

University of Haifa

The Senate of the University of Haifa, by virtue of the authority vested in it by the constitution of the University and in accordance with the recommendations of the President and the Executive Committee

hereby confers upon

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf

the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy, Honoris Causa

In recognition of her vision, courage and willingness to march, against every risk and every obstacle, along a path that has led her people to peace and prosperity; on her leadership, ability to act and uncompromisingly struggle for equal rights for women, and for upholding universal values, while giving expression to the fact that success and abilities are not dependent on gender and race; and on her work around the globe to protect human dignity and the right of all mankind to education and freedom.

Conferred in 1 Sivan 5776/June 7, 2016
Haifa, Israel



Ami Ayalon

Chairman of the Executive Committee



Amos Shapira

President



Prof. David Faraggi

Rector



PRESIDENT ELLEN JOHNSON SIRLEAF

President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, now in her second term in office, is Liberia's 24th President, the first democratically-elected female Head of State on the African continent, and Winner of the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize. Known as Africa's "Iron Lady," President Johnson Sirleaf has always stood for peace, justice and democratic rule, while embodying a passionate commitment to hard work, integrity, good governance, women's rights, and education.

Born in Monrovia in 1938, Ellen Eugenia Johnson completed her schooling at the College of West Africa in her home city, then continued her studies at Madison Business College, University of Colorado, and Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government where, in 1971, she attained an MA in Public Administration.

A controversial speech she made at the convocation ceremony at her alma mater in 1972, proved to be her political debut when she strongly criticized the government and showed her determination to speak the truth no matter the consequences.

After joining Liberia's Treasury Department, she rose quickly through its ranks, becoming Minister of Finance in 1979. Following the 1980 coup d'état, Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf served as President of the Liberian Bank for Development and Investment (LBDI), but fled Liberia that same year as a result of the government's increasingly martial dictates. For close to two decades she held top executive positions at various private and global financial and development entities in Kenya, the United States, the World Bank, and the United Nations.

Returning home in 1997, Mrs. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was a candidate in the presidential elections in which she finished second. While in self-imposed exile in Côte d'Ivoire, she established the Kormah Development and Investment Corporation, a venture capital vehicle for African entrepreneurs, and Mesuagoon, a Liberian Community Development NGO. In 2003 she joined the National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL), serving as Chairperson of its Governance Reform Commission. Two years later she resigned to stand in the general and presidential elections, which she won. She was inaugurated into office on January 16, 2006.

As a result of the strong relations she built with regional partners and the international community, President Sirleaf led the Liberian economy through exponential growth, increasing the national budget, attracting major foreign investment, significantly reducing the country's foreign debt, and forging a place for Liberia in international markets.

President Sirleaf has, among others, served as Chairperson of the African Leaders Malaria Alliance; Chairperson of the Mano River Union; and a Goodwill Ambassador for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) in Africa. As a founding member of the International Institute for Women in Political Leadership, she has investigated the Rwandan Genocide, negotiated in the Inter-Congolese Dialogue process, co-chaired the UN's high-level panel to advise on the global development framework beyond 2015, and, on behalf of UNIFEM, studied the effect of conflict on women and their roles in peace-building. She has also served on a number of advisory boards, including the International Crisis Group (USA), Women Waging Peace (USA), and others.