



The International Gender Justice Dialogue

APRIL 20 - 21, 2010 • Puerto Vallarta Mexico

Díálogo
Internacional
sobre Justicia
para las Mujeres

International
Gender Justice
Dialogue

Dialogue
International
Justice pour
les Femmes

Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice


**NOBEL
WOMEN'S
INITIATIVE**
United for Peace with Justice and Equality



Message from the Co-conveners

The International Gender Justice Dialogue—held April 20-21, 2010 in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico—was first conceived of in 2006 by the Women’s Initiatives for Gender Justice. The work of the International Criminal Court was gathering momentum and the possibilities of the Rome Statute were being tested and, in some cases, advanced and in other cases, diminished. The critical importance of developing a clear global agenda for advancing women’s rights and gender justice through advocacy and engagement with the ICC and other key institutions became apparent.

In 2009, the Women’s Initiatives for Gender Justice invited the Nobel Women’s Initiative to collaborate on an event that would bring together leading women’s rights experts from around the world. Our combined efforts led us to create a highly visible and strategic event, with the goal of further advancing the work on developing a global women’s rights and gender justice agenda.

We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the dedicated women and men who travelled far distances and invested their time to be a part of this event. For them and for us, it was more than just a conference. It was an opportunity to share the stories of women and visions for the future, and to develop the partnerships that will last as long as the fight for gender justice.

Despite the best efforts of Icelandic Volcano Eyjafjallajokull, the Dialogue went on (almost) without a hitch. Many participants from Europe, Africa and the Middle East were, sadly, unable to join us, but their presence was felt and their voices were heard, even if not in person.

Our webcast brought the plenary sessions to hundreds of viewers around the world. Activists from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and Kenya sent us blog posts and contributed their expertise to the working groups on peace talks and implementation, justice and jurisprudence and communicating gender justice. Palestinian activists sent a video to make their voices heard.

One month later we carried ideas and messages from the Dialogue to the first ever Review Conference of the International Criminal Court in Uganda. We will continue to use the work of the Dialogue to call on world and national leaders to adhere to their responsibility to protect all of their citizens, their responsibility to prevent violence against women and their responsibility to ensure accountability for acts of sexual violence and gender based crimes.

It was an unique experience to work closely and productively together as partners to plan and host this Dialogue. We truly believe that our work together, and with these remarkable women around the world, will have a meaningful impact on international women’s rights.

WE WILL CONTINUE TO MOVE FORWARD UNTIL OUR SHARED VISION OF A WORLD FREE FROM SEXUAL VIOLENCE, GENDER BASED CRIMES AND RAPE AS A WEAPON OF WAR IS A REALITY.



Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	5
OPENING PLENARY	6
SESSION I	7
Peace Talks and Outcomes – Strategies and Challenges	
SESSION II	9
Prosecutions and Jurisprudence – What we have achieved, what remains to be done	
SESSION III	11
Women’s Rights and Peace Advocates in Conflict Situations and Fragile States	
SESSION IV	13
Mandates and Opportunities for Justice and Peace	
WORKING GROUPS	15
CLOSING PLENARY	18
PARTICIPANT REFLECTIONS	19
APPENDIX	21
About the Organizers	
Acknowledgment	



**“WE ARE HERE TO
GIVE VOICE TO THE
DESIRE FOR JUSTICE”**

- Brigid Inder, Executive Director of Women’s Initiatives for Gender Justice



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Introduction

Women around the world are subjected to devastating forms of gender-based violence. All the while, women are grossly under-represented in governments worldwide and are being left out of peace processes.

Yet the calls for gender justice are steadily growing louder in the halls of justice, in the media and in international organizations. Nowhere can we hear these calls more clearly than when we listen to the voices of women around the world speaking up for peace, accountability, equality and an end to impunity.

Some of the most outspoken and powerful voices calling for gender justice could be heard from April 20-21, 2010 in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. Fifty participants from 16 countries around the world—including international law experts, Nobel Peace Laureates, peace activists and women's rights advocates from current armed conflicts—came together for the first time ever to identify a global strategy for strengthening justice and accountability for women.

2010 is a crucial year for the advancement of gender justice and women's rights globally. This year marks the fifteenth anniversary of the Beijing World Conference on Women, the tenth anniversary of the UN Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and the emergence of a new, consolidated gender architecture within the UN to promote women's rights. And, one month after the Dialogue, the 10-year Review Conference on the Rome Statute and the International Criminal Court was held in Uganda.

The Dialogue was an opportune moment to reflect on the progress and work of the ICC, the possibilities embodied in the Rome Statute for the accountability of gender-based crime and the responsibilities of the United Nations for the deterrence and resolution of armed conflicts, for women's global citizenship and for gender-inclusive international justice.

Delegates came from a range of circumstances. Many are fighting for gender justice in the most inhospitable situations—within conflict zones and fragile states—and others are bringing a gender perspective to peace processes or post-conflict reconstruction. All envision a world free from sexual and gender-based violence. The opportunity to share experiences and lessons learned gave these extraordinary individuals a renewed commitment to their vital work. They left the dialogue with a collective promise to one another—to never give up. For if women do not speak up for each one another, do not give a voice to the voiceless or defend the defenseless, who will?

OPENING PLENARY

Liz Bernstein Executive Director, Nobel Women's Initiative
Brigid Inder Executive Director, Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice
Keynote Address **Jody Williams** Nobel Laureate, Nobel Women's Initiative

In the opening plenary Brigid Inder, Executive Director of Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice, began the conference by providing delegates with the context and moment for this conference: "We are here to give voice to the desire for justice, for the need for accountability and to highlight the aspiration for lives lived free from violence".

Gender justice recognizes the gender dimensions of violence. It means justice that is neither blind nor deaf to the ways in which violence is perpetrated specifically against women. Such violence includes rape as a weapon of war, trafficking and prostitution of women and forced sterilization.

Of course, there are limitations to law and legal process. It isn't possible to end gender discrimination and violence against women through prosecutions alone. Nonetheless, women survivors of conflict consistently call for the prosecution of gender-based crimes as an essential component of a comprehensive approach to sustainable peace and justice in their communities. The end of impunity is the beginning of peace.

Building on Inder's words, Nobel Peace Laureate Jody Williams, in an inspiring keynote address, called on delegates to use all of the avenues available to call for gender equality. Alternative forms of gender justice must also be sought out, outside of the halls of justice, for progress to truly be made. If women's voices are not heard on the radio, on television, in newspapers, in government bodies, as well as in courts, then these voices will be further marginalized.

Williams also reminded the audience of a fundamental point—women's rights are human rights. Women should no longer have their rights ignored because someone has defined them as "women's issues". Women's issues are human security issues, and these are the issues of everyone.



**“WOMEN’S ISSUES
ARE HUMAN
SECURITY ISSUES
– THEY ARE THE
ISSUES OF
EVERYONE.”**

Jody Williams, Nobel Peace Laureate

SESSION I

Peace Talks and Outcomes – Strategies and Challenges

Joanne Sandler Deputy Executive Director, UNIFEM

Monica McWilliams Chief Human Rights Commissioner, Northern Ireland (skype call)

Esther Maria Gallego Zapata National Coordinator, Ruta Pacifica de las Mujeres, Colombia

Sarai Aharoni Fellow Hebrew University, Israel

Moderator Dianne Aker Deputy Director, Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice

On October 31, 2000, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1325, emphasizing the crucial role of women in peace negotiations, peacebuilding, peacekeeping and in post-conflict reconstruction. In the 10 years since this ground-breaking resolution has been adopted, however, there has been no significant increase in women's participation or the incorporation of gender perspectives into United Nations peace and security efforts.

The panelists in this session demonstrated that each conflict is different, as are the approaches that women take when striving for peace with justice. They outlined the crucial importance of documenting and discussing not only the stories of success, but also the stories of failed peace processes and feminist struggles. Only then can we learn from the best and move forward to a more inclusive future.

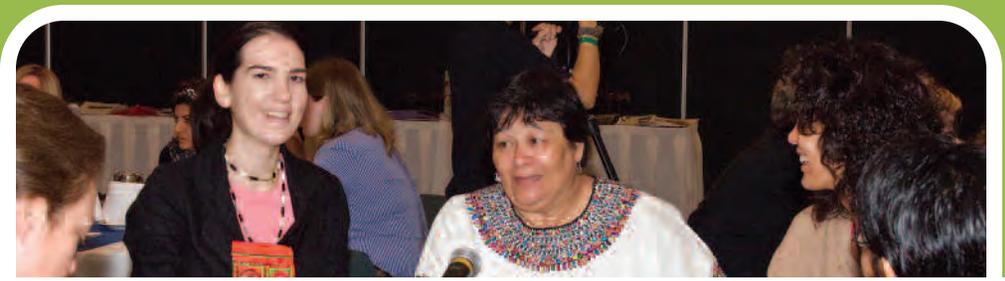
Joanne Sandler, Deputy Executive Director for Programmes at the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), explained that women continue to be absent at the table where crucial decisions about post-conflict recovery and governance are made. Her review of how women have engaged in peace processes emphasized the creative ways women have found to participate. She pointed to strategies from around the world—in Burundi women obtained observer status while in Darfur gender advisors have been appointed to participants. In Guatemala women gained access to parties via a sympathetic mediator, yet in Afghanistan women chose to engage in a parallel process.

When women in Northern Ireland calling for peace were confronted with closed doors, they formed their own political party, the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition. As the founder of that party, Monica McWilliams played a vital role in the Belfast peace negotiations. She provided suggestions for other peace processes based on her experiences.

McWilliams recommended mainstreaming a gender analysis at any early stage and setting benchmarks, targets and timetables for women's inclusion in the decision-making process. She also outlined the importance of including the grassroots, not just elites, so that there is a role for participatory democracy, civic forums and women's organizations in the future of the society's decision-making. And, most importantly, she urged the delegates to underline the importance of women's human rights in all the new institutions and processes, and to challenge sexual exploitation in all of its forms.

**“THERE IS NO END TO
THE CREATIVE WAYS
THAT WOMEN ARE
HAVING AN INFLUENCE.”**

*- Joanne Sandler, Deputy Executive Director for Programmes
at the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)*



Esther Maria Gallego Zapata, national coordinator of Ruta Pacifica, described to the conference the important role this organization plays in Colombia. Finding their voices silenced when calling for an end to an armed conflict waged on their bodies, the women of Colombia took to the streets and formed Ruta Pacifica. Ruta defends women's rights and promotes a negotiated settlement to Colombia's armed conflict through its demonstrations. It has opened a space for women in Colombian society that did not previously exist. Women facing sexual violence, harassment and forced displacement from their homes and lands are able to confront armed actors—paramilitaries, the army and guerrillas—who have enjoyed impunity for the crimes they have committed against women for generations. Colombian women demand that peace be built with social justice that respects the rights of women.

Sarai Aharoni, Postdoctoral Fellow at the Hebrew University in Israel, proposed that perhaps women's inclusion in formal peace processes should be rethought and that we need to come up with solutions that are embedded in the social context, especially for intractable conflicts such as that of Israel/Palestine. This conflict is not just local, but regional and even global.

In the Israel/Palestine conflict, there is no peace table. There are only unilateral actions and coercive strategies where peace is perceived of as a security process and not a mechanism to bring about justice. In such circumstances, Aharoni suggests that women should pursue a feminist resistance. Radical voices for change must be maintained, assisted and fostered to help women from all walks of life lift up their own voices for peace.

Globally, women have had to spend far too much time finding ways to participate. Sandler therefore advocated for institutionalizing women's participation in peace processes by mandating quotas and funds for participation, and ensuring gender sensitivity and inclusion of women's rights issues through training for all participants.

Introduction to the ICC

Located in The Hague, the International Criminal Court (ICC) was created in 1998 by the Rome Statute, now ratified by 114 states. Its goal and purpose is to end impunity for the perpetrators of the most serious of concern to the international community—genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The ICC is currently investigating conflict situations in five countries—Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, Sudan and Kenya—and is engaging in preliminary examination of information relating to conflicts in Afghanistan, Colombia, Georgia, Palestine, Côte d'Ivoire, and Guinea. At the time of the Dialogue, two trials, both in the situation of the DRC, were ongoing at the Court.

Although gender-based crimes have been extensively documented in all of the current situation countries, they have yet to be comprehensively charged in the prosecutions. The ICC is in a unique position to signal to the world that perpetrators will not enjoy impunity when they treat women's bodies as a battlefield of war. Under the Rome Statute, the founding document of the Court, rape and other forms of sexual violence can be charged as crimes against humanity, war crimes and acts of genocide.

According to representatives of the ICC Office of the Prosecutor who were present at the Dialogue, in the coming years their goal is to build on the work of the last seven years and continue to charge gender-based crimes. In order to stop these crimes, the ICC will give survivors a voice by including them in investigations, in presentations before the Court as victims and witnesses and during determinations of reparations.

Session II

Prosecutions and Jurisprudence – What we have achieved, what remains to be done

Dr Kelly Askin Senior Legal Officer, Open Society Justice Initiative, Open Society Institute
Professor Catharine A. MacKinnon Special Gender Adviser to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (video)
Susana SaCouto Director War Crimes Research Office, American University Washington College of Law
Moderator Professor Valerie Oosterveld Faculty of Law, University of Western Ontario



Historically, wartime sexual violence was not considered a crime. Rape was seen as an incentive for soldiers to capture a town or as an inevitable byproduct of war. But there have been unprecedented developments in international gender justice since the United Nations Security Council set up the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and for Rwanda (ICTR) in 1993 and 1994 respectively.

Dr. Kelly Askin, Senior Legal Officer for the Open Society Justice Initiative, Professor Catherine A. MacKinnon, Special Gender Advisor to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court and Susana SaCouto, Director of the War Crimes Research Office at the American University Washington College of Law, all lent their expertise to this complex and critical issue.

Sexual and gender-based violence during armed conflict is increasingly well documented, and there is a growing worldwide recognition that these acts are, indeed, war crimes, crimes against humanity and instruments of genocide. In fact, all contemporary international war crimes tribunals do include at least rape as a crime against humanity in their statutes, and the jurisprudence of these tribunals has gone even further to recognize other forms of sexual violence. The ICC statute explicitly includes jurisdiction over a much more comprehensive set of gender crimes, including rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, persecution and trafficking.



Yet sexual violence is still rampant and used widely as a powerful weapon of terror and destruction. There continue to be enormous cultural and attitudinal challenges. Delegates at the Gender Justice Dialogue who are at the frontlines of conflict and post-conflict situations spoke time and time again of women being treated as the “booty” or “spoils” of war. And there are a myriad of gender-based crimes that are still not prosecuted—sex trafficking and crimes of a reproductive nature, such as forced abortion, genital mutilation, forced sterilization and forced pregnancy.

Discussion in Puerto Vallarta focused on the ICC, the only permanent international criminal court with jurisdiction over gender-based crimes. The ICC’s record with respect to the investigation and prosecution of sexual violence and gender-based crimes is mixed. Gender-based crimes have now been charged in every situation before the Court for which there are charges, and in six of the ten cases before the Court. However, there are many challenges in prosecuting these types of cases that need to be addressed.

For example, there is unlikely to be evidence of explicit orders to commit gender-based crimes, making it difficult to prove the guilt of top military or civilian leaders who knowingly contributed to, or failed to prevent and punish sexual violence committed by their subordinates. There is a precedent for circumstantial evidence to be used to establish a superior’s responsibility for certain crimes; unfortunately the ICC and other international tribunals

have been reluctant to use such evidence in the case of sexual and gender-based violence. And, without specific expertise, gender-sensitive analysis and acknowledgment that these crimes are not just incidental and opportunistic but are often an integral part of the organized war effort, these cases are unlikely to be effectively investigated or prosecuted.

The ICC’s mandate is to prosecute the higher-level perpetrators, which risks leaving hundreds of thousands of lower-level perpetrators to enjoy impunity for sexual crimes in war and peace. For survivors to truly get the justice they need and deserve, perpetrators must be also prosecuted at the national level. Advocacy for development of domestic legal processes will begin to change realities on the ground. All of the panelists stressed the need to work collaboratively within domestic legal systems while also thinking creatively about other forms of justice.

We must confront the notion that crimes of sexual violence in conflict are “exceptional”, as opposed to reflecting the entrenched gender inequality that pre-dates, and will outlive, any conflict. We must act to take the shame and stigma of sex crimes off the survivors and put it where it belongs—on the shoulders of the perpetrators.

And NGOs must continue to push for justice, prevention and reparations. For if it were not for international NGOs, there would be no ICC in the first place.

“I CAN ABSOLUTELY GUARANTEE THAT IF THE WOMEN’S INITIATIVES FOR GENDER JUSTICE DID NOT EXIST THERE WOULD NOT BE A FRACTION AS MUCH PROSECUTION OF GENDER CRIMES IN THE ICC AS THERE IS NOW.”

- Dr. Kelly Askin Senior Legal Officer, Open Society Justice Initiative

SESSION III

Women's Rights and Peace Advocates Conflict Situations and Fragile States

Yanar Mohammed President, Organisation of Women's Freedom in Iraq, Iraq

Thin Thin Aung Board Member, Women's League of Burma, India

Gilda Maria Rivera Sierra Executive Coordinator, Centro de Derechos de Mujeres, Honduras

Moderator **Karla Micheel Salas Ramirez** Asociación Nacional de Abogados Democráticos, México

Around the world, women advocate for peace and human rights in environments that are completely hostile to their efforts. They face threats to their lives, bodies, families and communities on a daily basis. And yet, despite these very real and terrifying threats to their safety and security, they continue to pursue peace, demand accountability and continue along the long path to justice. The three panelists in this session exemplify the courage and determination required to work under these circumstances—and shared the strategies women are using to build peace and bring justice to their communities.

Yanar Mohammed, President of the Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq (OWFI), explained that the occupation in Iraq since 2003 has created a political vacuum and turned the country into a breeding ground for a variety of Islamist forces trying to fill the void. The biggest so-called evil for these forces is the freedom of women. OWFI is the watchdog for women's freedom, safety and lives. Their strategies for supporting and empowering women include running shelters for survivors of domestic violence, operating a radio station that broadcasts programming about women's rights and documenting and reporting on the treatment of women prisoners and cases of human trafficking.

The women of Burma suffer daily at the hands of the ruling military junta. Rape, sexual violence, forced labour and portering, torture, imprisonment and forced relocation are common events. Meanwhile, refugee and exiled women have formed women's groups along Burma's borders. Since 1999,

the Women's League of Burma (WLB) has acted as an umbrella organization encompassing these groups. Thin Thin Aung, board member of the WLB, described the organization as working on three main program areas: peace-building and reconciliation, women against violence and political empowerment. Documenting human rights violations in reports that can be disseminated to the global community—and garnering as much media coverage as possible—are key strategies. WLB's production of a CEDAW shadow report to counter the official government presentation of the situation of women of Burma was an important achievement.



Exchange and testimonies— Voices from the Frontlines

In a special lunchtime session, women's rights activists working on the frontlines shared their stories of the grave violations of their rights that are everyday realities for women in Mexico, Guatemala, Zimbabwe and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

This was the moment to take stock of the ever-worsening situation in our host country, Mexico. Violence in the country has exploded since President Calderon launched a war on drugs in 2006. Instances of femicide, the disappearance of girls, aggression against female human rights defenders and rape by military personnel are constantly on the rise while impunity persists.

In the aftermath of the coup d'état in Honduras on June 28, 2009, there has been a breakdown of respect for human rights and a quick and significant acceleration of violence against women. Sexual violence is used to spread terror, take revenge, accumulate war booty and dominate women. The lack of impartial and independent state organizations, the inadequacy of legal recourse, the biased judicial system and the violent repression of political protest all contribute to this dire situation. Despite the brutal crackdown, women from the Centro de Derechos de Mujeres, including its executive coordinator, Gilda Maria Rivera Sierra, who joined us at the Dialogue, continue to take to the streets to fight militarism in Honduras.

As these cases demonstrate, in conflict zones and fragile states, government authorities use gender based violence to try to subdue the courageous women who demand peace, justice and equality. All of the panelists urged the international community to support the women of such countries, and to support women's movements and human rights organizations working from within.

**“PEACE IS NOT SIMPLY
AN ABSENCE OF ARMED
CONFLICT.”**

- Jody Williams, Nobel Peace Laureate



SESSION IV

Mandates and Opportunities for Justice and Peace

Susannah Sirkin Deputy Director, Physicians for Human Rights, USA
Kristin Kalla Senior Programme Officer and Acting Executive Director, ICC Trust Fund for Victims
Jody Williams Nobel Laureate, Nobel Women's Initiative
Moderator Doris Mpoumou Director of International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect

The effects of sexual violence perpetrated during conflict linger long after the violent act, undermining the potential for peace and security. The international community's failure to adequately address the physical, psychological and socio-economic impacts of these forms of violence has left deep scars on women and their communities.

How do you tackle such a pervasive issue, and help survivors recover their dignity, rebuild their families and communities and live without fear?

Identification, prosecution and punishment of perpetrators are imperative to achieve a lasting peace and justice. However, it is also important to include prevention, reparations and protection of survivors when addressing gender-based violence. Both Kristin Kalla, Senior Programme Officer and Acting Executive Director of the Trust Fund for Victims, and Susannah Sirkin, deputy director of Physicians for Human Rights, described this comprehensive view of justice.

By giving survivors a voice, support and the tools they need, the Trust Fund for Victims gives renewed hope for the future to communities impacted by the worst forms of violence. Working within the ICC's jurisdiction, the Fund provides psychological support, physical rehabilitation and material support for survivors of sexual violence. Through consultation with survivors it has become clear that they seek participation in and ownership over the process—to be consulted during investigations, to testify and to be a part of the process as it unfolds. Furthermore, they demand accountability for perpetrators but require reparations as well: peace with justice. While the past cannot be undone, monetary compensation can help build a future. During conflicts women are often the ones maintaining a semblance of normalcy, and after the conflict is over, they are central to rebuilding communities. Supporting women's economic and social rights by providing loans and other material support also protects them from violence that often continues even after the conflict abates.





Sirkin explained the multidimensional nature of treatment for survivors of sexual violence during conflict. Such women have survived not only rape, but also a myriad of other traumas including death of loved ones, loss of home and community and the utter disruption of normal life. And serving survivors is limited if there isn't simultaneous work to prevent rape in the first place - and from it happening again as women continue to live in vulnerable conditions after the conflict is over. With all of the incredible work being done to put an end to gender-based violence by individual activists and groups, there is still a need to think more broadly about how to protect women from becoming victims of crimes in the first place. Sirkin proposed the idea of a global campaign to stop rape in war, led by a coalition of individuals and groups with a set of achievable aims.

Nobel Laureate Jody Williams lent her coordinating expertise to the discussion. She provided lessons learned from the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, now recognized as one of the most successful international campaigns to achieve a social justice outcome. She explained that a coalition of organizations with different mandates coordinating to wield their collective force was very powerful. Membership in such a coalition must include survivors as well as campaigners. Together, they can maintain creativity in their campaigning and develop shared messages that use facts and emotion to be persuasive. Finally, Williams discussed the importance of setting long-term as well as short-term benchmarks in order to keep positive momentum going.

All of the panelists and delegates at the Gender Justice Dialogue articulated a collective vision— an end to sexual violence, gender-based crimes and rape as a weapon of war. The Dialogue formed partnerships and nurtured discussions that will help achieve this vision.

**“JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS
OF THE GRAVEST
HUMAN RIGHTS
CRIMES CANNOT BE
ACHIEVED WITHOUT
THEIR PARTICIPATION.”**

*- Kristin Kalla, Senior Programme Officer and
Acting Executive Director of the Trust Fund for Victims*

WORKING GROUPS

The International Gender Justice Dialogue developed a shared set of priorities for advancing gender justice globally, in order to increase the efficacy of all our advocacy efforts. Delegates met in working groups to formulate ideas and outline the challenges, strategies and opportunities in three areas: Peace Talks and Implementation; Justice and Jurisprudence; and Communicating Gender Justice. They then reconvened to share their findings and provide input into a common global agenda for the coming three years.

The suggestions of the groups revealed some common themes. All stressed the need to develop new and innovative tools and approaches while building on existing resources, strategies and opportunities.

There is a need to improve the gender competency of individuals and groups working in all of the areas discussed. The Peace Talks and Implementation group called for a gender balance when identifying mediators, but also for providing gender sensitivity training for both male and female mediators. Similarly, the Justice and Jurisprudence group discussed the need to advance and enhance the gender perspective of the ICC, human rights tribunals, regional courts and their judges, lawyers and investigators. The Communications group suggested training journalists, media relations professionals and communications experts so that stories in the media and communications tools all have a clear gender analysis.

Groups suggested using models that already exist to build new frameworks for monitoring, evaluating and reporting gender inclusion, competence and equality at all levels. For example, a version of the annual Gender Report Card on the International Criminal Court created by the Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice could be used to evaluate the operations of regional human rights and national courts, or to evaluate peace processes.

Resource mobilization was also addressed. There is currently no sustained funding to advance gender justice and equality worldwide. While there are mechanisms in place, such as the Trust Fund for Victims, there needs to be an increased emphasis on allocating resources towards gender imbalances that currently exist, whether they be within international institutions and governments, or amongst civil society groups. In order to move forward and build this movement, funds must be raised to support this work locally, regionally and internationally.



The groups also identified key moments and opportunities to take the conversation forward. These include global meetings of policy makers and government officials, such as at the ICC Review Conference or at regional summits including meetings of the African Union.

Finally, everyone wholeheartedly agreed on the importance of keeping the dialogue open and continuing what was started in Puerto Vallarta. We need to build alliances, network and identify new allies. We must share best practices, bring together experts and learn from other social movements. We must develop more platforms for communication, including more dialogues such as this, regional consultations and online communities. There is an urgent need to build a global constituency around gender justice. The International Gender Justice Dialogue has laid a foundation, but it is only the beginning.

“IN THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT, GIRLS WILL NOT BE INVISIBLE.”

–Fatou Bensouda, Deputy Prosecutor, International Criminal Court

Launch of In Pursuit of Peace

On the first day of the International Gender Justice Dialogue, the Women's Initiatives launched *In Pursuit of Peace - À la poursuite de la paix*. This new bilingual publication includes statements, documents and calls to action from women peace activists of three countries emerging from, or still held captive to, armed conflict: Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Central African Republic.

Download your copy at:

http://www.iccwomen.org/news/berichtdetail.php?we_objectID=51





Closing Plenary

CLOSING PLENARY

Keynote Address **Dr Joan Chittister** Co-Chair, The Global Peace Initiative of Women
Moderator **Liz Bernstein** Executive Director, Nobel Women's Initiative

At the turn of the 20th century, 5% of war casualties were civilians. That number has been steadily growing over the past century and today 90% of the human war toll is civilians—the majority of whom are women and children.

Conflict and war falls most mercilessly on women. Women go unprepared, unarmed and unmasked into war. They are the spoils of war and their bodies become the weapons of war. The statistics are shocking and unfathomable but justified by armies and governments as collateral damage, yet this justification comes into question when stories are attached to these figures. Then there is no doubt that these acts of unimaginable brutality are a calculated weapon of war. But this weapon can no longer be accepted as incidental.

In a powerful keynote address, Sister Joan Chittister, Co-Chair of the Global Peace Initiative of Women, called on the delegates to use their power and positions to rally the conscience of the world and leave the conference intent on making a difference for women around the world. Jurists, lawyers, and advocates alike must insist on gender equality everywhere and be a voice for the voiceless.

It is time for women around the world to come together in the greatest and most obvious numbers to heal the wounds of war, give their lives to the pursuit of peace, demand justice and give hope.



“YOU ARE THE ONLY PUBLIC VOICE FOR JUSTICE THAT WOMEN CAN CLAIM AS THEIR OWN—AND THAT WOMEN REALLY HAVE.”

- Joan Chittister, Co-Chair of the Global Peace Initiative of Women

Participant Reflections

PARTICIPANT REFLECTIONS



When I was younger I thought only polar bears and seals lived in Iceland, no human beings! Now, I know how to pronounce Mount Eyjafjallajokull and even spell it without Googling it first! I know that Iceland has a population of about 317,000 and its capital city is Reykjavik.

It is nothing short of amazing that a country which has no known diplomatic relations with Kenya, a country whose culture, people, language and way of life is perhaps as far removed from mine as the 5,300 miles that separates Mount Eyjafjallajokull and Nairobi, has profoundly affected my week, my plans and my life. By 15th April my bags were packed and I was ready to travel the following day to Puerto Vallarta for the Gender Justice Dialogue 2010, which for me promised a space that vibrant discussion where "feminism" is not a taboo word, intellectual reflection was possible and yet real discussions on real justice would happen.

And these events made me think, isn't that the story of our lives as women. I do not know what journeys and stories of women's rights, women's empowerment emerge from Iceland, yet their stories, my stories will connect and mirror each other; stories of women determined to realize equality, to redress discrimination, to resist the degradation that comes with patriarchy and to seek justice. We are connected across the world as women, even if our experiences are not. We keenly feel the unfairness of discrimination meted out because we are women, the anger when conflict victimizes us as women even if we have never been through it. We are connected. The Gender Justice Dialogue is a place to realize, acknowledge, celebrate and learn from that connectedness. I wish I were there to share it.

Ava A. Maina-Ayiera
*Urgent Action Fund,
Nairobi, Kenya*

Where to begin? The speakers are knowledgeable, committed and able to inspire. A recurrent theme is the necessity of building networks, ensuring that your work is based on an agreed and transparent set of principles and that you communicate often with your supporters. We hear these ideas from those involved in peace processes, justice networks and from the promotion of women's rights generally. Those of us from the 'global north' are inspired by the courage of those working in countries either in the midst of conflict or in the early stages of making the transition from war to peace. They are faced with ongoing threats to their physical and we can only assume that over time this will affect their (and their family's) psychological well being.

Whether the speaker is from Northern Ireland, Iraq or Honduras we hear of the backlash women experience when they attempt to enter the public debate. They are targeted with language and physical violence that is aimed at denigrating them as women. Luckily we also hear that there are those already inside the debates, peace negotiations and governments who can be trusted to work with women's groups in order to ease their entry into ongoing dialogues. But many of us sit in the meeting room and wonder why in 2010 women still should have to rely on the goodwill of others to be able to take their rightful place in their societies.

The speakers reinforce what most of us know, as hard as it may be to negotiate the text of a treaty or a peace agreement, the implementation phase is even more difficult. It is imperative to develop benchmarks for monitoring whether or not progress is being made, particularly with respect to women's inclusion in new structures. Whether at the domestic level or within the United Nations, statements about the necessity of incorporating women at decision-making levels and ensuring that women's voices are adequately represented generally are rarely followed up with concrete measures that result in real change.

By the end of the day our brains and souls feel as if they are full to capacity. We all know there is so much more to do and I, and others, wonder if we have the strength to keep on fighting. In our hearts we know the answer is yes. We are rejuvenated by the sharing of stories about family, countries, cultures and aspirations. Most agree that guacamole has become a crucial part of our diets. Adios,

Tina Dolgopol
*Associate Professor of Law,
The Flinders University of South Australia*

Within the hell of war lies a private hell

Gender justice is an unfamiliar term to most people. Many assume it is merely a feminine (and therefore diminutive) form of justice, created by adding an awkward adjective to an abstract ideal. But thanks to years of documenting gender-based crimes, pressure from women's movements, testimony from victims and legal arguments, there is now a body of jurisprudence and a history of movements that define gender justice and promote it internationally. At an historic conference in April, organized by the Women's Initiative for Gender Justice and the Nobel Women's Initiative, fifty women gathered in a Mexican beach town to evaluate the progress of gender justice and set forth a three-year work agenda.

The sands beneath our feet shifted during the conference. Not when the tide rolled over during early morning walks on the beach--although those moments were also an important part of forging a common commitment--but when we heard survivors' stories and statistics.

It is easy to think of impunity as a sin of omission. The hand not raised in protest appears genteel alongside the hand stained with the blood of the victim. Yet we learned from the testimonies of women on the frontlines of battle for gender justice that impunity not only perpetuates crimes against women, it teaches generation after generation how to continue the practice.

Laura Carlsen
*Director of the Americas Program of the
Center for International Policy, Mexico*

*Read more of Laura Carlsen and other participant's reflections at
<http://www.opendemocracy.net>*

APPENDIX



About the Organizers

Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice

The Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice is an international women's human rights organisation that advocates for gender justice through the International Criminal Court (ICC) and works with women most affected by the conflict situations under investigation by the ICC.

www.iccwomen.org

Nobel Women's Initiative

Launched in 2006, the Nobel Women's Initiative is a strategic vehicle of the women Nobel Peace Prize Laureates to leverage the visibility and prestige of the prize to promote, spotlight and amplify the work of women's rights activists, researchers and organizations worldwide, addressing the root causes of violence.

www.nobelwomensinitiative.org



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APPENDIX

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“I BELIEVE THAT WE CAN AND PERHAPS WILL END GENDER VIOLENCE AS A NORMAL EVERYDAY MATTER IN OUR TIME.”

- Professor Catherine A. MacKinnon, Special Gender Advisor to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court

APPENDIX

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