

The Elders call for inclusive and independent reconciliation process in Côte d'Ivoire

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PRESS RELEASE

The Elders have written to President Alassane Ouattara of Côte d'Ivoire on the eve of the inauguration of the Commission on Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation (CDRV), to urge him to ensure that key principles are included at the core of its work.

The Elders emphasise that a successful Commission should be inclusive and independent. They also highlight the importance of ensuring that the judicial process, started to address past violations of human rights, is both fair and impartial.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Chair of The Elders and former Chair of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission said:

"We wish to share with the people of Côte d'Ivoire the lessons that we have learned from efforts to bring reconciliation to other divided nations, in the hope that our experience can help to foster the reconstruction of your beautiful country and the binding of painful wounds after years of conflict."

The Elders believe that inclusiveness is a key ingredient for any successful reconciliation process. They urge President Ouattara and Mr Charles Konan Banny, President of the Commission on Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation, to take the time required to reach out to, and involve, representatives of Côte d'Ivoire's vibrant civil society in decisions on the orientation and scope of the Commission's work. This would be a wise investment of time.

Protecting the independence of the Commission – in reality and as well as in the popular mind – is another feature of successful reconciliation processes. The Elders encourage President Ouattara to take steps to demonstrate publicly his commitment to the Commission's impartiality and independence.

Another lesson the Elders have learned is that reconciliation and justice are intertwined. A number of officials from the Gbagbo administration who have allegedly committed violations of human rights are being prosecuted. President Ouattara also promised to charge those of his own supporters who are similarly suspected of having violated human rights.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu said:

“We encourage President Ouattara to demonstrate to his people and the world that the judicial process he has started is both fair and completely impartial. As we said during our May visit, we are convinced that the perception that “victor’s justice” is being applied would greatly undermine the reconciliation process.”

The Elders are confident that by adopting these simple but important principles, the Commission will be able to build up the popular trust necessary for the reconciliation process to take root among the Ivoirian people, a key component of bringing lasting peace to the country.

The Elders’ previous work on Côte d’Ivoire

In May 2011 Kofi Annan, Desmond Tutu and Mary Robinson travelled to Côte d’Ivoire to encourage reconciliation and healing, after four months of post-election violence in which an estimated 3,000 people were killed and one million displaced. During their visit, they met President Ouattara and former President Laurent Gbagbo, under house arrest in Korhogo, as well as members of civil society.

Read more at: <http://theelders.org/cote-d'ivoire>

About The Elders

The Elders is an independent group of global leaders, brought together by Nelson Mandela in 2007, who work together for peace and human rights.

The Elders are [Martti Ahtisaari](#), [Kofi Annan](#), [Ela Bhatt](#), [Lakhdar Brahimi](#), [Gro Brundtland](#), [Fernando Henrique Cardoso](#), [Jimmy Carter](#), [Graça Machel](#), [Mary Robinson](#) and [Desmond Tutu](#) (Chair). [Nelson Mandela](#) and [Aung San Suu Kyi](#) are honorary Elders.

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