

The Elders call on African leaders to push for urgent ceasefire, mediation and humanitarian access in Ethiopia

LONDON, 30 November 2021

The Elders today urged African leaders to intervene to stop the conflict in Ethiopia escalating into a regional crisis and an even worse humanitarian disaster.

The Elders reiterated their calls on the African Union and the UN Security Council to take urgent steps to address the humanitarian and human rights crises in Ethiopia, which threaten peace and security in the Horn of Africa as well as the lives of Ethiopians. It is now clear that African mediation at the highest level is needed to stop the fighting.

During their board visit to Addis Ababa in 2019 (when they met Prime Minister Abiy as well as AU representatives), the Elders supported the idea of African solutions to African problems. The Elders have publicly and privately backed AU Envoy Olusegun Obasanjo in his efforts to find the compromise needed by all parties to end the conflict. They believe he needs more active support from African leaders to achieve this.

[Ellen Johnson Sirleaf](#), former President of Liberia, Nobel Peace Laureate and member of The Elders, said:

“AU Envoy Obasanjo is right to expect African leaders to bring pressure to bear on all sides to achieve a ceasefire. The region and the continent cannot afford a full-blown conflict in Africa’s second biggest country, and the home of the African Union. Ethiopia’s stability is vital for the whole of Africa. It is time for mediation, and it is time for African leaders to help that happen.”

[Juan Manuel Santos](#), former President of Colombia, Nobel Peace Laureate and member of The Elders, said:

“I was inspired by the vision of “Medemer” which my fellow Nobel Peace Laureate set out in his Nobel acceptance speech in 2019: that different views can be brought together and a compromise found, to build a just, egalitarian, democratic, and humane society. The PM’s vision can only be realised if he applies his philosophy to the current conflict. African leaders must urge

him to seek a compromise that will enable peace and prosperity across Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa. It is equally vital that the TPLF leadership is willing to compromise. But the solution has to be found within Ethiopia, not imposed internationally.”

[Ban Ki-moon](#), Deputy Chair of The Elders and former UN Secretary-General, said:

“A year after this destructive conflict began, it is now escalating at an alarming rate, exacerbating the dire humanitarian situation. With 9.4 million Ethiopians in need of food assistance as a result of the conflict, 400,000 facing famine-like conditions, and widespread human rights abuses bordering on crimes against humanity, an immediate ceasefire is urgently needed. A ceasefire is the first step towards inclusive mediation, and allowing life-saving humanitarian access. This is needed not just by the Ethiopians suffering from the fighting, but to save the region from the consequences of conflict spilling over Ethiopia’s borders.”

The Elders met Prime Minister Abiy in June 2019 on the occasion of their board meeting in Addis Ababa. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf had discussions with him in Addis Ababa in November 2020, as did Juan Manuel Santos in November 2021.

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Media enquiries

Luke Upchurch, Director of Communications
T: +44 7741742064
media@theElders.org

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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 [Ban Ki-moon \(Deputy Chair\)](#), [Gro Harlem Brundtland](#), [Zeid Raad Al Hussein](#), [Hina Jilani](#), [Ellen Johnson Sirleaf](#), [Ricardo Lagos](#), [Graça Machel \(Deputy Chair\)](#), [Juan Manuel Santos](#), [Mary Robinson](#) (Chair) and [Ernesto Zedillo](#).

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

[Kofi Annan](#) (1938-2018) was a founding member of The Elders and served as Chair from 2013 to 2018.

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