

## The Elders call on Sri Lanka's leaders to uphold constitutional law

**LONDON, 31 October 2018**

The Elders today expressed their grave concern at the unprecedented situation in Sri Lanka following President Maithripala Sirisena's unconstitutional decision to dismiss Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe and suspend Parliament.

They called on President Sirisena to immediately allow Parliament to reconvene as a first step to resolve the country's political and constitutional crisis.

The Elders urged all the country's political leaders to act in strict accordance with the rule of law and show respect for human rights and democratic principles, refraining from any actions that could inflame political tensions and cause more violence.

[Gro Harlem Brundtland](#), Acting Chair of The Elders and former Prime Minister of Norway, said:

*"Sri Lanka is facing an unprecedented constitutional crisis which must be urgently resolved by peaceful and legal means. The country has suffered so much from years of conflict and human rights abuses, and cannot afford reckless political manoeuvres. I urge President Sirisena to act in the interest of all Sri Lankans by respecting democracy and constitutional norms."*

The Elders warned that further unconstitutional actions risked jeopardising the fragile reconciliation and redevelopment processes that Sri Lanka has undertaken following decades of civil war. Trust in state institutions could be seriously harmed if the constitution is violated by the head of state.

[Lakhdar Brahimi](#), Elder, former Foreign Minister of Algeria and UN diplomat, said:

*"In all its years of conflict and anguish, Sri Lanka has never experienced such a serious constitutional crisis. The country's leaders must abide by its traditions of constitutional law and parliamentary democracy and govern with transparency, accountability and full respect for human rights."*

[Hina Jilani](#), Elder and Pakistani human rights advocate, added:

*"This is a moment of acute concern for all who are committed to the rule of law and democracy. President Sirisena must stand by his past commitments to deliver peace, justice and*

*reconciliation to his people – all of which can only be achieved by strict adherence to and respect for the constitution.”*

ENDS

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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](#) (1938-2018), [Ban Ki-moon](#), [Lakhdar Brahimi](#), [Gro Harlem Brundtland](#) (Acting Chair), [Hina Jilani](#), [Ricardo Lagos](#), [Graça Machel](#), [Mary Robinson](#) and [Ernesto Zedillo](#).

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

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