

BELFAST MAY 28-30 2013

MOVING BEYOND MILITARISM

WOMEN-DRIVEN SOLUTIONS FOR A NONVIOLENT WORLD



Advocating for peace, justice & equality



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A WORD FROM OUR LAUREATES

The signing of the Good Friday Agreement in Belfast on April 10, 1998, marked the culmination of more than two decades of struggle to bring peace to Northern Ireland. The end to armed conflict may never have been achieved without the emergence in 1976 of a mass movement for peace, led by the women of Northern Ireland who rallied under the banner of the Peace People. The Peace People organized massive demonstrations, inspired 100,000 people to sign a declaration calling for an end to the killing, and were instrumental in building support for the Good Friday Agreement.

Fifteen years later, peace activists gathered in Belfast to honour the work of the Peace People and participate in the conference “Moving Beyond Militarism & War: Women-driven Solutions for a Nonviolent World.” Organized by the Nobel

Women’s Initiative and hosted by Peace People co-founder Mairead Maguire, the conference drew more than 100 participants from more than 20 countries. From May 28 to 30, 2013, we heard the strategies of activists, academics, journalists and others who work everyday around the globe to end militarism and war.

The message we heard, over and over again, was that it is time that we take the alternatives to war seriously. We are tired of seeing precious resources funneled into militarism while children die of starvation and poverty. We are tired of seeing institutions designed to protect and promote human security functioning as part of a global war machine.

It does not have to be this way. Just as the Peace People of Northern Ireland demonstrated the power of collective nonviolent action in the 1970s, the women and men gathered in Belfast for our conference are working together around the world to bring about an end to armed conflicts and the culture of militarism.

It was an inspiring three days. We invite you to share in the conversations we had in Belfast and learn about some of the profound alternatives to militarism that are bringing new hope to women and communities worldwide.

Jody Williams

Leymah Gbowee

Mairead Maguire

Shirin Ebadi

Rigoberta Menchú Tum

Tawakkol Karman



Nobel laureates from L to R: Leymah Gbowee, Mairead Maguire, Shirin Ebadi, Jody Williams, Tawakkol Karman, and Rigoberta Menchú Tum

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE AND THE NOBEL WOMEN'S INITIATIVE

The conference “Moving Beyond Militarism & War: Women-driven Solutions for a Nonviolent world” was convened by the Nobel Women's Initiative from May 28 to 30, 2013. Hosted in Belfast by Nobel peace laureate Mairead Maguire, it brought together for the first time all six current Nobel peace laureates of the Nobel Women's Initiative. They were joined by more than 80 influential activists, academics and decision-makers from across the globe whose work focuses on ending militarism and war with nonviolent strategies for peace.

Through plenary speeches, panel presentations and thematic table discussions, conference participants explored the root causes and the effects of militarism and war, as well as the nonviolent strategies women are undertaking to bring about change. The focus was on sharing strategies that work, and exploring how these successful strategies can be effectively used elsewhere.

This was the fourth biennial conference of the Nobel Women's Initiative, an organization formed in 2006 by sister Nobel peace laureates Jody Williams, Shirin Ebadi, Wangari Maathai, Rigoberta Menchú Tum, Betty Williams and Mairead Maguire. These six women decided to bring together their extraordinary experiences in a united effort for peace with justice and equality. Nobel peace laureates Leymah Gbowee and Tawakkol Karman joined the organization in 2012.

The Nobel Women's Initiative uses the prestige of the Nobel Peace Prize and courageous women Peace Laureates to magnify the power and visibility of women working in countries around the world for peace, justice and equality.

We believe peace is much more than the absence of armed conflict. Peace is the commitment to equality and justice — to a democratic world free of physical, economic, cultural, political, religious, sexual and environmental violence.



THE FACTS ABOUT MILITARISM

What is Militarism?

Militarism is the military readiness of a state or society. It includes factors such as maintaining a standing army and actively developing advanced combat techniques and weaponry. Militarization occurs when state military and police forces are being actively developed and deployed to counter perceived threats to state security.

Militarization on the Rise

Conference participants expressed great concern about ever-expanding state military budgets. The last two decades have seen a significant rise in military spending worldwide, with steady increases every year between 1998 and 2011.¹

In addition to being among the top military spenders, the world’s wealthiest nations are some of the biggest arms exporters. More 75 percent of major arms traded globally are exported from G8 countries.²

Another deeply troubling trend is the race among nation states to develop and deploy remote-controlled armed drones, killer robots and other

new war technologies that pose unprecedented threats to human security.

The Costs of Militarism and War

The direct human costs of war are staggering:

- In 2012, armed battles killed an estimated 37,941 people worldwide — that’s more than four deaths every hour³
- More than 45 million people are living as refugees or internally displaced people, largely due to armed conflict⁴
- More than 1.5 billion people live in countries plagued by recurrent armed conflict or very high levels of criminal violence⁵

Conference participants also pointed to the indirect costs of militarization. When state budgets are largely tied up in military spending, governments neglect investments in health, education, social services, environmental protection and other priorities. This trend has become particularly marked in the austerity era of the past few years.

As Lena Ag of the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation pointed out, annual global military spending is 700 times greater than the UN’s regular budget.

1 Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), “SIPRI Yearbook 2012: 4. Military Expenditure,” <http://www.sipri.org/yearbook/2012/04>, June 4, 2012

2 SIPRI estimates that, between 2008 and 2012, 75 per cent of major arms traded internationally were exported from U.S.A, Russia, Germany, France, U.K. and Italy combined. The proportion exported from the two other G8 member countries (Canada and Japan), though not included in the SIPRI data chart, would bring the total to more than 75 per cent. See Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, “SIPRI Yearbook 2013: 5. International Arms Transfers,” <http://www.sipri.org/yearbook/2013/05>, June 3, 2013

3 Lotta Themnér and Peter Wallensteen, “Armed Conflicts, 1946–2012,” *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 50 no. 4, <http://jpr.sagepub.com/content/50/4/509.full>, July 2013

4 UN News Service, “UN spotlights plight of refugees as number of globally displaced hits 18-year high,” <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?www.iaea.org/html/www.sealtheddeal2009.org/petition/story.asp?NewsID=45225&Cr=refugee&Cr1=#.UregDfZOnD4>, June 20, 2013

5 World Bank, *World Development Report 2011: Overview*, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDRS/Resources/WDR2011_Overview.pdf, Washington, DC: 2011, p.2

“Any demilitarism plan for the planet must begin with the United States. As the number one military spender and arms exporter in the world, the United States keeps the military-industrial complex functioning worldwide. — Ann Wright, retired U.S. Army Colonel and activist

THE 10 LARGEST MILITARY SPENDERS, 2011 ⁶		WORLD NUCLEAR FORCES, 2012 ⁷			
COUNTRY	SPENDING (BILLIONS)	COUNTRY	DEPLOYED WARHEADS	OTHER WARHEADS	TOTAL INVENTORY
U.S.A.	\$711	U.S.A.	2 150	5 850	~8 000
China	\$143	Russia	1 800	8 200	10 000
Russia	\$71.9	U.K.	160	65	225
U.K.	\$62.7	France	290	10	~300
France	\$62.5	China	..	200	~240
Japan	\$59.3	India	..	80-100	80-100
India	\$48.9	Pakistan	..	90-100	90-100
Saudi Arabia	\$48.5	Israel	..	~80	~80
Germany	\$46.7	North Korea	?
Brazil	\$35.4	Total	~4 400	~14 600	~19 000
		Estimates are approximate, and are as of January 2012			

6 Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), “SIPRI Yearbook 2012: 4. Military Expenditure,” <http://www.sipri.org/yearbook/2012/04>, June 4, 2012

7 Ibid., “SIPRI Yearbook 2012: 7. World Nuclear Forces,” <http://www.sipri.org/yearbook/2012/07>, June 4, 2012

DOCUMENTING AND EXPOSING MILITARISM

For many women committed to moving the world beyond war, the first step is to document and expose the problem of increasing militarization. We heard from academics and activists whose work analyzing and documenting the many ways that militarism operates in our world has helped build a powerful body of evidence to support movements for demilitarization.

The Military-Masculinity Matrix

“Mustering troops is all about the mobilization of men into aggressive expressions of hypermasculinity,” said Amina Mama, a professor of women and gender studies at the University of California. “It is not that ‘masculinity’ generates war... but rather that the process of militarization both draws on and exaggerates the bipolarization of gender identities *in extremis*.”

Amina’s scholarly work illuminates the complex ways in which masculinity and militarism are linked — a phenomenon she calls the “military-masculinity matrix.” Her analysis exposes how

“ethno-nationalist and sexist identity politics” have shaped armed conflicts, particularly in the postcolonial states of Africa.

Amina argued that because militarism and gender identities are co-constructed, it is essential to challenge toxic masculinity as well as notions of femininity that serve militaristic agendas. The conceptualization of women as passive victims needing rescue, for instance, is problematic because “the ‘protection of women’ is too easily invoked in the service of imperialist national security agendas, and women will continue to pay the price.”

Unveiling the “War on Terror”

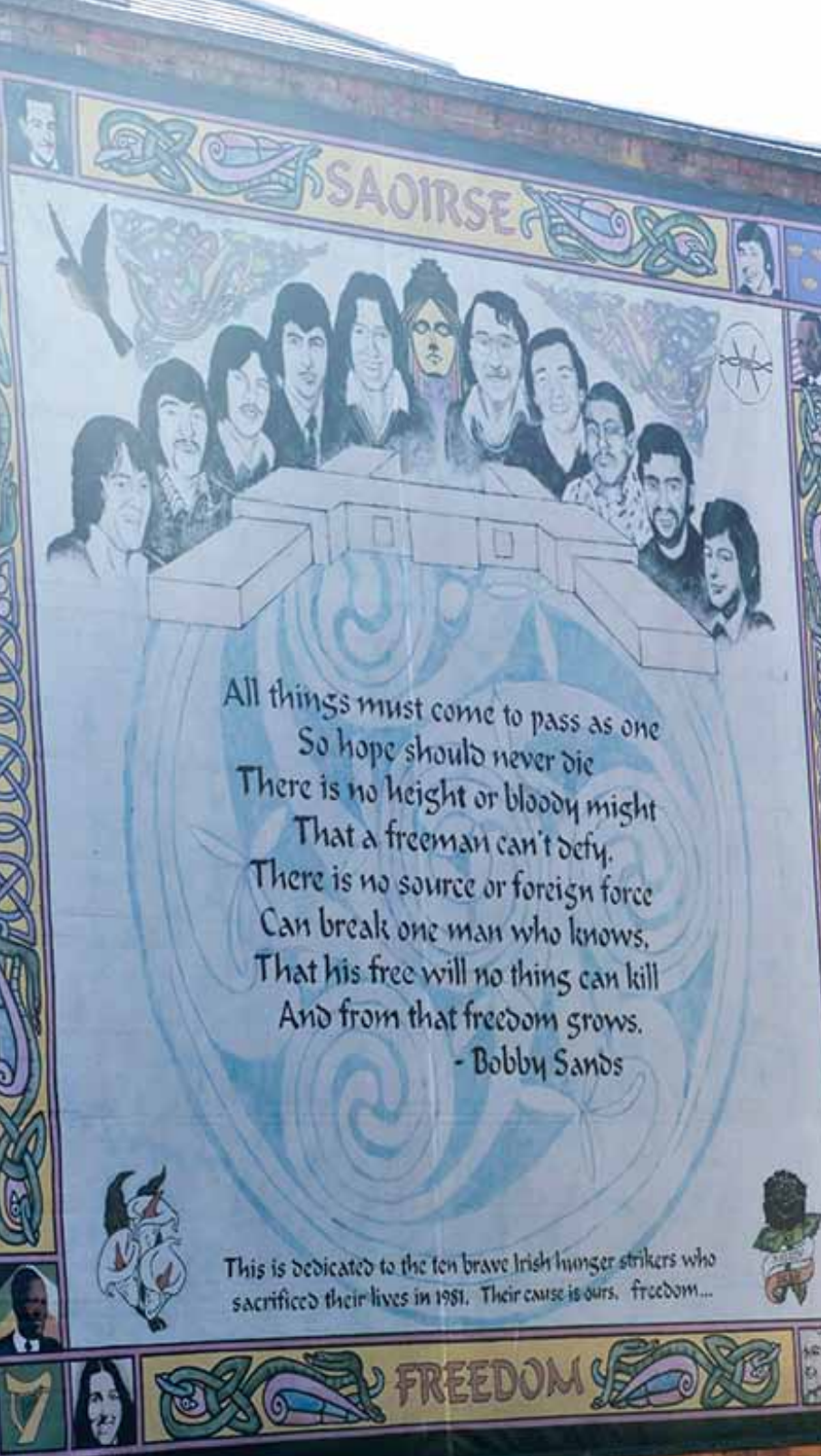
The U.S.-led “war on terror” which has dominated global security discussions for the last decade was a topic of great concern for many of our conference presenters. Critiquing and exposing how the “war on terror” has been used to justify violations of human rights and democratic rights, and how it has affected the lives of women globally, is an important component of their work.

“Our world has been ravaged by conflict, time and time again. And yet, instead of investing in our women, children and future generations, our states continue to spend more on our militaries — a solution that has failed to increase the human security of those at risk.

— Mairead Maguire, Nobel Peace Laureate

“The war on terror has been a setback for human security, conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

— Lena Ag, Secretary General,
Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation



Lena Ag, Secretary General of the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, spoke of the decade lost for human rights and women's security due to the "war on terror." Her organization has worked to raise awareness of how women in countries targeted for counter-terrorism measures have been harmed by outcomes such as tightened border controls and the stifling of civil society organizations.

Participants also decried how the war on terror has led to arbitrary detentions, drone strikes that kill civilians, suspension of civil liberties and other violations of fundamental rights. Invoking the ever-looming threat of terrorism has allowed the U.S. government and its allies to cloak their military programs in greater secrecy, sacrificing transparency and accountability.

Environmental lawyer Farhana Yamin noted that the surveillance systems developed over the past decade are also being used to repress activists working in opposition to the political agenda of governments. "Many of the people who are now listed and surveilled are environmental activists," said Farhana.

Naming Rape as a Weapon of War

Calling attention to the use of sexual violence in armed conflicts has been a major focus of human rights activists in recent years. Our conference included Julianne Lusenge of Female Solidarity for Integrated Peace and Development (SOFEPADI), Patricia Guerrero of the Displaced Women's League in Colombia and Esperance Kavira Furaha of eastern Congo. All three women are active members of the International Campaign to Stop Rape & Gender Violence in Conflict.

Thanks to the work of these and other activists worldwide, several international institutions have put the problem of war-related sexual violence on their agenda and are taking concrete steps to address it. The use of rape as a tool of war can now be prosecuted as a war crime under international law, and the UN Security Council has adopted several resolutions that address combating sexual violence in war. Most recently, the G8 foreign ministers adopted a landmark Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict and 144 UN member nations have pledged their support for a Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict.

G8 DECLARATION ON PREVENTING SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT

On April 11, 2013, the foreign ministers of the G8 countries endorsed a Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, affirming the responsibility that world leaders have to address this grave atrocity. The declaration includes six key components:

THE RECOGNITION that sexual violence in conflict is a war crime, and that states have the responsibility to search for, prosecute or hand over for trial anyone accused of such a crime

A VOW to never accept amnesty deals for perpetrators of sexual violence in future peace agreements negotiated by G8 nations

A COMMITMENT to improve the training of military, police and peacekeeping personnel trained by G8 nations, to ensure better responses to sexual violence

A DECLARATION of support for the deployment of international experts to develop the judicial, investigative and legal capacities of other countries

A CALL for increased funding for prevention and response efforts, with an immediate pledge of nearly \$36 million from G8 countries



Documenting Women's Security as a Means to State Security

Academics, policy makers and political leaders are starting to pay more attention to the link between women's security and state security thanks to the painstaking empirical research of Valerie Hudson, an expert on international security and foreign policy analysis at the The Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University.

With the WomanStats Project, Valerie and her colleagues have produced the largest compendium of information on the status of women in the world, and made it available for free at www.womanstats.org. The project brings together data on more than 300 variables connected to the status of women in 175 countries. She later co-authored a book, *Sex and World Peace*, summarizing their findings from this data.

Valerie's research shows that the best predictor of whether a nation will be involved in armed conflict, internally or externally, is the level of violence against women within the society — and not, as is often assumed, levels of democracy or wealth.

"We've used this research to develop and articulate what we call an R2PW [responsibility to protect women] framework," said Valerie. This framework rests on "the notion that the oppression and subjugation of women must be attended to by the international community as one of the deep roots of aggression and violence."

Valerie also spoke of the need to bridge the gap between academic research and the research needs of those working on the ground. She suggested that studies by scholars could be intentionally designed to support the frontline work of women human rights defenders.

"The Other Invasion:" Armed Transnational Corporations

Nation-states have long used military might to invade and extract resources from foreign lands. Increasingly, transnational corporations are playing a similar role, challenging the state's traditional monopoly on the use of force. Women working in communities affected by corporate plunder are ringing the alarm bell on this disturbing trend.

The major multinational oil corporations, for instance, "are larger than most countries. They have militaries and corporate police officers of their own," noted Farhana Yamin, a leading environmental lawyer and board member of Global Call for Climate Action.

Aura Lolita Chavez Ixcaquic, co-founder and coordinator of the K'iche' People's Council, is all too familiar with the phenomenon of militarized transnational corporations. Her organization challenges transnational corporations pursuing



destructive mining, hydroelectric and oil projects in Guatemala. Lolita told us that the K'iche' people, who survived the genocide and scorched earth tactics of a 36-year civil war, call this assault on their lands and communities by transnational corporations "*la otra invasión*" — the other invasion.

Lolita and her colleagues employ nonviolent tactics to challenge *la otra invasión*. She told us that soldiers have been deployed by transnational corporations and/or their government sponsors to disrupt community consultations on the effects of proposed mine projects. She and her colleagues managed to diffuse the tension by inviting the soldiers to share meals and conversations with them. It was not too long before the soldiers' formerly menacing faces were graced with smiles and laughter.

By sharing their stories of encounters with corporate security forces, Lolita and her colleagues are raising important questions about the role of non-state actors, such as private corporations, in fueling armed conflict.

CHALLENGING MILITARIZATION

Transforming our world from one of violence to one of nonviolence requires a strong will and the courage to speak out against all forms of militarism. We heard from dozens of women who are standing up to directly challenge militarism in its many facets, from particular acts of state aggression to the development of new classes of war weapons. These women are setting powerful legal and social precedents that undercut the dominant global march towards increased militarization.

Retired Army Colonel Ann Wright, for instance, took a very public stand against the United States' unwarranted invasion of Iraq when she resigned from the U.S. State Department's Foreign Service in 2003. Since her resignation, Ann has remained outspoken on a range of anti-war issues, including the implications of the United States' drone policies and their counter-productive impact on security.

“We have to get better at making power answer us.

— Amina Mama, Women and Gender Studies professor, University of California

SPEAKING OUT AGAINST A WAR OF AGGRESSION

“I believe the [U.S.] Administration's policies are making the world a more dangerous place, not a safer place. I feel obligated morally and professionally to set out my very deep and firm concerns on these policies and to resign from government service as I cannot defend or implement them.

— Ann Wright, former Army Colonel, in her letter of resignation from U.S. government service (March 19, 2003)

Reviving Article 26 of the UN Charter

Article 26 of the UN Charter was a recurring talking point at the conference. Nobel Peace Laureate Jody Williams argued that this neglected component of the charter, which directs the Security Council to develop a plan to regulate armaments with the goal of minimizing global military spending, could be used by activists as a point on which to challenge UN member states. She laid out a vision of civil society activists around the world developing a plan to fulfill Article 26 and presenting it to the Security Council.

Article 26 reads in its entirety:

In order to promote the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources, the Security Council shall be responsible for formulating, with the assistance of the Military Staff Committee referred to in Article 47, plans to be submitted to the Members of the United Nations for the establishment of a system for the regulation of armaments.

The Security Council has never met its obligations as laid out in Article 26.

Nobel Peace Laureate Shirin Ebadi suggested that a campaign around Article 26 could include the modest demand for a 10 per cent reduction in

“The UN Charter, Article 26, called for the Security Council to actually develop a plan to divert resources from war to meet the needs of people: from national security to human security. Of course they never did it.

— Jody Williams, Nobel Peace Laureate

military spending by member states. Redirecting just 10 per cent of their multibillion-dollar military budgets into education and social programs could have profound effects for society and the status of women.

Standing up to State Terror and Impunity

For the people of Guatemala, the struggle to bring military officials to justice for crimes committed during that country's 36-year civil war has dragged on nearly as long as the war itself. But the women who lost family members and experienced military atrocities persevere in their campaign against impunity.

As Nobel Peace Laureate Rigoberta Menchú Tum noted, women were the guardians of the most important evidence of genocidal attacks on indigenous Ixil Mayan communities in 1982 and 1983. In the spring of 2013, a number of courageous Ixil survivors testified in the trial of General José Efraín Ríos Montt, head of state during that period, and Mauricio Rodríguez Sánchez, former head of military intelligence. Ríos Montt was convicted of genocide and crimes against humanity on May 10, 2013, but Guatemala's Constitutional Court annulled the verdict later that month. The case may not be tried again until 2015, if ever.

We also heard from Helen Mack, Founder and President of the Myrna Mack Foundation. Helen launched the first judicial process against high-ranking military officials of the Guatemalan Army, charging three officers with organizing the 1990 assassination of her sister, Myrna, who had been targeted due to her work researching the

IXIL MAYAN GENOCIDE SURVIVORS TESTIFY

On April 3, 2013, in a demonstration of remarkable courage, ten veiled women took to the witness stand to testify. These survivors recounted their experiences of being sexually assaulted by soldiers during the Guatemalan Civil War. On May 10, a trial court convicted José Efraín Ríos, head of state from 1982 to 1983, of genocide and crimes against humanity for the assaults and the massacre of 1,771 Ixil Mayan people in the country's northwest highlands. The verdict was later annulled by the country's Constitutional Court. Despite this setback and the threats of violence they face for pursuing the case, the survivors are prepared to take to the stand again in a new proceeding.

Violence against women was part of a systematic attempt to exterminate the Ixil Mayan community. The attacks were sexualized expressions of violence and domination meant to destroy the women and their community. The Ixil women are holding their ground in the fight to end impunity for war crimes.

“Our struggles have not been easy. It is the cost of our convictions

— Rigoberta Menchú Tum, Nobel Peace Laureate

aftermath of genocide in Mayan communities. The principal perpetrator was eventually convicted, setting an important precedent for the prosecution of senior military officials in Guatemala.

From the other side of the world, Egyptian activist and journalist Hania Moheeb brought us the story of women standing up to condemn state complicity in a rash of sexual assaults that took place in Tahrir Square in 2013. By going public with her own story of assault, Hania challenged the culture of impunity that allows violence against women to persist. She also inspired other women in Egypt to come forward with evidence of what they suspect was a coordinated campaign of political intimidation through sexual violence.



STATE COMPLICITY: SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN TAHRIR SQUARE

On January 25, 2013, the second anniversary of Egypt's uprising, journalist Hania Moheeb and many fellow Egyptians gathered in Cairo's Tahrir Square in protest after dashed dreams of the revolution. While peacefully protesting, Hania was attacked and sexually assaulted by a gang of men.

Hania later learned that nineteen other women reported very similar assaults that took place that day. She has no doubt that these assaults were organized by the Egyptian police as part of a strategy to terrorize and silence women protesting in Tahrir Square. The message to women, she said, was: "You should stay at home, you should stop protesting, you should feel stigmatized."

Far from being silenced, Hania appeared on national television to talk about her assault, giving other women courage to speak out too. She and eight other women have since filed a lawsuit against the president of Egypt, asserting he was politically responsible for their assaults.

Campaign to Stop Killer Robots

With unmanned military aircraft already in use, the next step on the horizon of weapons development is fully autonomous robotic weapons. Whereas drone technology still requires human authorization to launch a strike, these killer robots rely on a pre-programmed system to select and strike targets. Decisions with life-or-death consequences will be delegated to artificial intelligence.

Nobel Laureate Jody Williams, who received the Peace Prize in 1997 for her work on the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, is spearheading the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots. It is an international coalition of non-governmental organizations working for a pre-emptive ban on fully autonomous lethal robots. With Israel already in possession of such weapons and the U.S. and U.K. actively developing their own, Jody warned, the time to act is now.

Her challenge to governments regarding lethal robotic weapons is based on multiple layers of ethical concern. Given the often blurred distinction between combatants and civilians, how will this technology distinguish between the two? To what extent can robots be programmed to comply with international humanitarian law? In cases of civilian deaths, who is held responsible? As of yet, no legal accountability mechanism exists for this technology.

The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots is calling on every state to place a moratorium on the testing or use of lethal autonomous robotics, as recommended in the April 2013 report of the UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions.

Using People Power to Defeat Nuclear Weapons

The decades-long struggle for nuclear disarmament continues, with women like Rebecca Johnson taking the lead. As Co-Chair of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons and Director of the Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy, she is pushing for nothing less than comprehensive global nuclear disarmament.

Rebecca spoke of the immense threat posed by the world's nuclear arsenal, currently held by nine countries, reminding us of both the staggering casualties and catastrophic climate effects that would result from even a small proportion of this arsenal being used.

"Here we are, on the point of getting governments together to negotiate a treaty and ban nuclear weapons," said Rebecca. "It can be done... people power works."

GREENHAM COMMON WOMEN'S PEACE CAMP

Rebecca Johnson has been active in the nuclear disarmament movement for several decades. As a feminist committed to nonviolent activism, she lived from 1982 to 1987 at the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp, a camp set up outside the Greenham Common Airbase in Berkshire, England, to protest the decision to locate 96 American nuclear cruise missiles there.

Women at the camp engaged in nonviolent direct action, disrupting military exercises and blockading nuclear convoys leaving the base. Many were arrested, women were evicted from the camp and it was re-formed several times over its 10 years of existence. The protest mounted by the Women's Peace Camp was instrumental in the decision to remove the nuclear missiles from Greenham Common Airbase in 1991.

Defending Japan's Peace Constitution

Following the end of World War II, Japan drafted a new constitution that symbolized its new commitment to peace in the world. Article 9 of the constitution renounces the state's right to wage war or maintain a standing military and other "war potentials."

According to Yoshioka Tatsuya, Co-founder and Director of the organization Peace Boat, this legal mechanism for diverting resources from militarization into sustainable development has served as a partial brake on arms proliferation in Japan and the entire Asia Pacific region.

But Article 9, Yoshioka warned, is under unprecedented threat. The new regime of Prime Minister Abe, under pressure from Japan's industries that stand to profit from arms exports, has its sights set on reforms that include the abolition of Article 9. Such a move, says Yoshioka, could inspire an arms race between China and Japan, which in turn could further provoke the militarism of North Korea.

Article 9's significance goes far beyond its role in Asia, said Yoshioka. As an example of a peace constitution, it is a global treasure. It could serve as a model for other states seeking to demilitarize. The more than 50 per cent of Japanese people who still support Article 9 need the world's help to preserve this important mechanism of peace.



FROM A CULTURE OF WAR TO A CULTURE OF PEACE AND NONVIOLENCE

We must not underestimate the enormity of the task at hand. Moving the world beyond militarism will require the mobilization of all of civil society. Women are in a unique position to guide this transition and are, in fact, already doing so.

Our conference brought together women and men who are at the forefront of movements to deconstruct the culture of war, teach methods of nonviolent conflict resolution, guide war-torn countries through peace negotiations and reconstruction, and build cultures of democracy and justice to ensure lasting peace.

“Peace isn’t easy. It’s a strategy. It’s a choice.”

— Kate Cumbo, Director of Programs, PeaceJam Foundation

Deconstructing War Culture, Teaching Peace Culture

Many conference participants expressed concern over the way war is glorified and normalized in our schools, political assemblies, mainstream media and other cultural institutions. Through panel presentations and table conversations, we discussed strategies for deconstructing militarized ways of thinking and instilling the values of nonviolence in public consciousness.

DEMILITARIZING EDUCATION

A recurring theme at the conference was the need to teach our children nonviolent ways, in order to counteract the values of militarism preached to them at school. Participants discussed how we could teach children to identify the patterns underlying conflict, for instance, rather than have them study war timelines. Instead of having them memorize facts about victorious battles by armies, we could teach them about the great nonviolent struggles of history.

“Peace is many things, from human security to equality, but at its heart lies a culture; a culture based on people, acceptance and dialogue.”

— Jennifer Allsopp, Commissioning Editor, openDemocracy 50.50.

Nobel Peace Laureates with volunteers
Belfast 2013



“There are countries that have more soldiers than teachers.

— Shirin Ebadi, Nobel Peace Laureate

Rawan Eghbariah, legal coordinator of the Israeli organization New Profile, spoke of how her group works to counteract the hyper-militarization of Israel's education system, which prepares children for their obligatory military service by segregating students along religious lines. New Profile teaches Israeli youth nonviolent conflict resolution methods and critical thinking skills to deconstruct the narrative of an Israeli soldiers' state.

“In my country, we teach war. History is the glorification of war.

— Jody Williams, Nobel Peace Laureate



NEW PROFILE TAKES ON CHALLENGE OF DEMILITARIZING ISRAELI YOUTH

Forced conscription is a reality for every Israeli citizen reaching the age of 18. For many Israeli youth, the idea of a world without armed conflict does not exist. Militarism is deeply entrenched, from the playgrounds speckled with toy canons and warplanes to the classroom lectures by military personnel.

New Profile, a group of Israeli women and men who advocate for demilitarization, works to shed light on the subtle encroachment of militarism into every sphere of Israeli life. It presents the alternative narrative that war is a choice, and teaches Israeli youth about nonviolent conflict resolution.

We heard from Rawan Eghbariah, who, as legal coordinator for New Profile, provides support and advice to Israeli youth who refuse military service. A trend of non-cooperation is developing among Israel's youth, she said, with roughly one quarter of graduating seniors objecting to their forced conscription.

“Every person is a potential soldier.

— Rawan Eghbariah, Legal Coordinator, New Profile

Teaching young people to critically analyze war culture and understand nonviolent alternatives is also a major focus of Peace Boat, a Japan-based international non-governmental organization promoting peace, human rights, sustainable development and respect for the environment.

We heard from Jasna Bastic, International Coordinator of Peace Education Programs aboard Peace Boat. Jasna designs and implements courses for university students and activists from conflict areas, teaching them about conflict analysis, nonviolent conflict resolution, institutions of international justice and the reconciliation process. Drawing on her experiences of the war in ex-Yugoslavia, Jasna shares her knowledge of the consequences of extreme nationalism and political manipulation through the media, as well as peacebuilding and democracy development.

ENGAGING RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

Several participants spoke about the role religious institutions could play in transforming societies' conversations on militarism and war. As Peace Laureates Mairead Maguire and Shirin Ebadi noted, compassion and respect for the sacredness of life lies at the heart of all the world's religions.

Leymah Gbowee, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her role in the Liberian women's movement to bring an end to the civil war, talked about the role churches could play in the campaign to end sexual violence. She recalled how, during the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, she rarely attended a church service in which Nelson Mandela's inspiring nonviolent revolution was not mentioned. She called on her fellow activists to open religious leaders' eyes to the scourge of sexual violence and other crises related to war, to help revive religious traditions of promoting peace and social justice.

“We cannot leave a single sister alone.

— Rigoberta Menchú Tum, Nobel Peace Laureate





“ There is solid evidence that peace processes are more sustainable if they are more inclusive — that is, if more stakeholders are involved than just the warring parties... There is evidence of this from the Mozambique Peace accords of the 1990s,... Liberia,... and of course the Good Friday agreement, with the women’s coalition at the table.

— Lena Ag, Secretary General, Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation

Women Building Peace: Liberia, Sudan and South Sudan

From Northern Ireland to Liberia, women have been a powerful force in building momentum for ceasefires and peace talks to end long, bloody wars. They have also asserted their right to participate in negotiations and reconstruction, working to improve the odds for a lasting peace.

LIBERIA’S WOMEN IN WHITE

The women of Liberia played a major role in bringing an end to the country’s fourteen-year civil war in 2003. Organized by Leymah Gbowee, the Liberian Mass Action for Peace movement united women across the Muslim-Christian religious divide. Armed with nothing more than their white t-shirts and their determination to bring about peace, these women built a movement that ultimately forced a commitment from President Charles Taylor to invest in peace talks.

Leymah, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011 for her work, told us that the women’s nonviolent campaign for peace was grounded in conscious respect for local traditions and leaders. They made careful assessments of different communities and worked within them to identify women willing

to join the movement, to deliver trauma-response services and to create safe spaces for survivors to tell their stories. From this network they developed a mobilization mechanism for mass action.

In the aftermath of the conflict, the women set up community policing and a series of Peace Huts in different communities. During the first post-war election, they walked from village to village, teaching people about election procedures and helping register voters. Liberia became the first African state to elect a woman, Ellen Sirleaf Johnson, as president.

FROM WAR TOWARDS RECONCILIATION IN SUDAN AND SOUTH SUDAN

Too often, women’s critical role in rebuilding and sustaining peace is ignored at the negotiating table and their voices are marginalized during the reconstruction processes. As a result, attention is paid almost exclusively to disarmament, demobilization and reorganization of the political-military structure, while issues like social services and healing for survivors are overlooked.

Samia Ahmed Babiker, a member of the Sudanese Women Coalition for Peace, told us that women



were continually excluded from referendum and negotiation processes that followed the end of the Sudanese Civil War. The women have asserted their right to participate in the post-referendum peace-building process. After the separation of South Sudan from Sudan in 2011, Samia and her colleagues met for 12 days to discuss the referendum and agreements being put forth. Officials began adopting the women's talking points into their formal language.

As Samia noted, separation of South Sudan was not the wish of everyone, and the mechanisms needed to support two viable states were not in place. Much work remains in the struggle to defuse armed conflict and build a sustainable peace, but Samia and her colleagues remain deeply committed to carrying out this work. {Editor's note: the conference took place before active conflict broke out again in South Sudan in the late fall, 2013.}

Network Building to Support and Protect Women in Conflict Zones

A recurring theme at the conference was the need for strong networks to support and protect women on the ground in regions torn by armed conflict. Activists from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burma, Haiti, Mexico and other countries spoke about their involvement in such networks.

In building networks, some women's grassroots organizations face challenges in the most basic areas, such as communication. Julienne Lusenge, of Female Solidarity for Integrated Peace and Development (SOFEPADI), explained that "there are offices which still have no computers today and many women can't even communicate on the phone... When you work in a climate of insecurity you don't know how to protect yourself, but when you have a phone you can call someone and that can help to protect you."

As President of SOFEPADI, Julienne manages a coalition of 40 women's organizations that defend and protect women's rights in the eastern provinces of the Democratic Republic of Congo and assist victims of sexual violence in seeking justice.

We heard from Esperance Kavira Furaha, a young woman who received medical, psychological and other support from the organization after being sexually assaulted by soldiers and losing contact

ARMED VIOLENCE IN THE DRC AND THE CELL PHONE INDUSTRY

Two women from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) spoke about the link between armed violence and the mining of minerals to supply the cell phone industry, Julienne Lusenge, President of Female Solidarity for Integrated Peace and Development (SOFEPADI), explained how Rwandan armed groups often enter the DRC to control mines and then benefit from the profits of trading valuable minerals used by cell phone manufacturers and extorting money from workers in the mines. These men often terrorize local populations and assault young women — women like Esperance Kavira Furaha, who was attacked while walking miles through the bush to get to school.

with her family. Esperance has since earned a diploma in community work and is active in the International Campaign to Stop Rape & Gender Violence in Conflict.

In Burma, the government's stranglehold over people's movements and communication is so tight that women's networks must operate in secrecy to provide the most basic support. Jessica Nhkum, from the Kachin Women's Association Thailand, supports women subjected to forced labor, rape, trafficking, torture, killing and other abuses by the Burmese government. The organization trains women on how to take photos, conduct interviews, make videos and upload the information onto the Internet. Collecting this evidence is essential in order to build awareness and generate global political pressure on the Burmese government to cease its human rights violations.

BLOWING THE WHISTLE ON RAPE IN HAITI

The 2010 Haitian earthquake generated a tent city phenomenon in the capital of Port-au-Prince that has long overstayed its welcome. These displacement camps have become breeding grounds for poverty, poor sanitation, desperation and a rape epidemic in which even UN security officers have been allegedly implicated.

Women living in a tent city in Port-au-Prince organized themselves into a grassroots network with the support of international women's organization MADRE. Yifat Susskind, Executive Director of MADRE, recounted how her group worked with the Haitian group Commission of Women Victims for Victims (KOFIVIV) to create a community-based counseling service for survivors and a special space for men to gather and grieve for their loved ones who had been raped.

KOFIVIV also distributed whistles to women in the tent city as part of their "blow the whistle on rape" campaign. One woman said that after receiving her whistle, she slept through the night for the first time since the earthquake. This sense of empowerment felt by women across the tent city encouraged them to claim their space in discussions critiquing the UN mission in Haiti, which they saw making decisions on their behalf without their consultation.

Cultivating Democracy and Justice for Lasting Peace

Lasting peace within and between nations will require societies to be grounded in a deep commitment to democracy, equality and justice. Many of the conference participants we heard from are helping build the foundation for a world beyond war by defending and promoting these values within their countries.





BUILDING DEMOCRATIC CULTURE IN IRAN

Toppling a dictator does not guarantee democracy: in Iran, the fall of one dictator paved the way for another one. As Nobel Peace Laureate and lawyer Shirin Ebadi explained, her country's Islamic Revolution replaced political dictators with religious dictators who derive the laws and their legitimacy from manipulated interpretations of Islam. This insulates them from dissent, since to challenge their power is seen as challenging Islam itself. Women suffer the most under this deeply undemocratic regime.

"It is in fact democratic people that make a society democratic," said Shirin. "The people must decide to practice democratic values and demand that their governments respect human rights and the rule of law."

Democracy is generally understood as the rule by the majority, demonstrated through free and fair elections. But given that dictators are sometimes elected by majority vote, said Shirin, our definition must be expanded so that democracy is understood as rule by the majority bound by respect for human rights. Democracy is weakened when a population is oppressed, like the women of Iran, when freedom of speech is suppressed, as is the case in Cuba and China, or when citizens' privacy rights are violated, as in the U.S. under post-9/11 surveillance programs.

Shirin has played a leadership role in the One Million Signatures Campaign, which aims to collect one million signatures from Iranians for a petition demanding an end to discrimination against women in Iranian laws. She also uses her experience as a lawyer and judge to promote human rights, and works as part of a network of attorneys defending political prisoners in Iran.

Another conference participant, Mahnaz Parakand, works within the same network of attorneys. She began her pursuit of a law degree one year before the Iranian revolution took place in 1979. After the revolution, Mahnaz was arrested and sentenced to execution for her student activism. Her sentence was later reduced to a life in prison, and five years after being jailed she was released. Working within a group of lawyers committed to justice, she has seen that it is through collective action that women have real power.

DEFENDING INDIGENOUS AND TREATY RIGHTS IN CANADA

Crystal Lameman is a mother and member of the Beaver Lake Cree Nation in Northern Alberta. She and her community are taking on the Canadian government and one of the world's largest industries in a fight to protect

their traditional hunting, trapping and fishing grounds. Citing alleged breach of treaty rights, this First Nation launched a lawsuit in 2008 against the provincial and Canadian governments, challenging the more than 17,000 permits issued for oil sands extraction projects within their traditional territory.

The extraction of bitumen from oil sands has devastating consequences for the land where the extraction occurs and also the lands surrounding the extraction sites. Highly polluted wastewater from the process is stored in open lakes or injected deep underground, putting the groundwater and nearby bodies of water at risk of contamination.

Crystal told us her community can no longer drink water from their lake. Their children have been airlifted for emergency care after drinking it. They regularly find fish with cancers hanging from their skin, and moose with puss bubbles under their skin.

Crystal's convictions rest in her responsibility as a mother. In her culture, women are the keepers of the water and it is her responsibility to protect her children's right to drink clean water. But this isn't just a First Nations issue, Crystal explained: "If you drink water, then this affects you. If you breathe air, then this affects you."

The oil industry has created a powerful sphere of influence over the Canadian government, which has fought at every turn to have the lawsuit dismissed. But Crystal and other community leaders are pressing forward with this historic case that raises fundamental questions about Aboriginal rights and the rule of law in Canada.

“Every major oil company in the world is in our traditional hunting territory illegally.

—Crystal Lameman,
Beaver Lake Cree Nation

COMMITTING TO MOVE THE WORLD BEYOND MILITARISM

As the conference drew to a close, we reflected on the challenge we face to move the world beyond militarism. Each participant considered what she personally could do to contribute to this process, then made a public commitment.

Here are just some of the commitments they made.

I commit to continue to press the U.S. Government to close Guantanamo, return prisoners and end assassin drones.

I commit to help the witness fund in Guatemala. I commit to you: if you have information that the media is not picking up, send it to me and I will immortalize it.

I commit to not giving up when my heart begs to, not shutting up when people want me to, not letting my heart turn to stone because of the things I have seen and known. I cannot give up because we will not fail.

I would like to take action regarding killing and violence against women in Palestine and raising awareness within Palestinian society.



I am with all women in the world. Let's say together: enough of oppression, enough of wars; end occupation. We are one voice in the world, the voice of women that we desperately need today.

I would like to pledge as an academic researcher, to find ways of making my research relevant and impactful to the society in which my family and I live; and as a translator/interpreter, to offer my time and expertise to valuable causes in general, and women in particular.

When I came here I was so depressed; I commit to myself that I will take care of me to continue serving women's rights.

I commit to work with faith-based organizations in Sri Lanka for sustainable peace.

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Conference Participants

- Amina Mama, Professor, University of California, U.S.A.
- Ann Patterson, Trustee, Peace People, Northern Ireland
- Ann Wright, Activist and Army Veteran, U.S.A.
- Anna Lo, MLA, Alliance Party, South Belfast Constituency, Northern Ireland
- Annie Nushann, Coordinator, Women in Peace Building Network, Liberia
- Apuk Mayen, Senior Diplomat, South Sudan
- Ashley Hunter, President, HM Risk Group, U.S.A.
- Asieh Amini, Journalist, Iran
- Aswan Shaher Saad Mohamed, Yemen
- Aury Leticia Cuxe Pirir, Assistant to Rigoberta Menchú Tum, Fundación Rigoberta Menchú Tum, Guatemala
- Aura Lolita Chávez Ixcaquic, Coordinator & Co-founder, K'iche' People's Council, Guatemala
- Bahia Amra, Assistant to Mustafa Barghouthi, Palestinian National Initiative, Palestine
- Barbara Ransby, Professor, University of Illinois, U.S.A.
- Bernice Freeman, Advocacy Program Officer, Women in Peace Building Network, Liberia
- Bronagh Hinds, Senior Associate, DemocraShe, Northern Ireland

Celia McKeon, Grants Officer, Peace and Ireland Programmes of the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, United Kingdom

- Christine Jones, Co-Chair, Canadian Peace Alliance, Canada
- Clare Grehan-Toland, Project Manager, Peace People, Northern Ireland
- Crystal Lameman, Alberta Climate and Energy Campaigner, Sierra Club Prairie Chapter, Canada

- Cynthia McKinney, Former Congresswoman, U.S.A.
- Dalia Abdelhameed Ali Ibraheem, Gender and Women's Rights Officer, Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, Egypt
- Ekaterina Zagladina, Advocate/President, Moscow Region Bar Association and Permanent Secretariat of the World Summits of Nobel Peace Laureates, Russia
- Esperance Kavira Furaha, Activist, Democratic Republic of Congo
- Farah Council, Program Manager, The Institute for Inclusive Security, U.S.A.
- Farhana Yamin, Board Member, Global Call for Climate Action, United Kingdom
- Flavia Tudoreanu, Assistant Coordinator, Scottish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, United Kingdom
- Francis Mulley, Executive Member, Peace People, Northern Ireland
- Gerry Grehan, Chair Person, Peace People, Northern Ireland

- Glenda Paige, Secretary, Center for Global Nonkilling, U.S.A.
- Gro Linstand, Executive Director, FOKUS, Norway
- Hania Moheeb, Journalist & Activist, Egypt
- Heather McRobie, Commissioning Editor, openDemocracy 50.50, United Kingdom
- Helen Mack, Founder & President, Myrna Mack Foundation, Guatemala
- Jane Gabriel, Founder & Editor, openDemocracy 50.50, United Kingdom
- Jasna Bastic, International Coordinator, Peace Boat (Japan), Switzerland
- Jennifer Allsopp, Commissioning Editor, openDemocracy 50.50, United Kingdom
- Jessica Nhkum, Joint General Secretary, Kachin Women's Association Thailand, Burma
- Jodie Evans, Co-founder & Co-director, CODEPINK, U.S.A.

- Jody Williams, Nobel Peace Laureate, Chair of the Nobel Women's Initiative, U.S.A.
- Judith Hand, Author, U.S.A.
- Julienne Lusenge, President, Solidarité féminine pour la paix et le développement integral, Democratic Republic of Congo
- Kate Cumbo, Director of Programs, PeaceJam Foundation, U.S.A.
- Khadijeh Hagidini Moghaddam, Board Member, Women's Society Against Environmental Pollution, Iran
- Kristine Ashe, Entrepreneur, U.S.A.

Leila Alikarami, PhD Candidate,
University of London, Iran

Lena Ag, Secretary General,
Kvinna till Kvinna, Sweden

Leymah Gbowee, Nobel Peace Laureate,
Nobel Women's Initiative, Liberia

Lina Teiby, Writer and Poet, Egypt

Lisa VeneKlasen, Co-founder & Director,
Just Associates (JASS), U.S.A.

Lynette Jackson, Associate Professor,
University of Illinois Chicago, U.S.A.

Lynne Twist,
President, Soul of Money Institute, U.S.A.

Madeleine Rees, Secretary General,
Women's International League for Peace
and Freedom, Switzerland

Mahnaz Parakand, Lawyer, Iran

Mairead Maguire, Nobel Peace Laureate,
Nobel Women's Initiative, Northern Ireland

Mansoureh Shojaee, Activist & Writer,
One Million Signatures Campaign, Iran

Marci Shimoff, Author, U.S.A.

Margaret Ward, Director, Women's Resource
and Development Agency, Northern Ireland

Mariem Omari, Deputy Director, Women
Living Under Muslim Laws, United Kingdom

Marusia López Cruz, Mesoamerica Regional
Coordinator, Just Associates (JASS), Mexico

May Su Su Swe, General Secretary,
Women's League of Burma, Burma

Mi Kun Chan Non, Vice Chairwoman,
Mon Women's Organization, Burma

Michelle Taheripour, Immigration Attorney, U.S.A.

Michelle Higelin, Deputy General Secretary,
World YWCA, Switzerland

Nancy Word, Co-Founder, Impact Austin, U.S.A.

Patrician McKeown, Regional Secretary,
UNISON, Northern Ireland

Patricia Guerrero, Founder & Legal Advisor,
Liga de Mujeres Desplazadas, Colombia

Pauline Murphy, Emeritus Professor, University
of Ulster, United Kingdom

Peter Emerson, Director, The de Borda Institute,
Northern Ireland

Rawan Eghbariah, Legal Coordinator,
New Profile, Israel

Rebecca Chiao, Co-founder & Director,
HarassMap, Egypt

Rebecca Johnson, Acronym Institute
for Disarmament Diplomacy, United Kingdom

Rébécca Guillaume, Co-founder,
WE ADVANCE, Haiti

Rigoberta Menchú Tum, Nobel Peace Laureate,
Nobel Women's Initiative, Guatemala

Rita Duffy, Artist, United Kingdom

Rosalina Tuyuc Velásquez, Co-founder
& Coordinator, National Council of Widows
of Guatemala, Guatemala

Rosy Cave, Director of Programmes,
Saferworld, United Kingdom

Safaa Elagib Adam Ayoub,
Secretary General/ Gender Advisor, Community
Development Association, Sudan

Samia Ahmed Babiker, Member, Sudanese
Women Coalition for Peace, Sudan

Sarah Tofte, Volunteer, International
Campaign to Stop Rape and Gender Violence
in Conflict, U.S.A.

Shirin Ebadi, Nobel Peace Laureate,
Nobel Women's Initiative, Iran

Sussan Tahmasebi, Co-founder, International
Civil Society Action Network, Iran

Tawakkol Karman, Nobel Peace Laureate,
Nobel Women's Initiative, Yemen

Trevor Ringland, Contributor, openDemocracy
50.50, United Kingdom

Vaiba Kebeh Flomo, Women & Youth Desk
Officer, Trauma Healing and Reconciliation
Program, Liberia

Valerie Hudson, George H.W. Bush Chair,
The Bush School of Government and Public
Service, U.S.A.

Visaka Dharmadasa, Chairperson,
Association of War Affected Women, Sri Lanka
Yifat Susskind, Executive Director, MADRE, U.S.A.

Yoshioka Tatsuya, Co-founder & Director,
Peace Boat, Japan

Zaynab El Sawi, Coordinator, Sudanese Women
Empowerment for Peace (SuWEP), Sudan



COMMUNICATION TEAM

Judy Rand, President, J.Rand Images, Inc., U.S.A.

Gary Kelly, Kelly PR

Terri Kelly, Kelly PR

INTERPRETERS

Ahmed Manjouneh

Fadhil Amin

Fariba Ershadi

Kay Stubbs

Ruth Warner

Shirin Ershadi

Stephanie Brown

Veronica Kelly

NOBEL WOMEN'S INITIATIVE STAFF AND INTERNS

Liz Bernstein, Executive Director

Rachel Vincent, Director, Media & Communications

Lesley Hoyles, Coordinator, Events & Logistics

Zuzia Danielski, Coordinator,
Online Media & Outreach

Kathryn Semogas, Coordinator, International
Campaign to Stop Rape & Gender Violence

Natalie Claireaux

Alexandra Charette

Ashley Armstrong

Bonnie Thornbury

Jordan Ring

Lisane Thirsk

Megan Daigle

RAPPORTEUR, LOGISTICS AND MEDIA VOLUNTEERS

Barbara Hart

Debbie Donnelly

Laura Cushley

Qi Zhong

Paula McMenamin

Melissa Magee

MK Orsulak

Isidora Ovalle

Ellen Anderson

Claire Pierson

Keely Mason

Chloe Hassard

Chloe McAteer

Shona McComb

Hannah Gardiner

Kerry Keating

Tara Thommpson

Georgia Collins

Jenny Gillis



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2014



Advocating for peace, justice & equality

430-1 Nicholas Street, Ottawa, ON K1N 7B7 Canada

Tel: +1 613 569 8400 Fax: +1 613 691 1419

info@nobelwomensinitiative.org

nobelwomensinitiative.org

 NobelWomen

 NobelWomen



Advocating for peace, justice & equality