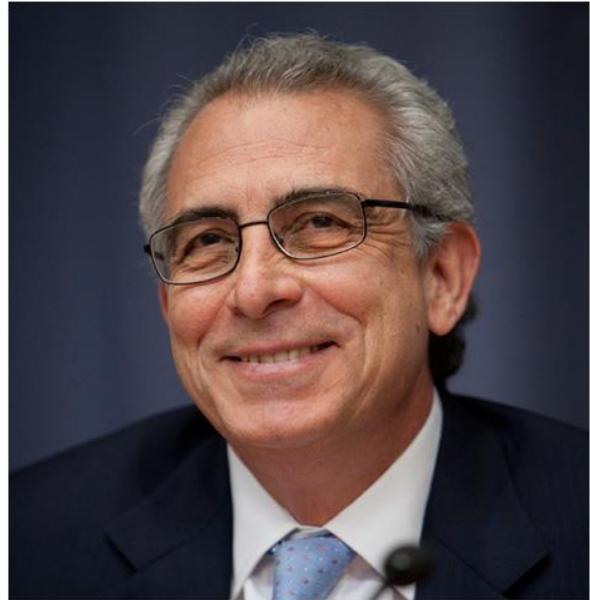


Kofi Annan announces two new Elders: Hina Jilani and Ernesto Zedillo



Hina Jilani and Ernesto Zedillo. (Credit: Jeff Moore/The Elders; Harold Shapiro)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[Hina Jilani](#), internationally known human rights defender from Pakistan, and [Ernesto Zedillo](#), former President of Mexico, have joined The Elders, a group of independent leaders working for peace, justice and human rights. Their appointment was announced today by Kofi Annan, Chair of the group first convened by Nelson Mandela in 2007.

[Kofi Annan](#), former UN Secretary-General and Chair of The Elders, said:

"I am very pleased that Hina Jilani and Ernesto Zedillo have agreed to join our group. Their wisdom and expertise will be precious assets for our future work. Their careers are models of ethical leadership and unwavering commitment to democratic values."

“I trust that they can help us inspire and promote these principles, and bring us closer to overcoming the Elders’ priority challenges: tackling the root causes of conflict and building a more just and inclusive world.”

Hina Jilani is an Advocate of the Supreme Court of Pakistan. In this capacity she has conducted many landmark cases, setting new standards in Pakistan for the rights of women, minorities, children, and prisoners – including political prisoners.

She created Pakistan’s first all-women law firm and co-founded Pakistan’s first legal aid centre. She also founded the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan and Pakistan’s Women Action Forum, a prominent women’s rights group whose campaigns have been at the heart of the democracy movement in the country. She was the first Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on Human Rights Defenders from 2000 to 2008.

[Hina Jilani](#) said:

“The Elders stand for independence, credibility and trust. Above all, we must champion democracy and peace. I hope I can contribute to promoting these principles and increase the visibility of the issues that the Elders decide to take on.

“The neglect and threats faced by minorities all over the world is a growing concern of mine. I hope my new colleagues and I can emphasise this throughout our work.”

Ernesto Zedillo, an economist, was President of Mexico from 1994 to 2000. He is currently the Director of the Center for the Study of Globalization at Yale University in the United States.

During his presidency, Mexico achieved profound democratic reforms, paving the way for a robust multi-party system. The country, after defeating a severe financial crisis, experienced strong economic growth and saw a great increase in social programmes to tackle poverty.

Since leaving office, Ernesto Zedillo has focused on seeking solutions to some of today’s foremost global challenges, notably drug policy, nuclear non-proliferation and development through his participation in a number of international commissions.

[Ernesto Zedillo](#) said:

“I see great value in a group of Elders who are entirely dedicated to the common good and whose purpose it is to rise above differences – who are there to listen, and who can draw on the experiences of Nelson Mandela.

“As Elders it can be our role to acknowledge the profound global challenges we face, but also to say: mankind can overcome them. Time and time again, acts of leadership have helped build peace and lifted millions out of poverty. We must aim to achieve stability, security and prosperity on a global scale.”

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](#).

[Nelson Mandela](#) and [Desmond Tutu](#) are honorary Elders.

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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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