



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)

STATEMENT

Myanmar's Proposed Inter-Faith Marriage Law Violates Rights of Women

We, six women Nobel Peace Laureates, join women's organizations in Myanmar and other civil society organizations around the world to express our grave concern regarding the draft "Inter-Faith Marriage Law." The proposed law, which would essentially prohibit Buddhist women from marrying outside their faith, violates women's rights and international law. We call upon Myanmar's President Thein Sein and the parliament to reject the proposed inter-faith marriage law.

The law's assumption that women do not have decision-making capacity and require state intervention when it comes to marriage is in direct contradiction of international norms regarding women's rights. This assumption negates the principle of equality enshrined in international law—including the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)—ratified by the government of Myanmar in 1997.

We are further deeply concerned that several of the women leaders who signed the joint statement against the legislative proposal have received death threats and sexual assaults as a result of their actions. All too often woman speaking out for peace pay a high price for their service to society. We call upon the government of Myanmar to assure the physical safety and the right to freedom of expression of all women activists working for peace with justice and equality.

As women peacebuilders, we encourage the government of Myanmar to cease efforts to restrict women's rights. Such efforts sow conflict within the country and will draw harsh international censure. At this key moment in Myanmar's history, we support all efforts to move toward genuine democracy and Constitutional reforms, with full respect for the rights of women and racial and religious minorities.

Advocating for peace, justice and equality