

The Elders welcome Myanmar peace conference

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Elders warmly welcome the Union Peace Conference convened by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. They believe the conference represents Myanmar's best chance to date to bring a definitive end to the many violent conflicts that have plagued its ethnic minority regions almost continuously since independence in 1948.

[Gro Harlem Brundtland](#), Deputy Chair of The Elders who led the group's last delegation to the country in December 2014, said:

"The basic rights of all Myanmar's people regardless of race, religion or citizenship should be a guiding principle as the country charts its way to a fully democratic and peaceful future. We hope that all parties to the Union Peace Conference hold firm to this principle and engage in its proceedings in good faith."

The Elders note that since coming to power in November 2015, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has given highest priority to national reconciliation and inclusiveness, stressing the need to bring all armed factions into a political dialogue about the country's future constitutional make-up.

They are pleased to see that most of the ethnic armed groups will be taking part in this latest peace conference, though they remain concerned about fighting still persisting in parts of Kachin and Shan states. All sides must demonstrate sincerity about their stated wish to find peaceful solutions to problems.

The Elders also welcome last week's announcement by the Myanmar Government of the establishment of an independent commission headed by Kofi Annan tasked with recommending measures to improve the dire situation in Rakhine State. The former UN Secretary-General, who is also Chair of The Elders, will be undertaking this important mission in his own capacity.

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About The Elders

The Elders are independent leaders using their collective experience and influence for peace, justice and human rights worldwide. The group was founded by Nelson Mandela in 2007.

The Elders are [Martti Ahtisaari](#), [Kofi Annan](#) (Chair), [Ela Bhatt](#), [Lakhdar Brahimi](#), [Gro Harlem Brundtland](#) (Deputy Chair), [Hina Jilani](#), [Ricardo Lagos](#), [Graça Machel](#), [Mary Robinson](#) and [Ernesto Zedillo](#).

[Fernando Henrique Cardoso](#), [Jimmy Carter](#) and [Desmond Tutu](#) are Honorary Elders.

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For biographies of the Elders, blogs, photos, videos and more information about their work please go to www.theElders.org.

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