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Amnesty International: Nobel Peace Prize important recognition of struggle for women's rights

The decision by the Nobel Peace Prize committee to recognize the work of activists to defend the rights of women around the world was commended by Amnesty International today.

“This Nobel Peace Prize recognizes what human rights activists have known for decades: that the promotion of equality is essential to building just and peaceful societies worldwide,” said Salil Shetty, Secretary General of Amnesty International.

“The tireless work of these and countless other activists brings us closer to a world where women will see their rights protected and enjoy growing influence at all levels of government.”

“Today it is not just these three leading women who are being celebrated, but everyone who has fought for human rights and equality in their societies.”

“The Nobel Committee’s choice this year will encourage women everywhere to continue fighting for their rights.”

The Nobel Committee divided the 2011 award in three parts between Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Liberian activist Leymah Gbowee and Yemeni activist Tawakkul Karman.

Johnson Sirleaf is the first woman to be democratically elected as President of an African country. Amnesty International in the past considered her to be a prisoner of conscience, jailed for her opposition to the ruling government in 1985.

Gbowee mobilized women across ethnic and religious lines to help end war in Liberia and ensure women’s participation in elections there.

Karman is a Yemeni human rights activist who has been a leading figure in mass protests against the government in 2011.

The Nobel Peace Prize will be awarded at a ceremony in Oslo on 10 December.

Notes to editors:

Marianne Møllmann, Senior Policy Adviser at Amnesty International and gender expert is available for interviews in English, Spanish and Danish. Marianne recently joined Amnesty International as a senior policy adviser. She comes to Amnesty International from eight years at Human Rights Watch, where she was advocacy director and, earlier, researcher on Latin America and the Caribbean for the Women's Rights Division.

For more information and to request an interview please contact the Amnesty International Press Office on +44 20 7413 5566.