

Media advisory: The Elders to visit Myanmar and Thailand on 24-28 March

21 March 2014

MEDIA ADVISORY

On Monday 24 March, two members of The Elders will begin a five-day visit to Myanmar (24-26 March) and Thailand (27-28 March).

As independent leaders committed to peace, justice and human rights, the Elders aim to highlight the benefits of socio-economic justice and promote participatory and inclusive decision-making, at a critical time for Myanmar's political and economic opening-up.

The Elders travelling to the region are:

- [Gro Harlem Brundtland](#), former Prime Minister of Norway, former Director-General of the World Health Organization and Deputy Chair of The Elders (**delegation leader**);
- [Martti Ahtisaari](#), former President of Finland and Nobel Peace Laureate.

In Myanmar the Elders will travel to Nay Pyi Taw for meetings with the Government and Parliament, and to Myitkyina (Kachin State), to learn about the current conflict in Kachin State from local people.

In Thailand, the Elders will travel to areas along the border with Myanmar. They will study the long-term impact of the civil wars that have affected Myanmar's ethnic minority groups for over 60 years, and meet those offering them help and essential public services.

This visit marks the continuation of The Elders' work in Myanmar, following a first visit by Jimmy Carter (former US President), Martti Ahtisaari and Gro Harlem Brundtland in September 2013.

The purpose of this visit is to meet with a wider cross-section of Myanmar society, including grassroots and ethnic minority organisations the Elders were unable to meet on their first visit.

Media inquiries

International contact:

Elliott Fox, Media Officer, The Elders: media@theElders.org / T +44 (0) 77 9569 3903

Myanmar contact:

Soe Thu Htun, Mango Media: media-14@mango.com.mm / +95 (0) 9 4500 01087

To receive updates about the visit, please register your interest by emailing the above media contacts. The Elders' media availability will be very limited.

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), [Fernando Henrique Cardoso](#), [Jimmy Carter](#), [Hina Jilani](#), [Graça Machel](#), [Mary Robinson](#) and [Ernesto Zedillo](#).

[Desmond Tutu](#) is an honorary Elder.

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

Sign up to [receive The Elders' press releases](#).

Follow The Elders on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Flickr](#) and [YouTube](#).

Members of The Elders traveling to Myanmar and Thailand



Gro Harlem Brundtland (Deputy Chair of The Elders) – delegation leader

Gro Harlem Brundtland, a medical doctor, was Norway's first woman Prime Minister, serving a total of ten years as head of government between 1981 and 1996. She chaired the World Commission on Environment and Development – known as the Brundtland Commission – which articulated the principle of sustainable development for the first time at a global level. She was Director-General of the World Health Organization from 1998 to 2003, UN Special Envoy for Climate Change from 2007 to 2010 and, from 2011 to 2012, was a member of the United Nations Secretary-General's Global Sustainability Panel.



Martti Ahtisaari

Martti Ahtisaari was President of the Republic of Finland from 1994 to 2000. A distinguished statesman, he is also a globally respected diplomat and peace mediator who has played a key role in ending conflicts in Aceh, Kosovo and Northern Ireland. As a senior diplomat he helped Namibia to achieve independence and was made an honorary citizen. In recognition of "his important efforts, on several continents and over more than three decades, to resolve international conflicts," he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in December 2008. He is Chair of [Crisis Management Initiative \(CMI\)](#).