



2007-10-03 FOR IMMEDIATE DISTRIBUTION

Media Contact: Denise Ward

(619) 260-4659

wardd@sandiego.edu

Is Peace Possible? International Experts Convene in San Diego

Searching for paths to peace in some of the toughest conflict zones in the world, peacemakers from around the world will come to a two-day summit in San Diego convened by the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice (IPJ) at the University of San Diego.. Persevering in the face of violence, crossing conflict lines, fostering civic trust and using the media as a tool for peacebuilding will be addressed by international experts in the fields of peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, who will respond to and engage with women on the frontlines seeking security for their families, communities and nations.

While destruction and violence rage around the globe, and homes become battlefields, many may ask: Is peace possible? The panelists, and their actions, offer a resounding “Yes.” With complete resolution of violent conflict or prospects of sustainable peace often on the more distant horizon, this summit will illuminate how individuals around the world are working tirelessly to restore humanity and dignity in the face of ongoing conflict.

IPJ Women PeaceMakers, a group of women from 14 countries who have each spent eight weeks in residence at the institute in the last five years, offer unique perspectives on how to transform the violence in their communities. They walk the talk.

- Confronting cycles of violence and failed state in Somalia, Zahra Ugas Farah continues to struggle to defend human rights and work for the resumption of peace negotiations.
- Christiana Thorpe, chief elections commissioner in Sierra Leone, will share how she overcame the challenges of decades of war to carry out the recent successful electoral process.
- Shreen Abdul Saroor from Sri Lanka supports a group of young women who stand shoulder to shoulder, in brightly colored saris, as they march for accountability for gender-based war crimes.

Lt. Gen. Joseph Olorunghon Owonibi of Nigeria, former force commander of peacekeeping troops in the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), and Priscilla Hayner, director of the Peace and Justice Program at the Geneva-based International Center for Transitional Justice and author of *Unspeakable Truths*, will highlight gender concerns and inclusion in peacekeeping operations and long-term peacebuilding efforts.

From calling for and monitoring ceasefires to ensuring accountability for war crimes, panelists will present the complexities of real-world conflict mitigation and peace negotiations from Afghanistan to Uganda. As they reflect on the obstacles in their paths to peace, women on the frontlines will share their success stories and their hopes for the future.

All panels are free and open to the public.

Day 1: Tuesday, Oct. 23

- 9:30 a.m. to noon "Peacemaking: Persevering in the Face of Violence"
Frontline panelists: Afghanistan, Palestine, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Somalia
- 2 to 4 p.m. "Seeking Human Security: Crossing Conflict Lines"
Frontline panelists: Cameroon, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Serbia, Uganda
- 4 to 4:30 p.m. West Coast Launch of *Women Building Peace: What They Do, Why It Matters* by Sanam Anderlini
- 7 to 9 p.m. Joan B. Kroc Distinguished Lecture Series: "International Strides for Inclusive Peacebuilding"

Day 2: Wednesday, Oct. 24

- 10 a.m. to noon "Peacebuilding: Fostering Civic Trust"
Frontline panelists: Kosovo, Nepal, Sierra Leone, Sudan
- 2 to 3:30 p.m. "Media as a Tool for Peacebuilding"
Frontline panelists: Kosovo, Sudan, U.S./Mexico, U.S.

The IPJ Women PeaceMakers Program is a selective program for leaders to document, share and build upon their unique peacemaking experiences. Initiated in 2003, the program and summit are made possible through a generous grant from the Fred J. Hansen Foundation. For more information on the Women PeaceMakers program, go to <http://peace.sandiego.edu/programs/women.html>.

-end-