

Denis Mukwege joins The Elders

26 MARCH 2024

The Elders today welcome Dr Denis Mukwege, the Congolese gynaecologist and Nobel Peace Laureate, as the newest member of their group.

Denis Mukwege, 69, is a globally respected expert on conflict-related sexual violence and an outspoken advocate for the rights of survivors, and the empowerment of all women and girls.

In 1999 he founded the Panzi Hospital in Bukavu in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where he treats survivors of sexual violence and women with severe gynaecological problems.

Denis Mukwege is the sixth African Elder to join the group since it was founded by Nelson Mandela in 2007, and the seventh Nobel Peace Laureate. His arrival takes the current number of active Elders to twelve.

Denis Mukwege said:

“It is a huge honour to join the Elders in their mission to secure a world where everyone enjoys peace, justice and human rights on a sustainable planet. Their work has never been more important in an age of heightened geopolitical tensions where the suffering of innocent civilians is too often ignored. I see this every day in my work in Central Africa, and I look forward to joining the Elders’ endeavours to end this scourge across the whole world.”

Dr Mukwege was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2018 for his campaigning to end the use of rape as a weapon of war. He is also a recipient of the United Nations Human Rights Prize (2008) and the Sakharov Prize (2014). He has been a member of the Scientific Council of the World Health Organization. He was a Presidential candidate in the DRC elections in 2023, standing on a platform to end conflict, hunger and corruption.

Mary Robinson, Chair of The Elders and former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, said:

“I am delighted to welcome Dr Denis Mukwege to The Elders. He brings rich expertise, courage and impeccable moral authority, and his commitment to the rights of survivors will serve as a crucial guide to our ongoing work on conflict and gender equality.”

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About The Elders

The Elders are independent global leaders working for peace, justice, human rights and a sustainable planet. The group was founded by Nelson Mandela in 2007.

The Elders are [Ban Ki-moon \(Deputy Chair\)](#), [Gro Harlem Brundtland](#), [Helen Clark](#), [Elbegdorj Tsakhia](#), [Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein](#), [Hina Jilani](#), [Denis Mukwege](#), [Ellen Johnson Sirleaf](#), [Graça Machel \(Deputy Chair\)](#), [Juan Manuel Santos](#), [Mary Robinson \(Chair\)](#) and [Ernesto Zedillo](#).

[Lakhdar Brahimi](#), [Fernando Henrique Cardoso](#), [Jimmy Carter](#) and [Ricardo Lagos](#) are Elders Emeritus.

[Desmond Tutu](#) (1931-2021) and [Kofi Annan](#) (1938-2018) were founding members of The Elders and served as Chairs from 2007 to 2013 and 2013 to 2018 respectively. [Ela Bhatt](#) (1933 - 2022) and [Martti Ahtisaari](#) (1937 - 2023) were members of The Elders from 2007 to 2016 and 2009 to 2018 respectively.

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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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