

Terms of Reference

Research and scoping of opportunities for potential Elders' programmatic engagement in the conflict in Sudan

1. Background

[The Elders](#) are an independent group of global leaders working for peace, justice, human rights and a sustainable planet. The Elders are supported by a secretariat team based in London.

The Elders' [strategy for 2023 – 2027](#) focuses on three programmes that address existential threats to humanity requiring a collective response - the climate crisis, pandemics, and nuclear weapons – and a fourth programme on conflict (a threat in itself, and a risk factor for other threats). We also have four cross-cutting commitments which are incorporated into our programmes - multilateralism, human rights, gender equality and women in leadership, and intergenerational dialogue.

Under the conflict programme the Elders seek the following impact: Global peace and security are improved through enhanced respect for international law and more inclusive national and international dialogue. They seek to achieve this by supporting the following long term outcomes:

- International law and accountability are reinforced in conflict contexts.
- Inclusive dialogue and diplomacy are promoted to resolve conflict, including the role of women as agents for peace.
- The international peace and security architecture is protected and reformed.

Within this framework, the Elders currently focus on three priority conflicts – Russia/Ukraine, Israel/Palestine, and Myanmar. They undertake a mix of private diplomacy and, where appropriate, public advocacy (e.g. media interviews, social media, opinion pieces, public speeches, policy documents). They regularly engage in regional and global forums such as events at UN headquarters, the Munich Security Conference, and the Doha Forum, as well as dedicated visits to conflict priority countries.

At their board meeting in October 2025, recognising the gravity of the conflict in Sudan, the Elders requested the Secretariat to explore whether the Elders could engage in the conflict.

2. Objective

The objective of this assignment is scope potential areas of engagement by the Elders in Sudan, based on analysis and stakeholder consultation.

3. Scope

Specifically the consultant will:

- Conduct **desk-based research** on the conflict including latest conflict dynamics, main conflict-drivers and stakeholders, civilian protection and humanitarian aspects, main diplomatic efforts at deescalation and resolution.
- **Consult with experts** to discuss the conflict dynamics and trends in Sudan, including the role of regional and global actors, and explore potential entry points and objectives for any Elders engagement (with Secretariat staff joining as appropriate)
- **Produce a report** summarising key findings and a set of clear options and recommendations for possible Elders' engagement. This should include a realistic assessment of potential impact in the current context.

Focus areas and objectives for Elders could include:

- advocacy focused on increasing international attention on the conflict, including highlighting the humanitarian dimensions of the conflict, such as humanitarian needs, the need to facilitate humanitarian access and protect humanitarian workers
- advocacy highlighting the scale of atrocities, and promote prevention of and accountability for atrocity crimes and respect for international humanitarian law.
- influence the stakeholders to the conflict in support of dialogue, diplomacy and de-escalation; this could include exploring possible role(s) for The Elders to engage with existing/current multinational initiatives to address the Sudan conflict (by actors such as the Quad, AU, IGAD, Horn of Africa Initiative).
- engagement and support for civil society and community-based initiatives to amplify and encourage support for their work

These or other priorities would only be pursued if it was assessed that Elders role could hold potential for positive impact. It will be important to consider the limitations, risks and opportunities presented by the current context. The balance of public advocacy and private diplomacy opportunities should also be considered.

4. Approach

The work will be undertaken a consultant, working 10 - 15 days over a period commencing in March 2026 and running to 10 April 2026.

The consultant will be responsible for submission of all deliverables.

| Task | Activities | Indicative Timeframe | Outputs | Number of days |
|---------------------------|--|----------------------|---|----------------|
| Inception | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with Secretariat conflict team to agree scope • Draft stakeholder consultation list, revised workplan | Early March | Consultation list Workplan | |
| Research and consultation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background research • Consultation with experts (w Secretariat staff as needed) • Presentation of initial findings (covering | Mid-March | Initial outline of main findings, potential entry points and objectives | |

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| | potential entry points and objectives for the Elders) | | | |
| Drafting | Draft scoping paper for presentation to the Elders | 25 March | Draft 1 | |
| Final report | Finalisation of scoping paper | 3 April | Final Draft | |
| Total | | | | |

5. Deliverables & timeline

Approximately 10-15 days have been allocated to this assignment.

The final product will be a scoping paper (1 page executive summary; 6-8 pages main report; annexes as needed) with a tentative structure (final to be agreed at outset of the assignment) of i) summary conflict analysis, including diplomatic efforts at deescalation and resolution, ii) mapping of relevant priority stakeholders, iii) potential entry points and objectives for Elders.

Other outputs required during this assignment include:

- Agreed scope of the research
- Proposed consultation list
- Revised workplan
- Initial outline of findings from consultations, potential entry points, objectives;
- First draft of scoping paper (structure to be agreed at outset)
- Final draft of scoping paper (ready for presentation at Elders Board Meeting)