ending sexual violence, and empowering individuals at the community level to bring about peace and reconciliation.

We shared what learned in Liberia at the Heads of State meeting of the 20th African Union Summit in Ethiopia, where we were also joined by African women activists in calling on the African Union to take up the challenge of ending sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations across the continent.



# BACKGROUND ON THE CONFLICT IN LIBERIA

Liberia became a sovereign nation in 1847 under the rule of Americo-Liberians (freed former African American slaves from the United States), but gross inequalities between the ruling minority and the predominantly rural majority have remained prominent. The first indigenous Liberian president was Samuel Doe, who came to power after a bloody coup in 1980.

Between 1989 and 1996, rebel factions formed throughout Liberia and fought for control of the country. This is the period called the First Civil War, which resulted in the killing of thousands of Liberians. In 1990, rebel forces that arrived in Liberia from the Ivory Coast captured, tortured and assassinated President Doe.

The administration of the warlord Charles Taylor began in 1997, after the population was essentially coerced into electing him into power. Not surprisingly, a Second Civil War broke out in 1999. The civil war was an ethnic conflict with at least seven factions fighting for control of Liberia's resources (especially iron ore, diamonds, timber and rubber).

Taylor's government forces as well as the rebel factions recruited child soldiers into their armies as young as six or seven. Women were subjected to widespread gender-based violence, and rape was used as a weapon of war to terrorize communities, to force people to flee their homes, and to break up social structures. A 2005 World Health Organization report estimates that 77 percent of women were raped during the conflict. In addition, thousands were displaced from the countryside and fled to inhospitable and deadly camps in Monrovia.

The 14-year-long civil war in Liberia officially ended 10 years ago, in 2003. Liberia, a country rich in resources, was desperately poor and traumatized after so many years of brutal conflict.

It was during the Second Civil War that Leymah Gbowee, a young social worker, realized that she had to do something to help bring the conflict to an end. Horrified by scenes of human suffering all around her, Leymah brought women from her Lutheran church together with Muslim women to protest the war. These women, the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace, as they called themselves, used diverse tactics to press Taylor and the rebel factions for peace: daily demonstrations at the fish market (within sight of then-President Taylor's residence), a "sex strike" calling international media attention to the movement, and statements calling for peace. In 2003, they successfully pressured both Taylor and the rebel groups to agree to attend peace talks in Accra, Ghana. When the peace talks stalled, a group of women representing the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace blocked the exits and lobby of the building where the peace talks were being held, preventing the delegates from leaving.



*Leymah Gbowee and the women of Liberia mobilizing for peace during the civil war.*

In August 2003, the terms for the peace agreement were announced and Taylor resigned as president. Liberia began to rebuild under a transitional government until Ellen Johnson Sirleaf won the 2005 presidential runoff vote and became the first African female president. Sirleaf was elected for a second term in 2011, the year she and Leymah Gbowee received the Nobel Peace Prize (along with Tawakkol Karman of Yemen).

Ethnic divisions, sexual violence, youth unemployment, nepotism, impunity and disagreements over the exploitation of natural resources continue to undermine the fragile peace that exists in Liberia. Former warloads not only walk free, but many hold important government positions.

Yet the other reality in “post-conflict” Liberia is that there are many women, organizations, community groups and even individual government leaders that are doing remarkable work. They are rebuilding communities that were torn apart by war and also empowering women to address the ongoing crisis of sexual violence and the challenges to advancing gender rights. This is why the delegation focused on meeting with these individuals and organizations—and communicating their priorities to policy-makers directly and through the media.



## FACTS AND DATES

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In 1822, former African American slaves settled on the lands that later became Liberia.

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Liberia became a sovereign nation under Americo-Liberian rule in 1847.

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The True Whig Party was founded in 1869 and dominated politics from 1878 until the 1980 coup d'état led by Samuel Doe.

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In 1979, the Rice Riots broke out in Monrovia after the Liberian military opened fire on marchers protesting the rising cost of rice.

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The First Civil War broke out in 1989 and ended in 1996, though fighting did not cease until 1997, when Charles Taylor was elected president.

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The Second Civil War broke out in 1999 and ended in 2003 with the Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

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Liberia's total population is an estimated 3.95 million (as of 2009).

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According to the Human Development Index, 83 percent of the population lives on less than \$1.25 per day and only 58.9 percent is literate.

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Most of Liberia's population is rural; 68 percent of Liberia's population is concentrated in rural areas.

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One in three Liberian girls gets pregnant before the age of 18.

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The Liberian National Police reported 312 cases of rape and sexual assault in 2009 and 521 in 2010.

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Though a court was established to prosecute sexual violence, only 30 cases have gone to trial since 2009. A very small number of perpetrators serve prison sentences.

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A Save the Children study found that 80 percent of victims of gender violence in Liberia from 2011-2012 were younger than 17. Almost all of them were raped.

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A 2005 World Health Organization report estimates that 77 percent of women were raped during Liberia's civil wars.

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An estimated 250,000 people were killed and 1.5 million were displaced during the civil wars.

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Female genital cutting, or FGC, (also known as female genital mutilation) is practiced by 10 of 16 tribes in Liberia and is thought to prevent promiscuity by women. The practice is protected by traditional secret societies and, until recently, by government complicity.

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# “WOMEN FORGING PEACE”

## DELEGATION TO LIBERIA

Arriving from all over the world, delegates met in Monrovia, the capital of Liberia, to begin orientation and prepare for the busy week of activities. The delegation began on an inspirational note on day two when the delegation visited Rockhill community, outside of Monrovia, where we were greeted by the entire community singing “Water is Life,” as well as hugs and a parade.

The women of Rockhill have united to promote development and empower women in their community. Rockhill has never had pipe borne water, modern schools or adequate roads. Teenage pregnancy and school dropout are common among youth. Many adults and even children under age 10 have to mine rocks for their livelihood.

With a population of 20,000, the community has one only functional hand pump. Women took the lead to deal with the community’s lack of potable water by organizing and raising the money to buy the community’s pump. Through words, song and skit, the Rockhill women demonstrated to us the dangers that arise when girls have to walk great distances for water, including greater vulnerability to rape and harassment.

“ We are concerned that if nothing is done to change this ugly course we will continue to live in an environment of poverty with poor health and sanitation, while the future of our children will be bleak.” — the Women of Rockhill community

“ Rockhill women are really a true picture of the typical African and Liberian women. In problems, hardship, they come together and mobilize their meagre resources and they have decided that, we will address our concern.” — Leymah Gbowee

“ We were inspired, heartbroken and blown away at the strength and beauty of the ROCKHILL Women.” — Delegate

On the third day, the delegation attended the Sunday service at St. Peter’s Lutheran Church, where in 1990 rebel forces brutally murdered hundreds of Liberian men, women and children who





had taken refuge in the church. It was a beautiful service, with music provided by the inspirational Martin Luther King, Jr. choir. After services, we met with trauma healing counsellors from the church to learn about how they are working to heal wounds from the Civil War and help their community move forward. It is clear that there are many miles to walk before the trauma is healed. Yet people are doing their best to heal wounds, rebuild infrastructure, and welcome home Liberians from the diaspora.



**“ There are huge issues facing the women here in Liberia. But I believe that these women are up to the challenge of making a huge difference. . . It’s a real honour to be here with this group. I am growing in so many ways to understand how I can take this back to my friends in the United States and make a difference.” — Delegate Nancy Word**

The next day ActionAid-Liberia organized a rich half-day session, “Contextualizing Liberia,” in which the delegates heard from leading Liberian academics and activists about the historical, social, economic and political context for advancing women’s rights in Liberia.

In this background session, the delegates learned that to a large extent the founding years of the country are the root of the crises Liberians now face. Liberia’s “founding fathers,” the freed slaves from the United States known as Americo-Liberians, replicated many of the ways of the oppressors and have dominated the economy and political system in Liberia since the 1820s.

## ACTIVIST SPOTLIGHT

### MAE AZANGO

“I want to spend my ink on ordinary people,” acclaimed journalist Mae Azango told us. Mae is passionate about giving a voice to the voiceless — especially women and girls. She has faced strong hostility in her native Liberia for her reporting on the dangers associated with the ritual of FGC (female genital cutting), an issue considered controversial as it is deeply engrained in local cultures. Mae’s courageous reporting has had enormous impact. However, it has also put her life in danger. She has received death threats, forcing her to go into hiding with her daughter. In response, the international community — including journalist protection committees and human rights organizations — helped pressure the Liberian government to protect Mae. The government was also forced to take a stance on FGC for the first time. After denouncing the practice, the government committed to help find alternative sources of income for women who traditionally perform the cutting.



In 1980, indigenous people finally wrested control from the Americo-Liberians, but within a short nine years the country had descended into tribal and civil war. Social exclusion and restrictions on political participation brought on the 1980 coup and First Civil War.

Delegates also learned how resource struggles, the second-class status of women, and sexual violence are impeding the full development of a just and equal Liberian society.

**“ History belongs to men — it doesn’t tell the story of women raped and killed looking for food. I want to tell that story.”**

— Dr. Patricia Jabbeh Wesley, a renowned poet who records the stories of women who survived the Liberian civil war

Liberia’s history, we discovered, is one of dispersion, movement and exile. It is now a story of return, as Liberians from the diaspora come home after many years abroad. There are the people who lived through the war in Liberia, those who went into exile and never returned, and those who left but are slowly making their way back. Yet among those who spoke in the session, and all of the people the delegates spoke with in Liberia, no one who stayed holds a grudge against those who left, permanently or otherwise.

After the ActionAid briefing, we invited the Liberian men and women who met with us to participate in a pledge ceremony we held as part of the International Campaign to Stop Rape & Gender Violence in Conflict. Women and men made commitments to end gender-based violence through various means: from raising their voices in the community to law reform.

Later in the day, the delegation split up into smaller groups and made site visits to AIDS Hospice Monrovia, St. Joseph’s Catholic Hospital, and “Missionaries of Charity and Sisters of Mother Teresa Home of Peace and Joy.” Some of us also visited women in a local prison and brought them useful hygienic supplies.

In the evening, we met with student leaders and Women Peace and Security Network-Africa (WIPSEN) leaders. Women and men youth leaders were passionate and articulate about resolving the problems facing young people in Liberia, particularly girls. One problem, for instance, is that families with limited resources will often prioritize educating boys over girls. Girls who do make it to high school often rely on “sugar daddies” – older men, including teachers, who will pay their fees or give good grades in exchange for sexual favors. But some girls do overcome these obstacles, especially if they have the support and mentorship of women and institutions committed to girl’s education. It was powerful to hear these young leaders recognize education as an essential building block to a more peaceful, just society.





“ We want you to accompany us as we build a more democratic system, celebrate the kind of peace we’re looking for.”

— Liberian youth leader

“ Without young women, Liberia has no future, won’t go anywhere if we don’t empower them.” — Liberian youth leader

“ I’m moved and inspired by your passion and courage and grace, and humbled to be in your presence. We feel privileged to listen to you, and will go home thinking Liberia is in good hands. You’ve come through conflict and asked the right questions: how do we not do this to each other? You are intelligent young people.”

— Laureate Mairead Maguire

“ After seeing the young people, I rebounded and felt so hopeful for this country. The resilience of these people, it’s incredible, you can’t beat them down. I feel so encouraged. I know with an organization like [the Nobel Women’s Initiative], and the persistence we have, there will be change. We will all do whatever little we can do to make a difference.” — Delegate Trea Yip

On the fifth day of the delegation, we embarked on a full-day visit to the community of Totota, in Bong County outside of Monrovia.

We were greeted by dozens of women chanting proudly “women are WOMEN.” They wore t-shirts with messages like “Beating your wife is everyone’s concern” and “Peace, yes! RAPE NEVER AGAIN.”

## ACTIVIST SPOTLIGHT

### FELICIA COLEMAN

The delegation met with the Chief Prosecutor for the Sexual Crimes and Gender-Based Violence Unit of the Ministry of Justice, Felicia Coleman. She works against the backdrop of a legal system in desperate need of reform and without some of the most basic tools prosecutors in other countries take for granted, like police transportation to carry out investigations and arrests. Coleman and her staff not only struggle to get rape cases to court but also spend a great deal of time in the community educating Liberians on the legal rights of women. Coleman is the first to admit that the courts are delivering very little justice to Liberian women. And she worries that there is not enough support for survivors. Yet, despite these obstacles, she is a doing a remarkable job in moving justice for women in Liberia forward.





There, we learned firsthand from a women's peace network about their "peace huts," an alternative to "palava huts," where community-based justice is traditionally meted out. Men enter the palava huts and women remain on the outside; but in the case of the peace huts, women enter and work alongside the men. Peace huts were born during the Civil War, as women working at the community level realized they needed to mobilize their collective strength to help put a stop to the violence. Women-led peace huts are springing up in other communities in Liberia. Leymah described them to us as a grassroots effort to "deconstruct patriarchy" from the inside out.

The women of Totota also work closely with community police and sometimes chase down evidence in rape cases to take to court. They asked us to convey important messages to Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf: they want rape cases fast-tracked in the court system and they want local police to be provided with vehicles so they can properly investigate sexual violence crimes. Most of all, they want President Sirleaf to come and see their hard work.

**"It was beyond inspirational, the spirit of the women, the life of the women, the confidence that they exude. The courage and the strength was something that I'll never forget. And I feel so honoured to be in their presence, to be in their community and to be sharing this day with them. It is something that I will never forget. And it definitely something that I'm thinking about as I go back to America."**

— Delegate Lauren Embrey

A key part of all Nobel Women's Initiative delegations is ensuring that what we hear "on the ground" is communicated to policy-makers. On

## ACTIVIST SPOTLIGHT

### DR. WILHELMINA JALLAH

Dr. Wilhelmina Jallah is a champion of women's healthcare in Liberia. As the head of obstetrics and gynecology at the John F. Kennedy Medical Center in Monrovia, Dr. Jallah provided medical services to young survivors of rape, many of whom require fistula repair surgery. The tragic story of one of her patients, Olivia Zinnah, has been covered by international media as well as by one of our delegates, journalist Seema Mathur. Olivia died at age 13 from injuries resulting from a brutal rape she survived when she was only seven years old. Dr. Jallah now works full time with the organization she founded, Hope for Women International, where she supports cancer patients and administers chemotherapy. She works with women and girls to reconstruct and rehabilitate not only their bodies but their entire lives.





the sixth day, the delegation carried the voices of the women of Totota and others we met during our delegation directly to Liberian and international decision-makers.

We met with high-level government officials, including representatives of the United Nations (UN Women), the United States ambassador and President Sirleaf. As promised, we communicated the messages from the women of Totota to President Sirleaf and asked for her strong support for the efforts of grassroots women to achieve greater justice and build peace. President Sirleaf promised to visit the women of Totota.

“ The Laureates . . . were able to share about our experiences out in the rural areas, at Totota, at the Rockhill community, with all the dignitaries that we met, and our meeting with the president... Their eyes were opened up to what it is that we saw and that we’ll spread in whatever country we go on to next. Wherever this delegation goes, they will hold Liberia in their hearts and they will continue to strengthen the powerful women here and preserve their rights for themselves and for all children here.” — Delegate Sara Vetter



## AMPLIFYING WOMEN’S VOICES IN THE MEDIA



Another key part of all our delegations is amplifying the voices of women to a larger public through national and international media. One of the delegates who joined us, Seema Mathur, is a television journalist from the United States who has already reported on violence against women in post-conflict Liberia and used her time with the delegation to gather information for her upcoming documentary *Camp 72* as well as other reporting she is doing on Liberia. We also invited Monrovia-based journalists to accompany the delegation on certain site visits, which gave women peacebuilders an opportunity to speak to a national audience about their work taking place at the community level.

To conclude the Liberia portion of the delegation, a press conference was held on the final day with three of the Nobel Laureates: Leymah Gbowee, Jody Williams and Shirin Ebadi. It reinforced the key priorities identified by the women peacebuilders and activists we met.

These were our recommendations to government officials and policy-makers made during the press conference:

- » Support grassroots women’s organizations that helped to bring about peace in Liberia, and continue to work to empower women and girls who are working to bring an end to rape and other forms of gender violence.



- » Provide transportation for community police and others working to respond to rape and violence against women and girls at the community level.
- » Start to heal the wounds of rape and sexual violence by providing reparations to communities deeply impacted by such violence in the war; such reparations can be used to respond to community priorities including basic services and alternative justice mechanisms such as peace huts.
- » Prioritize reform of the justice system and the effective prosecution of rape cases—especially those perpetrated against children—as a more powerful deterrent for ending rape and sexual violence in this post-conflict period of Liberia's history.

## THE IMPACT OF THE DELEGATION TO LIBERIA

The journey we shared with incredible women activists in Liberia was truly transformational, and many of the delegates left the country knowing that their lives would never be the same.

“This journey has not only opened my eyes and heart, it has also made me fall in love with everyone and a country that I knew little about. More importantly, it has deepened my commitment to helping women and girls... Rest assured [women of Liberia] that your voice is echoed loudly, clearly and deeply in all of us, and it carries farther beyond where anyone can imagine... My life hasn't been the same since I left Liberia.” — Delegate Trea Yip

“It stopped me in my tracks. I'm inspired, devastated, blown away. The Laureates ... all of you, your passion ... It will take me months to process, and I will never be the same.” — Delegate Sara Vetter

“We're back and still talking about all the ways we were moved and rocked by Liberia - that place certainly boggles the mind and stirs the heart!” — Delegate Lisa VeneKlasen

“There is immense strength in Liberia and I am hopeful that now that the 'Ladies of Action' are watching and working to empower activists making a difference there will be fewer 'broken places' and fewer graves...” — Delegate Seema Mathur

“I came in as an observer and I'm now a supporter. It's due to all of you.” — Delegate Margot Pritzker

Amidst difficult stories and barriers to progress in Liberia, so much of what we learned humbled us and brought us great joy. Women are rebuilding their lives and their communities with dignity, grace, confidence and a strong sense of justice. They are focused on the future. The country still has a long way to go to reconcile the past and build a sustainable, peaceful future, but the women of Liberia have been at the forefront of this movement. It is now essential to ensure their voices are heard in the reconciliation processes currently taking place.



## WOMEN FORGING PEACE

Our delegation to Liberia was successful on many levels. We provided support and increased the visibility of women activists and their networks on the ground in Liberia, including women peace-builders and anti-rape activists, by validating and recognizing the importance of their work in meetings with national policy-makers and in the media.

Our delegation also resulted in other concrete outcomes, driven by the delegates:

- » Three delegates connected with the Foundation for Women Liberia, which provides micro loans to women in Liberia. They worked with the Foundation to establish a micro loan program for women in Totota. Forty women received their first loans in April 2013.
- » One of the delegates contacted a physician friend who does work in Liberia. He is now researching a solution for an electrocardiogram (EKG) device that requires no maintenance and could be used at the hospital we visited. The same delegate provided generous funding to the women's HIV-AIDS hospice.
- » Leymah intervened after the delegation to find an adoptive Liberian family for the orphaned son of one of the women who died last year in the HIV-AIDS hospice the delegation visited. She also organized a group of local women to regularly visit the hospice and provide more ongoing support.
- » Progress is also being made on delegate Seema Mathur's documentary *Camp 72*, which some of the delegates will help fund.
- » The only surviving water pump in Rockhill community broke down a few weeks after the delegation's visit. However, progress has been made to fix this problem in collaboration with a few of the delegates who met with the Chairman of the Monrovia district water commission during our visit to Monrovia.

**“ I believe the future of this country rests with the power of the women, and I know they will not rest until there is change.” — Laureate Jody Williams**

**“ I was most impressed by the strong willpower of your people to make changes...What we have seen in Liberia we will also raise in the other countries we visit.” — Laureate Shirin Ebadi**



# REACHING AFRICAN LEADERSHIP: THE DELEGATION TRAVELS TO THE AFRICAN UNION

From Liberia, the delegation travelled to the African Union Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia where it shared what was learned in Liberia with African leadership. In Addis, we were also joined by African women activists in calling on the African Union to take up the challenge of ending sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations across the continent.

In Addis, the delegation was organized into two parts: pre-summit activities (meetings and trainings) with a smaller group of activists from across the continent, and organized side events with a larger group participating in media engagement and lobbying during the Heads of State meeting from January 27 to January 28.

## PRE-SUMMIT DELEGATION

The pre-summit delegation was made up of 10 women's rights activists from across the continent gathering on behalf of the International Campaign to Stop Rape & Gender Violence in Conflict: Sudan, South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya and South Africa. They were met by the group of delegates arriving from Liberia including Laureate Jody Williams and philanthropists based in the United States.

### Gender is My Agenda

Activities began with the "Gender is My Agenda" (GIMAC) conference, an annual pre-summit session that discusses gender mainstreaming with reference to the upcoming summit. About two hundred activists and policy-makers engaged in dialogue about African women's issues, and the sessions were instrumental in developing recommendations to lobby behind at the later meetings with African Union leaders. GIMAC also provided an important opportunity for us to engage with actors from international institutions, such as AU Chairwoman Dlamini-Zuma and former President of Ireland Mary Robinson.

### Media Training

As part of the pre-summit activities, the Nobel Women's Initiative developed a media training for 10 activist participants. We provided the activists with the necessary tools to spotlight how decisions being made at the political level during the Summit would impact the grassroots women back home, and how to effectively share their message for action with policy leaders.



## AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT

On January 26, the eve of the Heads of State meeting, the Campaign held its official side event to the African Union Summit. The event included the participation of delegates and grassroots activists, as well as remarks by Jody Williams, the African Union Gender Directorate and UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict Madame Zainab Hawa Bangura. Approximately 50 representatives from international and African embassies and civil society attended the event, as well as journalists.

While the side event provided an important opportunity to bring the issue of stopping widespread gender violence to policymakers and media, it also was a significant opportunity to build relationships with the office of the UN Special Representative and the African Union Gender Directorate, with which continued engagement on this issue is crucial. We also held a meeting with the Special Rapporteur on Women's Rights in Africa, Soyata Maiga, who discussed her role, her background as a lawyer in Mali, and how we can support her going forward.

The delegation attended the opening ceremony of the Heads of State meeting and was encouraged to hear strong words of support to end gender violence from Chairwoman Dlamini-Zuma and UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.

While we had requested and confirmed a number of meetings with Heads of State, including President Kabila, none of the meetings materialized during the Summit to the discouragement of the delegation. As the activists continued to lobby and network in the halls of the Summit, a new strategy was developed on the evening of the first day after seeing the interest of media gathered.

**“ On January 27, our meeting with the president of the Democratic Republic of Congo, our president, was cancelled at the last minute without warning. But the next day, January 28, we met with other groups and spoke to them about the Campaign, and demanded that Africans receive more protection and prevention against sexual violence. ”** — Delegate Julienne Lusenge from the Congo

**“ Indeed we know real change comes from the grassroots, from the movements we saw in Liberia. ”**

— Delegate Liz Bernstein, executive director of Nobel Women's Initiative (pictured with Neema Namadamu of the Congo)



## WOMEN FORGING PEACE

On the second day of the Summit, the Campaign sent out a media advisory calling on AU member states for further action to stop rape in conflict. Activists gave an impromptu press briefing, distributed hard copies of the media advisory and spoke to journalists ahead of the briefing. Approximately 20 media attended the briefing and followed up afterwards with individual interviews. Two members of the delegation attended a meeting with UN Women Executive Director Michelle Bachelet and women's civil society groups.

The delegation strengthened activists' knowledge and understanding of how the African Union works as an institution and possible avenues for advocacy on gender violence. Since then, delegates have followed up with Madame Zainab Hawa Bangura's office (UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict) and collaborated through the Campaign to advocate for a survivor of rape in Somalia who was imprisoned.

The delegation to the African Union Summit was successful in bringing grassroots women's rights activists directly to the policymakers. We were a very large group not traditionally seen at the Summit; as a result, we received significant attention not only from media but from policy-makers who stopped and spoke with us in the halls.



## ITINERARY

### DELEGATION TO LIBERIA, 2013

#### January 18:

Delegates arrive in Monrovia, Liberia

#### January 19:

Orientation session

Visit to Rockhill community

Tour of Monrovia

Welcome dinner and cultural performance

#### January 20:

Sunday service at St. Peter's Lutheran Church

Meet with trauma healing experts

#### January 21:

ActionAid and Gbowee Peace Foundation  
Roundtable: Contextualizing Liberia

Meet with Liberian Women's  
Empowerment Network

Roundtable: Women's Rights in Development

Community visits to a local school, hospital  
and prison

#### January 22:

Meet with women peacebuilders in Totota  
and Wealea

#### January 23:

Meet with Women Peace and Security Network  
Africa (WIPSEN) Young Girl Leaders

Meet with government officials and international  
institutions

#### January 24:

Press conference

### DELEGATION TO THE AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT, 2013:

#### January 22:

"Gender is My Agenda" pre-summit consultations

#### January 23:

"Gender is My Agenda" pre-summit consultations

#### January 24:

Strategic media training with grassroots women's  
rights activists

#### January 25:

Delegates arriving from Liberia join the group  
in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

#### January 26:

International Campaign to Stop Rape & Gender  
Violence in Conflict High-Level Side Event hosted  
with the African Union Commission Women, Gender  
and Development Directorate and the Office of the  
Special Representative of the Secretary-General  
on Sexual Violence in Conflict

Meeting with Soyata Maiga, Special Rapporteur  
on Women's Rights in Africa

#### January 27:

Opening ceremony of the 20th African  
Union Summit

Advocacy meetings

#### January 28:

Advocacy in the halls of the African Union  
during the Heads of State Meetings

Press conference in the African Union lobby  
spotlighting African women grassroots leaders

## ENDNOTES

### DELEGATES TO LIBERIA:

*Mairead Maguire*, Nobel Laureate 1976, Northern Ireland  
*Jody Williams*, Nobel Laureate 1997, USA  
*Shirin Ebadi*, Nobel Laureate 2003, Iran  
*Leymah Gbowee*, Nobel Laureate 2011, Liberia  
*Ann Patterson*, Trustee, Peace People, Northern Ireland  
*Judy Rand*, Photographer, USA  
*Lauren Embrey*, CEO/President, Embrey Family Foundation, USA  
*Lesley Hoyles*, Events and Operations Coordinator,  
Nobel Women's Initiative  
*Lisa VeneKlassen*, Executive Director, JASS (Just Associates), USA  
*Liz Bernstein*, Executive Director, Nobel Women's Initiative  
*Lynne Twist*, President, Soul of Money Institute, USA  
*Margot Pritzker*, Chair, Zohar Education Project Incorporated  
and President and Founder, WomenOnCall.org, USA  
*Nancy Word*, Co-Founder, Impact Austin, USA  
*Rachel Schmidt*, Videographer, Canada  
*Rachel Vincent*, Director, Media and Communications,  
Nobel Women's Initiative  
*Sara Vetter*, Soul of Money Institute, USA  
*Sarah Cavanaugh*, Curator, Jini Dellaccio Collection, USA  
*Seema Mathur*, Journalist and Filmmaker, USA  
*Trea Yip*, CEO, TY Commercial Group, USA  
*Zaynab El Sawi*, Coordinator, Sudanese Women Empowerment  
for Peace, Sudan

### DELEGATES TO THE AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT:

*Jody Williams*, Nobel Laureate 1997, USA  
*Alice Oleya*, Community Empowerment for Progress, South Sudan  
*Bafana Khumalo*, Sonke Gender Justice Network, South Africa  
*Itumeleng Komanyane*, Sonke Gender Justice Network,  
South Africa  
*Jeanette Ruhebuza*, World Pulse, Democratic Republic of Congo  
*Judy Rand*, Photographer, USA  
*Julienne Lusenge*, Executive Director, Solidarité Féminine Pour  
la Paix et le Développement Intégral, Democratic Republic of Congo  
*Lesley Hoyles*, Events and Operations Coordinator,  
Nobel Women's Initiative  
*Liz Bernstein*, Executive Director, Nobel Women's Initiative  
*Lynne Twist*, President, Soul of Money Institute, USA  
*Nahid Gabralla*, SEEMA Centre, Sudan  
*Neema Namadamu*, World Pulse, Democratic Republic of Congo  
*Netty Musanhu*, JASS (Just Associates), Zimbabwe  
*Pauline Kamau*, Executive Director, Green Belt Movement, Kenya  
*Rachel Schmidt*, Videographer, Canada  
*Safaa Adam*, Community Development Association, Sudan  
*Sara Vetter*, Soul of Money Institute, USA  
*Solange Lwashiga Furaha*, Caucus des femmes congolaises  
du Sud-Kivu pour la paix, Democratic Republic of Congo  
*Susannah Sirkin*, Physicians for Human Rights, USA  
*Walaa Abdelrhman*, Strategic Initiative for Women  
in the Horn of Africa, Sudan  
*Zaynab El Sawi*, Coordinator, Sudanese Women Empowerment  
for Peace, Sudan  
*Zuzia Danielski*, Acting Coordinator, International Campaign  
to Stop Rape & Gender Violence in Conflict





*Advocating for peace, justice & equality*

