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Ahtisaari wins Nobel Peace Prize

KosovoCompromise Staff

Former special UN envoy for the Kosovo status talks Martti Ahtisaari received the Nobel Peace Prize on Friday for his efforts in Africa, Asia and Europe, including in Kosovo.

"The Norwegian Nobel Committee has decided to award the Nobel Peace Prize for 2008 to Martti Ahtisaari for his important efforts, on several continents and over more than three decades, to resolve international conflicts. These efforts have contributed to a more peaceful world and to 'fraternity between nations' in Alfred Nobel's spirit," the committee said in announcing the prize of 10 million kroner (US\$1.4 million).

"For the past 20 years, he has figured prominently in endeavors to resolve several serious and long-lasting conflicts," the citation said, mentioning his work in conflicts from Namibia and Aceh, Indonesia, to Kosovo and Iraq.

Speaking to NRK Norwegian TV, Ahtisaari said he "was very pleased and grateful" at receiving the prize.

Asked what work he considered the most important, Ahtisaari, the first Finn to win the prize, said that "of course Namibia is absolutely the most important because it took such a long time." He also singled out his work in Kosovo and Aceh.

The president of the European Commission Jose-Manuel Barroso congratulated Ahtisaari for the prize.

"We know President Ahtisaari for his untiring efforts to maintain peace and stability on our continent. He played a key role during the International Conference on the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s. His strong commitment and excellent negotiating skills were crucial in the talks to end the fighting in Kosovo in 1999. As the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for Kosovo, he played a major role in contributing to the security and stability of the region of the Western Balkans", Barroso said.

Meanwhile, the Swedish institute TFF (Transnational Foundation for Peace and Future Research) called the decision "scandaous".

"The choice of Martti Ahtisaari satisfies - even with a broad interpretation - none of the criteria outlined in Alfred Nobel's will, namely: to contribute to fraternity in the world, to reduce armies and to establish peace congresses - to quote them in the Nobel's own language of 1895", it said.



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”Ahtisaari has repeatedly functioned as "peace fixer" for Western power elites. In 1999 he was the envoy who persuaded the Serb state to give in after NATO's 78 days of bombing, the most brutal event in Europe since 1945, which also lacked a UN Security Council mandate. He then was appointed as the "architect" of the plan behind the separation of now "independent" Kosovo which, following this bombing, broke off from Serbia. Independent Kosovo is recognized by only 25% of the world's governments.

So, Ahtisaari is a man who by his "mediations" fully endorses the "peace" brought about by militarist means and international law violations - rather than following the UN norm of "peace by peaceful means.", TFF said.