

Kofi Annan

Former UN Secretary-General, Nobel Peace Laureate and Chair of The Elders; put development, human rights, the rule of law, good governance and peace at the top of the United Nations agenda.

- Chair of The Elders
- United Nations Secretary-General 1997-2006
- Initiated the Millennium Development Goals
- Played a central role in the acceptance by Member States of the Responsibility to Protect doctrine
- Nobel Peace Laureate (jointly with the UN) 2001
- UN/Arab League Joint Special Envoy on the Syrian crisis 2012
- Chair of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, Myanmar 2016

"No one can deprive us of the right, as concerned global citizens, to want to do something about the challenges that face us."

Work with The Elders

Kofi Annan has been a member of The Elders since its founding in 2007, succeeding Desmond Tutu as Chair in May 2013. Between February and August 2012 Kofi Annan temporarily recused himself as a member of The Elders during his UN and Arab League assignment as Joint Special Envoy on the Syrian crisis.

Kofi Annan's first engagement with The Elders came in November 2008 when, together with Jimmy Carter and Graça Machel, he drew the world's attention on the humanitarian crisis affecting [Zimbabwe](#).

In May 2011, following months of post-election violence, Mr Annan, Mary Robinson and Desmond Tutu travelled to Abidjan, [Côte d'Ivoire](#), to encourage reconciliation. After meeting President Ouattara, civil society representatives, members of the opposition and people who had fled their homes in the fighting, he warned that much of Ivorian society remained polarised and stressed that the new government's role was to ensure the safety and security of all Ivorians. In October 2013, an Elders' delegation led by Kofi Annan revisited Cote d'Ivoire to

assess the progress made in the recovery of the country and discussed the challenges it faces ahead of the 2015 elections. The group met with a number of interlocutors to encourage them to step up efforts for reconciliation and to urge the need for preparing the elections with integrity in order to avoid the outbreak of a new conflict.

In January 2014, Kofi Annan together with Martti Ahtisaari, Desmond Tutu and Ernesto Zedillo visited [Iran](#) to encourage dialogue between Iran and the international community and promote peaceful solutions to conflict and sectarian divisions in the region. The Elders discussed how best to ease regional tensions, the spread of extremist violence internationally, the issue of human rights and the Syrian crisis, as well as their support to the progress being made in the international negotiations over Iran's nuclear programme.

In April 2015, Kofi Annan led The Elders' delegation to [Moscow](#). Along with Martti Ahtisaari, Gro Harlem Brundtland, Lakhdar Brahimi, Jimmy Carter and Ernesto Zedillo, Mr Annan spoke to Russian officials about key geopolitical issues. During the trip, The Elders met with President Vladimir Putin, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, as well as former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev

In September 2016 Kofi Annan together with Martti Ahtisaari and Lakhdar Brahimi visited Berlin to hear a range of perspectives on the country's response to the refugee crisis: from Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Federal President Joachim Gauck and business leaders, to civil society groups, volunteers and refugees themselves. This trip also marked the launch of a new report on [refugees and migration](#).

Reforming the United Nations

Kofi Annan was the seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations and the first to emerge from the ranks of UN staff. A constant advocate for human rights, development and the rule of law, he revitalised the UN, bringing it closer to the public by forging ties with civil society, the private sector and other partners.

At his initiative, the [Millennium Development Goals](#) were introduced in 2000, creating for the first time a global blueprint to end poverty. Mr Annan also oversaw the strengthening of UN peacekeeping to cope with a rapid rise in the number of operations and personnel, and the establishment in 2005 of two new intergovernmental bodies: the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council.

Mr Annan played a central role in the creation of the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the adoption of the UN's first-ever counter-terrorism strategy, and the acceptance by Member States of the 'responsibility to protect' people from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity when their own states fail to do so. His Global Compact

initiative, launched in 1999, has become the world's largest effort to promote corporate social responsibility.

In 2001, Kofi Annan was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace jointly with the United Nations "for their work for a better organised and more peaceful world."

Diplomacy and conflict mediation

As UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan undertook wide-ranging diplomatic initiatives. In 1998, he helped ease the transition to civilian rule in Nigeria. Also that year, his efforts helped avoid an outbreak of hostilities in Iraq following an impasse between the country and the UN Security Council over compliance with resolutions on weapons inspections and other matters.

In 1999, he was deeply involved in the process by which Timor-Leste gained independence from Indonesia. He was responsible for certifying Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000, and in 2006 his efforts contributed to securing a cessation of hostilities between Israel and Hizbollah. That year he also mediated a settlement between Cameroon and Nigeria during their dispute over the Bakassi peninsula.

Mr Annan continues to use his experience to mediate and resolve conflict. In Kenya, in early 2008, he led the African Union's Panel of Eminent African Personalities to mediate a peaceful resolution to the post-election violence. Most recently he served as the UN/Arab League Joint Special Envoy on the Syrian crisis, between February and August 2012.

In September 2016, Mr Annan was appointed Chair of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State in Myanmar, at the request of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. The Commission aims to support and advise the Government of Myanmar in resolving the conflict in Rakhine State and improving the welfare of all people living there.

Advocate for Africa

Since leaving the United Nations, Kofi Annan has continued to advocate for better policies to meet the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable, particularly in Africa.

In 2007 he established the [Kofi Annan Foundation](#), which works to promote better global governance and strengthen the capacities of people and countries to achieve a fairer, more secure world. Through the Kofi Annan Foundation, Mr Annan launched the West Africa Commission on Drugs in January 2013 with the aim to raise the issue on the political agenda and create more effective policy responses.

He also chairs the Africa Progress Panel, which tracks and encourages sustained development across the African continent; the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa, an organisation that

works to promote rapid, sustainable agricultural growth based on smallholder farmers in Africa;
and is a Board Member, Patron or Honorary Member of a number of organisations.