

THE BARCELONA DECLARATION:

REFUGEES: MEETING THE CHALLENGE TO OUR HUMANITY

STATEMENT OF THE XV WORLD SUMMIT OF NOBEL PEACE LAUREATES, BARCELONA



BARCELONA 2015

We, the Nobel Peace Laureates and Peace Organisations, in the presence of youth from all over the world, gathered together in Barcelona from 12 - 15 November 2015, have considered issues affecting world peace - with special emphasis on the current refugee and migration crisis.

We are profoundly shocked and outraged by the barbaric killing of more than 150 innocent people in Paris on the evening of 13 November. We express our deepest sympathy and solidarity with the families of the victims and with the people of France.

This outrageous attack stresses the urgent need to address the root causes of the current refugee crisis and insecurity in the world. This situation should not be abused to demonise refugees and the Muslim community.

As Nobel Peace Laureates and Laureate organisations we join with millions of individuals, organisations, communities and cities who every day make a difference by working for a better and more peaceful world.

We collectively raise our voices in compassion for the millions of refugees who have been forced to leave their homes. We affirm that the manner in which we honour and protect their inherent dignity and human rights is a measure of our own humanity.

We are particularly concerned about the plight of women and children whose lives have been devastated by conflict, repression and deprivation. We must and can eliminate the conditions that compel people to leave from their homes.

The refugee and migration crisis does not exist in isolation. It is a symptom of the broader problems that confront humanity that include

- continuing conflict in many countries;
- the consequences of militarism, extreme nationalism and the use of force and proxy wars by global powers in pursuit of strategic, financial and ideological interests;
- distorted religious beliefs that lead to horrific acts of violence;
- the failure of governance characterised by rampant corruption, persecution and the absence of democracy, basic human rights and the rule of law;
- the gross inequalities in opportunities and in economic and social wellbeing between and within the so-called developed and developing countries;
- the failure to accommodate, tolerate and appreciate the value of religious, cultural and ethnic diversity;
- the growing impact of climate change that will increasingly threaten food security and disrupt the lives of hundreds of millions of people in the most vulnerable societies; and
- the criminal exploitation of refugees by human smugglers.

We believe that many of these problems can be solved if the international community fulfils its commitment to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals that nations have already adopted as the framework for a comprehensive, practical and achievable path to a secure and peaceful future.

We also call on the international community to

- address the root causes of the refugee and migration crisis while assuring access to asylum;

- redouble efforts to bring peace to Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, Ukraine, Palestine/Israel, Somalia, South Sudan, the Central African Republic and other societies in conflict in a process that includes the peoples involved - especially women - and concerned nations;
- denounce and reject the use of distorted religious doctrines and ideologies to justify violence by placing perverted beliefs above compassion and other universal values;
- ensure that refugee children have adequate access to education and health care;
- promote good governance based on respect for fundamental human rights and the rule of law;
- prevent ethnic conflict and repression by recognising the value of diversity and by protecting the rights of minorities;
- achieve and implement international agreements to combat climate change that bind all elements of society including government, business, finance and the military - with special focus on the forthcoming conference in Paris;
- identify and prosecute those responsible for human smuggling; and
- provide much greater support to countries bordering conflict areas which are hosting refugees - and underfunded humanitarian organisations aiding refugees.

True security will never be achieved by military force or by the possession and threat of nuclear weapons. It requires adherence to international humanitarian law and global cooperation in meeting the authentic needs of humanity. We call on the nations of the world to

- redirect each year at least 10% of annual military expenditure of over 1.8 trillion dollars to implement the programs required for the 17 Sustainable Development Goals;
- implement fully the Arms Trade Treaty and end illicit arms trading;
- put an immediate end to any new arms race - especially the modernisation of nuclear arsenals and the pursuit of fully autonomous weapons systems; and
- fulfil the legal obligation to commence negotiations now to eliminate nuclear weapons.

True personal, national and global security is found in the practical application of compassion.

The Summit was attended by nine Nobel Peace laureates:

1. President Dr. Oscar Arias Sanchez
2. President Frederik Willem De Klerk
3. Dr. Shirin Ebadi
4. Mrs. Tawakkol Karman
5. Mrs. Mairead Corrigan Maguire
6. Lord David Trimble
7. President Lech Walesa
8. Mrs. Betty Williams
9. Prof. Jody Williams

and ten Nobel Peace Laureate organisations:

1. The American Friends Service Committee
2. European Commission
3. International Campaign to Ban Landmines
4. International Labour Organization
5. the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
6. International Peace Bureau
7. International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War
8. Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs
9. United Nations
10. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

However, they do not all necessarily support all aspects of the general consensus that emerged from the Summit's deliberations.