

Leymah Gbowee

Leymah Gbowee is a Liberian peace activist, trained social worker, women's rights advocate and 2011 Nobel Peace Prize laureate. Internationally recognised for her leadership in bringing women together across religious divides during Liberia's civil war, she speaks about peacebuilding, women's leadership, social change and the power of nonviolent action.

KEY TOPICS

- Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace: How sisterhood, prayer and sex changed a nation at war
- Crossing borders to find common ground
- Can we transform the world by unlocking the greatness of girls?
- Interfaith dialogue and community building
- Promoting peace, conflict resolution and development in Africa

BIOGRAPHY

Leymah Gbowee: 2011 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

Leymah Gbowee rose to international prominence through her leadership of the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace. The movement brought together Christian and Muslim women in a sustained campaign of nonviolent protest that played a pivotal role in bringing Liberia's civil war to an end in 2003.

As spokesperson for the movement, Gbowee helped mobilise thousands of women to demand peace and put pressure on Liberia's political leaders, including then-President Charles Taylor. Their efforts helped drive progress in the peace negotiations and became an influential example of how women can shape peace and security processes.

In recognition of her work, Leymah Gbowee was jointly awarded the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize alongside Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Tawakkol Karman. The Nobel Committee recognised their nonviolent struggle for women's safety and their right to participate fully in peacebuilding.

Her role in the Liberian peace movement is chronicled in her memoir, *Mighty Be Our Powers*, and in the award-winning documentary *Pray the Devil Back to Hell*, which won Best Documentary at the Tribeca Film Festival.

Peacebuilding, Women's Rights and Leadership

A trained social worker and peacebuilder, Gbowee holds an MA in Conflict Transformation from Eastern Mennonite University. Her early work included supporting former child soldiers and communities affected by conflict, experience that helped shape her approach to reconciliation and peacebuilding.

She is the Founder and President of the Gbowee Peace Foundation Africa, which works to create educational and leadership opportunities for women, girls and young people. She also co-founded the Women Peace and Security Network Africa and previously served as its Executive Director. Earlier in her career, she was a founding

member and Liberia Coordinator of the Women in Peacebuilding Network, part of the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding.

Gbowee currently serves as Founding Executive Director of the Institute on Gender, Law, and Transformative Peace at CUNY School of Law. The Institute brings together research, advocacy and grassroots movements to address gender justice, conflict, human rights and transformative approaches to peace.

She previously served as Executive Director of the Women, Peace and Security Program at Columbia University and has held distinguished fellowships at institutions including Barnard College. Her international work has also included advising and supporting initiatives focused on women's rights, peace and security, youth leadership and sustainable development.

Gbowee has received honorary degrees from institutions including Rhodes University in South Africa and the University of Alberta in Canada. She was also appointed to the United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Advisory Board on Mediation in 2017 and previously served as a United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Advocate. She is now recognised by the UN as an SDG Advocate Emeritus.

Leymah Gbowee as a Keynote Speaker

As a keynote speaker, Leymah Gbowee brings first-hand experience of grassroots leadership, conflict resolution and social change to audiences around the world. Her story shows how determined communities can challenge entrenched power and how women's leadership can influence peace processes at the highest level.

Her keynotes draw on her experience of the Liberian peace movement as well as decades of work in women's rights and peacebuilding. She speaks candidly about leadership in difficult circumstances, reconciliation after conflict and what it takes to bring people together when divisions appear impossible to overcome.

For event hosts looking for a speaker on leadership, peace and security, women's rights or nonviolent social change, Leymah Gbowee offers a perspective shaped by lived experience as well as international advocacy. Her work continues to focus on strengthening the role of women and young people in building safer, more peaceful societies.

WHAT PEOPLE SAY

> ""*I've had people, faculty and staff who've witnessed many of our commencements, this being our historic fifteenth, tell me it was one of the best commencements they can remember [because of] Leymah's words, her passion for the future role of our students*""
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> **— Soka University**

> ""*Ms. Gbowee's talk at the Dartmouth College Centennial Circle Forum was met with RAVE reviews. The feedback we have received in our post event survey has been all positive. Our audience was inspired by her citing experiences along her path to the Nobel Peace Prize that could have happened to any one of them, such as falling in love with the wrong person. They felt connected to her, inspired to commit to other women and to the causes of education and peace.*""
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> **— Dartmouth College**

> ""*Leymah was simply electrifying yesterday.... so many women came up and told me that they cried, laughed, and were deeply moved in the one hour that Leymah spoke. We, at Visionary Women, would like to extend our deepest gratitude to her. She is truly a light in the world.*""
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> **— Visionary Women**