



## NEW IPB CO-PRESIDENTS COMMENT THE 2010 NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

**Geneva, 8 October 2010.** This year's Nobel Peace Prize, awarded to Chinese human rights activist Liu Xiaobo, illustrates once again the dilemma faced by the Nobel Committee, and all commentators, in interpreting the meaning of 'peace' in our era.

It is true that no sustainable peace can be achieved at the national level without full respect for human rights and democratic participation in decision-making. In this sense we applaud the decision of the Norwegian Nobel Committee to shine a spotlight, not only on Liu Xiaobo and his Charter 08 movement, but on human rights defenders all over the world.

On the other hand, international peace cannot be achieved without mutual respect, including between nations. There is a risk that the award of this prize, to a person who may be regarded as a hero by western governments and analysts, and as a criminal by the Chinese government, will exacerbate tensions between states.

In our view it is not self-evident that this choice contributes, as the Committee claims, to 'fraternity between nations'. Alfred Nobel was inspired by the vision of a disarmed world community living within a framework of international law. In that sense the 2010 award can be seen as another missed opportunity to return the prize to its roots.

The motivations for making this year's choice are no doubt multiple: it could be thought for example that after the world's most powerful politician, it was time to re-focus on grassroots actors. Another explanation could be that the Norwegian Nobel Committee is deliberately developing its taste for the controversial in order to provoke even greater media interest. That is a subject that will no doubt be raised as part of the next round of the national debate in Norway, and elsewhere.

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