

Media Update

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United Nations

REMARKS BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Awarding of the 2018 Nobel Prize for Peace to Dr. Denis Mukwege and Nadia Murad

[as delivered]

I congratulate Nadia Murad and Dr. Denis Mukwege on being awarded the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize. In defending the victims of sexual violence in conflict, they have defended our shared values.

Nadia Murad gave voice to unspeakable abuse in Iraq when the violent extremists of Daesh brutally targeted the Yazidi people, especially women and girls. As a Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime since 2016, she has pursued support for victims of human trafficking and sexual slavery and justice for perpetrators. Her powerful advocacy has touched people across the world and helped to establish a vitally important United Nations investigation of the harrowing crimes that she and so many others endured.

Dr. Denis Mukwege has been a fearless champion for the rights of women caught up in armed conflict who have suffered rape, exploitation and other horrific abuses. Despite regular threats to his life, he made the Panzi Hospital in the Democratic Republic of the Congo a haven from mistreatment. The United Nations has supported his efforts. He has been a strong voice calling the world's attention to the shocking crimes committed against women in wartime. As a skilled and sensitive surgeon he not only repaired shattered bodies but restored dignity and hope.



Ten years ago, the Security Council unanimously condemned sexual violence as a weapon of war. Today the Nobel Committee recognized the efforts of Nadia Murad and Denis Mukwege as vital tools for peace.

By honouring these defenders of human dignity, this prize also recognizes countless victims around the world who have too often been stigmatized, hidden and forgotten. This is their award, too.

Indeed, the award is part of a growing movement to recognize the violence and injustice disproportionately faced by half of our population. Let us honour these new Nobel laureates by standing up for victims of sexual violence everywhere.

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