



Milestones

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Nobel Committee Recognizes Three Women

The Norwegian Nobel Committee has decided to award the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize jointly to three women—Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Leymah Gbowee and Tawakkul Karman—for their extraordinary contribution to the non violent struggle for the safety of women and for women's rights to full participation in peace-building work.

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf is Africa's first democratically elected female president. Since she came to power in 2006, she has consistently contributed to securing peace in Liberia, to promoting economic and social development, and to strengthening the position of women. Leymah Gbowee, 39 year-old, also from Liberia, mobilized and organized women across ethnic and religious dividing lines to bring an end to the long war and to ensure women's participation in elections in her country. She has since worked to enhance the influence of women in west Africa during and after the war. Tawakkul Karman has played a leading role both in the struggle for

women's rights as well as in the pro-democracy and peace movements in Yemen. Karman is the chair of the network 'Women Journalists Without Chains', and the first Arab woman to be awarded the Nobel peace prize.

Through this year's award, the Nobel Committee has tried to send out the message that democracy and lasting peace cannot be gained in the world unless women obtain the same opportunities as men to influence developments at all levels of society. In October 2000, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1325, which, for the first time, made violence against women in armed conflict an international security issue. It underlined the need for women to become participants on an equal footing with men in peace work. The Committee hopes that the prize would "help to bring an end to the suppression of women that still occurs in many countries, and to realize the great potential for democracy and peace that women can represent".