AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

Statement Congratulating the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize Recipients

October 7, 2011

On behalf of the American people, I congratulate the recipients of this year's Nobel Peace Prize: Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Leymah Gbowee of Liberia, and Tawakkul Karman of Yemen. Today's award honors three extraordinary individuals and sends a powerful message that the struggle for universal rights and human dignity can only be fulfilled with the full participation of women around the globe.

President Sirleaf has inspired the world through her journey from a prisoner to the first female President of her country. She has helped Liberia emerge from years of civil war and make great strides toward reconstruction and a democracy that values the contributions of all Liberians, including its women. As a warrior for peace, Leymah Gbowee led her fellow Liberian women as they bravely stood their ground against a brutal dictator in a nonviolent struggle to bring peace to their country and realize a full voice for Liberian women. In Yemen, Tawakkul Karman and her fellow women activists were among the first to take to the streets this year to demand their universal rights, and despite the threats and violence waged against peaceful protestors, she has remained a powerful voice for nonviolence in a country where guns outnumber people.

Each of this year's Nobel recipients have their own story, but their lives reveal a fundamental truth. Nations are ultimately more successful when all of their citizens can reach their full potential, including women. When women and girls have access to proper health care, families are healthier and communities are less subject to the ravages of disease and hunger. When women and girls have the opportunity to pursue their education and careers of their own choosing, economies are more likely to prosper. And when women assume their rightful place as equals—in the halls of government, at the negotiating table, and across civil society—governments are more effective, peaceful resolution of disputes are more lasting, and societies are more likely to meet the aspirations of all their citizens.

I commend President Sirleaf, Leymah Gbowee, and Tawakkul Karman for showing the world that the rights and voices of half of humanity cannot and will not be denied. And I reaffirm the commitment of the United States to advance the rights and role of women everywhere, in our own country and around the world.

NOTE: The statement referred to former President Charles Taylor of Liberia.

Categories: Statements by the President : Nobel Peace Prize, congratulating 2011 recipients.

Names: Gbowee, Leymah; Johnson Sirleaf, Ellen; Karman, Tawakkul; Taylor, Charles.

Subjects: Civil rights : Women's rights and gender equality; Decorations, medals, and awards : Nobel Peace Prize; Foreign policy, U.S. : Civil and human rights, promotion efforts; Liberia : Democracy efforts; Liberia : President; Yemen : Democracy efforts.

DCPD Number: DCPD201100734.