

NOBEL PEACE PRIZE LAUREATES AND REPRESENTATIVES OF NOBEL PEACE PRIZE LAUREATE ORGANIZATIONS

We the undersigned Nobel Peace Prize Laureates and representatives of Nobel Peace Prize Laureate organizations urge the creation of a representative and effective UN Human Rights Council.

In virtually every armed conflict since the formation of the United Nations, gross human rights violations have preceded armed conflict. The stripping of rights and recognition of a people sets the stage for genocide and ethnic cleansing. In all continents, human rights violations have provided powerful fuel for the escalation of violence.

The body entrusted with setting and maintaining the international standards for human rights among the UN Member States is the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. While the Commission has a proud history, beginning with the issuance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, today it has become ineffective. In some instances, it has been led and influenced by gross human rights violators themselves, resulting in the decline in credibility of one of the pillars of the United Nations.

We support the bold remedy and new Human Rights Council proposed by Secretary General Kofi Annan last year, and endorsed by world leaders at the September 2005 World Summit.

The new Council as described in the recent text submitted by the President of the General Assembly will be more responsive to human rights violations and fairer in its review of human rights practices. It will also preserve and build on the strengths of the existing Commission on Human Rights.

We are approaching a critical point in history where we can reinvigorate the UN's role in the promotion and protection of fundamental human rights. Please join us in our support for this important initiative.

Sincerely,

Minister José Ramos-Horta, Timor Leste, 1996 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

President Jimmy Carter, United States of America, 2002 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, South Africa, 1984 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

President Oscar Arias Sánchez, Costa Rica, 1987 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

Bishop Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo, Timor Leste, 1996 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

Dr. Norman E. Borlaug, United States of America, 1970 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

President Kim Dae-jung, Republic of Korea, 2000 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

Mr. Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, Argentina, 1980 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

MP John Hume, United Kingdom, 1998 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

Mrs. Mairead Maguire, United Kingdom, 1976 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

MP David Trimble, United Kingdom, 1998 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

Ms. Jody Williams, United States of America, 1997 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate