



Betty Williams, Ireland - 1976
Máiread Corrigan Maguire, Ireland - 1976
Rigoberta Menchú Tum, Guatemala - 1992
Prof. Jody Williams, USA - 1997
Dr. Shirin Ebadi, Iran - 2003
Prof. Wangari Maathai, Kenya - 2004

united for peace with justice and equality

Declaration in Support of Guatemalan Women

The Nobel Women's Initiative has been privileged to bring together 120 women from all over the world in Antigua, Guatemala, May 10, 11 and 12. Together we analyzed, reflected on and formulated strategies to respond to the challenges that come with building pluralist, inclusive, participatory democracies that benefit all people. Our purpose was to give voice and visibility to the immense contributions that women's struggles have made to these processes nationally and internationally. Our discussions underscored that democracy and peace are interconnected and that neither can be achieved without the full participation of women.

We stand with all the women, men and institutions everywhere committed to human rights in our desire that the Guatemalan government take every measure to create a democracy that brings equality to all women and protects and ensures the full exercise of their rights.

We have witnessed the strength, courage and resistance of Guatemalan women as they work to advance their rights and those of the whole of society, amidst enormous challenges and threats to their wellbeing and that of their families and communities.

Guatemalan women struggle in a context of insecurity and violence that they have faced throughout history and continue to face today. We will not forget all of the women, the majority of them indigenous women, who were victims of sexual and other forms of violence during the internal armed conflict of past decades. But we are alarmed by the murder of more than 1,500 women between 2001 and the present, of which only 14 cases have been tried and the perpetrators brought to justice. The growing re-militarization and proliferation of weapons throughout the country only reinforce the wall of impunity that encircles Guatemalan society and affects women in particular because they face multiple forms of violence. This context has produced a constant war against women that is characterized by gender-based violence on the streets, at home and in the workplace. Women human rights defenders also confront harassment and violence in their struggle for justice. In the face of growing danger to themselves, they lack a minimal level of safety, which is the government's responsibility to provide, so that they may be able to

carry out their important work for democracy, justice and peace for all.

We believe that Guatemalan women embody a mosaic of diversity and multiculturalism that is a rich resource for Guatemala and for the world. In this diversity, they fight for the end of impunity and for a meaningful democracy in which everyone can live with respect. They strive for a society in which different voices can come together and women and men can live with dignity and in harmony with the rest of the planet.

We salute all of the women of Guatemala. We accompany them in their struggles for justice and peace, and we assure them that they are not alone. We call upon society to offer the same support and recognition for women and their struggles. We urge the Guatemalan government to uphold its commitment to ending impunity and addressing violence against women in Guatemala.

Mairead Maguire Rigoberta Menchu Tum

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