

LEYMAH GBOWEE, Nobel Peace Prize Winner Congratulated

Media Release by the Women Peace and Security Network-Africa (WIPSEN-Africa)

The Women Peace and Security Network-Africa (WIPSEN-Africa) is today delighted to congratulate its Executive Director, Ms Leymah Gbowee (a warrior who fights with no weapon), for winning the 2011 Nobel Prize for Peace along with Liberia's President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and Yemen's Tawakul Karman.

Leymah Gbowee mobilized and organized a group of Christian and Muslim women across Liberia that pressured warring factions in Liberia to end the civil war that ravaged the country for over a decade. She fearlessly led women from across the country to defy war-lords and push men to sign the Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2003. The group is most remembered for its long peace protests on a football field and government buildings in Monrovia. Dressed in their white- T-shirts they would pray and sing songs of hope in the hot sun and the heavy rain. Armed with nothing but their sisterhood these women pressured the then President, Charles Taylor to agree to hold peace talks with other warring factions to the Liberian conflict.

After the war, Ms Gbowee organised women across religious and ethnic divide to help Ellen President Johnson-Sirleaf's successful campaign for the presidency in 2005. Leymah Gbowee continues to play instrumental role in advancing women's right in Africa, particularly in war affected West African countries through WIPSEN-Africa, which she co-founded in 2006.

The award is a testament to the bravery and determination of women in Africa to bring peace and democracy on the continent. Until now, only 12 out of 97 Laureates have been women.

WIPSEN-Africa would like to thank the Norwegian Nobel Committee for recognizing women's role in promoting peace and security in Africa and around the world.

The staff of WIPSEN-Africa and its Board is proud to be associated with one of Africa's women's rights icon. To the Laureate, we say "Leymah, today, your determination and persistence to end conflict in Liberia has been recognized by the international community. We congratulate you on winning one of the most prestigious awards. You have done African women proud again!"

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