

The Elders conclude three-day visit to Moscow

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Six members of [The Elders](#), led by the organisation's Chair, Kofi Annan, today concluded a successful visit to Moscow with a meeting with President Vladimir Putin at his residence.

The Elders, concerned about increasing international confrontations and geopolitical tensions, held constructive and open talks with President Putin. The Elders intend to continue their discussions on these deeply worrisome developments with other governments.

[Kofi Annan](#), former UN Secretary-General, said:

"We are pleased to have had the opportunity to discuss Russia's role in international affairs with the President. To be successful in defusing conflicts and building trust, high-level dialogue and effective action are essential."

Apart from President Putin, the Elders held in-depth discussions with Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and former Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov, as well as the heads of leading Moscow-based think tanks.

As this was the first visit by The Elders as an organisation to Moscow, the delegation was keen to listen to their Russian interlocutors. The Elders wanted to hear how the Government views current geopolitical crises around the world, in particular the situation in Ukraine and prospects for implementation of the Minsk II agreement. The Elders emphasised the importance of the urgent implementation of the agreement.

A recurrent topic of discussion was the complex and dangerous situation in the Middle East today. The Elders agreed with their Russian hosts on the dangers posed by the rise of terrorism and extremism in Syria and Iraq, and the worrying spread of its influence to other regions.

They also spoke with their interlocutors in Moscow about the need to bring the Iranian nuclear discussions with the "P5+1" group of major states, including Russia, to a successful conclusion by the end of June, and then to make sure the agreement is fully implemented.

As an independent organisation dedicated to the pursuit of peace worldwide, The Elders are keen to encourage steps by all concerned that can help de-escalate global tensions and the risk of further conflict.

Those Elders who participated in the mission to Russia were: [Martti Ahtisaari](#), former Finnish President; [Kofi Annan](#), former UN Secretary-General; [Lakhdar Brahimi](#), former Algerian Foreign Minister; [Gro Harlem Brundtland](#), former Norwegian Prime Minister; [Jimmy Carter](#), former US President; and [Ernesto Zedillo](#), former Mexican President.

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

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

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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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