

The Elders: The Egyptian draft constitution marks a potential step forward

“The constitution should protect the diversity and cultural heritage of Egypt” – Kofi Annan

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[The Elders](#) welcome the publication of the revised draft constitution, which marks a potentially important step forward on the road to a full democratic transition in Egypt.

They believe that the drafting of the constitution presents a unique and timely opportunity for the government to ensure that the rights and obligations of every citizen are fully enshrined in the fundamental laws of the nation.

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

“The constitution should protect, and indeed celebrate the extraordinary diversity and cultural heritage of Egypt and reflect the inherent value of pluralism for a healthy and vibrant society.

“As Elders, we also strongly believe that the constitution must be an instrument for safeguarding and enhancing civic accountability. All public officials should be held responsible for their actions and use of public funds in accordance with the accepted principles of democratic practice. This provision must apply to every branch of government, including the military and security services.

“We recognise that each society must choose the route most suited to its character and history. Nevertheless, we remain convinced that there are certain universal values that we all share, which transcend national and cultural differences. We earnestly hope, therefore, that these values will be reflected in the constitution that is adopted by the Egyptian people.”

The Elders’ work on Egypt

Since the beginning of the wave of popular uprisings that swept the Middle East and North Africa nearly three years ago, The Elders have stood with all those across the region who have taken their destiny into their own hands to demand dignity, freedom and human rights. The Elders support these legitimate demands and join the call for an end to authoritarian rule, oppression and corruption.

The Elders believe that all members of society – including young people, women, religious groups and minorities – must have the opportunity to participate fully in building the institutions of government. They also highlight the need for new constitutions to enshrine universal rights and freedoms.

In October 2012, former Prime Minister of Norway Gro Harlem Brundtland, former US President Jimmy Carter and former President of Ireland Mary Robinson [visited Egypt](#) to support an inclusive democratic transition in the country.

Since then, The Elders have closely watched the events unfolding in Egypt, often with deep concern. They have repeatedly called on all Egyptians, including the security services, to remain calm during the incidents that rocked the country – such as the episodes of violence following the [referendum](#) on the draft constitution led by then-President Mohammed Morsi, or during the [overthrow](#) of his government by the military in the summer of 2013.

For more information about The Elders' work on Egypt:

<http://www.theelders.org/news-media/egypt>

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](#).

[Desmond Tutu](#) is an honorary Elder.

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