INTERNATIONAL NUREMBERG PRINCIPLES ACADEMY

Statement by Judge Navi Pillay on the awarding of the 2026 Nobel Peace Prize

I am deeply honoured and grateful to have been awarded the 2026 Nobel Peace Prize. Let me dedicate this award to all of the survivors of international crimes as well as to practitioners and defenders of international justice whose compassion and courage continue to ensure that impunity will not be allowed to reign.

We are living through an era when international law and human rights are under significant political attack. This worsening reality is particularly visible with the attacks on the International Criminal Court. As the Nobel Committee has rightly stated, "an international legal system in which war criminals are held to account and the victims of abuse see justice served is a precondition for a peaceful world". Perhaps it was meant to be that I was in this historic courtroom 600, where the Nuremberg trials were held, when the announcement was made, and I was informed of the award.

These efforts to weaken international criminal justice endanger the progress painstakingly made since Nuremberg and risk returning us to a world in which power, rather than law, determines whose suffering matters. This award strengthens my conviction that we must stand together in defence of the rule of law, independent courts and an international legal order based on principle rather than selectivity. The institutions that I have had the privilege to serve including the High Court of South Africa, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the International Criminal Court, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Commission of Inquiry on Occupied Palestinian Territory, the International Court of Justice and the International Nuremberg Principles Academy, have represented this promise to advance and protect the equal dignity of every human being and the rights of women and children in particular.

We must continue this mission and keep the promise enshrined in the United Nations Charter to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". That is the promise we owe to all those victims and survivors of international crimes and to our children and those who will inherit the world of tomorrow.

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