

**Laureates:**

Mairead Maguire, Ireland (1976)  
Rigoberta Menchu Tum, Guatemala (1992)  
Jody Williams, USA (1997)  
Shirin Ebadi, Iran (2003)  
Leymah Gbowee, Liberia (2011)  
Tawakkol Karman, Yemen (2011)

**Nobel Laureates call for case against Rios Montt to proceed in Guatemala**

(Ottawa, April 24, 2013)—Nobel Peace laureates—including Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Jose Ramos Horta, Jody Williams and Rigoberta Menchú Tum—are calling on past and present Guatemalan authorities to “respect a legitimate, independent and transparent judicial process” in the trial of former president General Efraín Ríos Montt.

José Efraín Ríos Montt, and retired General José Mauricio Rodríguez Sánchez are standing trial for genocide and crimes against humanity stemming from Ríos Montt’s rule from 1982-1983. The trial has been temporarily suspended awaiting one or more rulings from Guatemala’s Constitutional Court. The Ríos Montt trial is historic in that it is the first prosecution of a former head of state at the national level for genocide.

“If this case does not move forward, survivors of Guatemala’s genocide are being victimized all over again,” says Nobel Peace laureate Jody Williams, co-founder of the Nobel Women’s Initiative. “They have taken a huge risk in testifying, and many have been harassed, intimidated and threatened. To annul the case would turn the clock back on justice—and would be a victory for impunity.”

The Nobel Peace laureates say the “world is watching” what happens in Guatemala. Rios Montt has been accused of presiding over the killing of 1,771 indigenous Ixils in a “scorched earth” campaign aimed at wiping out support for leftist guerrillas during Guatemala’s civil war. During the trial, many Ixil women have testified to brutal sexual violence committed against them by the Guatemalan military.

The global human rights community is deeply concerned about the potential reset of the trial and President Otto Perez Molina's endorsement of a statement asserting that a finding of genocide in this trial would endanger Guatemala's peace process.

Guatemalan Nobel Peace laureate Dr. Rigoberta Menchu Tum, who has been in the courtroom along with fellow indigenous survivors of Guatemala’s genocide, affirms the value of the Rios Montt trial: “Revealing the truth and efforts towards justice both contribute to addressing the pain felt by survivors—they do not threaten peace.”

The Nobel Peace laureates say the trial plays a critical role in national reconciliation and strengthening the justice system for the benefit of all Guatemalans. They are calling on the government of Guatemala to act swiftly to guarantee the protection

*Advocating for peace, justice and equality*

and safety of survivors and those involved in the trial—including the judges and lawyers for the prosecution, members of civil society organizations and members of indigenous communities.

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Read the full text of the statement below.

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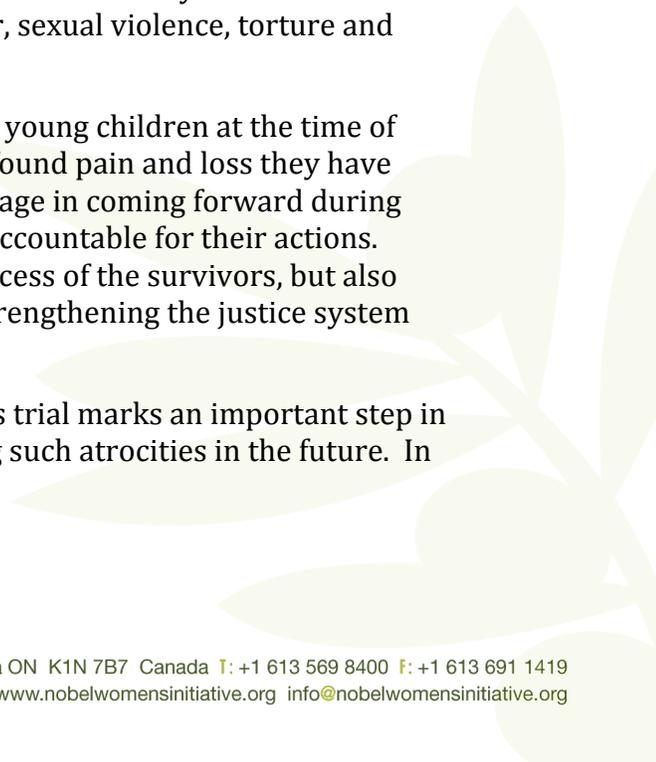
### **Justice for Survivors in Guatemala**

The trial of former dictator Efraín Ríos Montt and his former intelligence chief José Mauricio Rodríguez Sánchez in domestic courts is a critical test of Guatemala's commitment to lasting peace—and represents a historic milestone in the indigenous struggle to achieve justice in Guatemala.

As Nobel Peace laureates, we stand in solidarity with the survivors of the acts of genocide committed against the Mayan people of Guatemala. We honor their courage and conviction in testifying about the horrific crimes they endured at the hands of the Guatemalan military, including murder, sexual violence, torture and forced displacement.

We know that many of those people testifying were young children at the time of these mass atrocities, and we acknowledge the profound pain and loss they have endured for decades. We stand in awe of their courage in coming forward during the trial to make those who committed the crimes accountable for their actions. Such testimony will not only help in the healing process of the survivors, but also plays a critical role in national reconciliation and strengthening the justice system for the benefit of all Guatemalans.

True peace requires the presence of justice, and this trial marks an important step in accountability for crimes of the past and preventing such atrocities in the future. In



the words of fellow peace laureate Dr. Rigoberta Menchú Tum, “heroism is about standing firm and speaking out to demand justice—and not seeking vengeance”.

We call on all Guatemalans to respect a legitimate, independent and transparent judicial process. Any possibility of corruption in this trial must be investigated, and authorities must act to ensure that the highest standards of integrity are respected. Acting swiftly to guarantee the protection and safety of survivors and those involved in the trial—including the judges and lawyers for the prosecution, members of civil society organizations and members of indigenous communities—is also critically important.

The world is watching as Guatemala takes the bold and necessary step of putting a former head of state on trial. As friends of peace, and allies of justice, this is our opportunity as an international community to take responsibility for our own part in Guatemala’s tragic past and right the wrongs for the benefit of future generations of Guatemalans. This can only be achieved if we fully support the Guatemalan people’s right to have a fair and complete trial.

**Mairead Maguire, Nobel Peace Laureate 1977**

**Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Nobel Peace Laureate, 1984**

**Rigoberta Menchú Tum, Nobel Peace Laureate, 1992**

**President José Ramos-Horta, Nobel Peace Laureate, 1996**

**Jody Williams, Nobel Peace Laureate, 1997**

**Shirin Ebadi, Nobel Peace Laureate, 2003**

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