



#### FOUNDERS:

Betty Williams, Ireland - 1976  
Máiread Maguire, Ireland - 1976  
Rigoberta Menchú Tum, Guatemala - 1992  
Prof. Jody Williams, USA - 1997  
Dr. Shirin Ebadi, Iran - 2003  
Prof. Wangari Maathai, Kenya - 2004

united for peace with justice and equality

--December 8, 2009--

### **Nobel Peace Laureates Condemn Murders in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico Family of Human Rights Defenders**

Just days before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights is expected to issue a landmark ruling condemning the State of Mexico in the “Campo Algodonero” case of three women murdered in Ciudad Juarez (*Gonzalez et al. vs. Mexico*), family members of two leading women’s rights activists in Juarez have also been murdered.

The Nobel Women’s Initiative condemns these violent acts—intended to intimidate and silence women who are human rights defenders fighting for justice in the cases of hundreds of women murdered in Juarez—and calls upon the Mexican government to end violence against human rights defenders and their families.

On November 29, 2009, two assailants fatally shot Jesus Alfredo Portillo Santos, age 27, in Ciudad Juarez. Mr. Portillo Santos was the son-in-law of Marisela Ortiz, founder of *Nuestras Hijas de Regreso a Casa* (Our Daughters Returning Home), a leading organization fighting for justice in the cases of the murdered women of Juarez. Ortiz, who was recognized for her work as a human rights defender by the Spanish legal organization *Consejo General de la Abogacía Española*, has received numerous death threats as a result of her work, and her family has also been threatened.

On November 28, 2009, hooded men kidnapped, raped and murdered Flor Alicia Gomez Lopez. Ms. Gomez Lopez, age 23, was the niece of Alma Gomez Caballero, a member of the human rights organization *Justicia para Nuestras Hijas* (Justice for Our Daughters).

Since 1993, 504 women have been murdered in Ciudad Juarez. Most were young women, and in many cases the victims were tortured sexually prior to being murdered. The vast majority of these cases have yet to be investigated,

and family members who attempt to pursue justice routinely face threats, harassment by authorities and concerted efforts to publicly discredit them.

Mexico's systemic failure to investigate these murders violates numerous international human rights obligations in the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women "Convention of Belem do Para" and the U.N. Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, both of which have been signed by the Mexican government.

The ***Nobel Women's Initiative*** calls upon the ***Mexican government*** to:

1. Investigate the murders of Jesus Alfredo Portillo Santos and Flor Alicia Gomez Lopez without delay;
2. Exert its authority to bring an end to violence against women in Ciudad Juarez; and
3. Act to prevent further acts of violence and intimidation against human rights defenders in Mexico.

**For more information, please contact Rachel Vincent at 613-276-9030 or**

**Kimberly Mackenzie at 613-569-8400, ext. 114**