



Laureates:

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

Nobel peace laureates call for end to “Dirty War” in Mexico & Central America

(Ottawa)—September 28, 2014. The six Laureates of the Nobel Women’s Initiative—Jody Williams, Rigoberta Menchú Tum, Shirin Ebadi, Mairead Maguire, Leymah Gbowee and Tawakkol Karman—are calling on the governments of Mexico and Central America and the international community to bring to an end the so-called “war against drugs” that has resulted in large-scale human suffering.

The Laureates’ call follows the conclusion of the Permanent Peoples’ Tribunal, held September 25 – 27, 2014 in Santa Fe Laguna, Michoacan, Mexico. The Tribunal was conducted in an area of largely indigenous population to draw attention to the high levels of impunity for crimes committed against indigenous peoples.

Many of the cases presented during the Tribunal clearly confirmed the way in which violence against women—including sexual torture—is systematically used as a tool of repression that in turn creates a climate of fear and deeply damages the social fabric of communities. The growing attacks against human rights defenders in the country, particularly in indigenous territories and in the presence of members of the military, were also made clear.

"The militarization of the region has worsened the most basic security for those who are most vulnerable, including women and indigenous communities," says Jody Williams, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize who has lived and worked in Mexico, El Salvador and Nicaragua in the 1970s and 80s. "Instead of controlling the wave of drugs, current policies have led to increased corruption by state authorities and a culture of impunity for crimes such as forced disappearances."

The Merida Initiative, implemented in Mexico in 2008, was modeled along the lines of Plan Colombia—another anti-drug initiative with strong American financing. The Nobel laureates echo the demands of local activists calling for divestment from military expenditures and an increase in investments in health, education, access to justice and improved accountability for abuses and violations of human rights.

In 2012 the Nobel Women’s Initiative led a delegation of Nobel laureates, journalists and human rights experts to Mexico, Honduras and Guatemala to investigate crimes against women, including forced disappearances and sexual violence. The delegation heard testimony from more than 250 women in the three countries, and also met with senior officials of the respective governments and the UN.

Advocating for peace, justice and equality