

The Elders urge peaceful resolution of Zimbabwe crisis through inclusive dialogue

LONDON, 18 January 2019

The Elders today expressed deep concern at the worsening social and economic crisis in Zimbabwe amid reports of killings, arrests and intimidation of opposition and civil society figures and a shutdown of internet access.

Repression and violence would further erode trust in state authorities and imperil Zimbabwe's much-needed transition towards a more inclusive, prosperous and sustainable future.

Zimbabwe's leaders need to be extremely cautious in their use of the security services. The Elders expressed particular alarm at the use of live ammunition by police and security services in recent days, especially given the findings of the official commission of inquiry into the post-election violence of 1 August where six people were killed by live rounds in Harare.

[Mary Robinson](#), Chair of The Elders, said:

"The Government of Zimbabwe has conspicuously failed to address economic problems in a way that protects the rights and livelihoods of ordinary citizens, including provision of fuel, food and medical supplies. Closing down the internet and cracking down on civil society is not the way to restore calm; rather, President Mnangagwa needs to demonstrate inclusive and responsive leadership to try to repair social fractures."

The Elders voiced particular concern at the intimidation and allegations directed towards civil society groups in recent days. All parties should be encouraged to call for calming the streets and to condemn violence.

They reminded all Zimbabweans that [Kofi Annan](#), on his last ever mission, stood in solidarity with civil society activists in July 2018 and had urged all political and civic leaders to work together *"to ensure a Zimbabwe free from violence, where human rights are respected and prosperity restored."*

The Elders reiterated their belief that an inclusive national dialogue is the best way to defuse tensions and ease the political and social polarisation the country has seen since former President Robert Mugabe was removed from office in November 2017.

[Lakhdar Brahimi](#), Elder, Algerian and UN diplomat and former member of his country's liberation movement, said:

“The people of Zimbabwe have endured terrible suffering for decades, from colonial oppression to seeing the promises of the liberation struggle betrayed. They deserve better than the injustice and rampant corruption they now endure. The international community, including SADC leaders, must also stand by them and offer meaningful support for a true democratic transition.”

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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 [Ban Ki-moon](#) (Deputy Chair), [Lakhdar Brahimi](#), [Gro Harlem Brundtland](#), [Hina Jilani](#), [Ricardo Lagos](#), [Graça Machel](#) (Deputy Chair), [Mary Robinson](#) (Chair) and [Ernesto Zedillo](#).

[Martti Ahtisaari](#), [Ela Bhatt](#), [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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For biographies of the Elders, blogs, photos, videos and more information about their work please go to www.theElders.org.

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