

**The Elders call for strengthening of the United Nations:  
Fit for purpose in the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 09:00 CET  
7 FEBRUARY 2015**

MUNICH – Speaking at the Munich Security Conference today, The Elders announced four recommendations for strengthening the United Nations, including a review of the composition of its Security Council.

This is the first time The Elders have attended the internationally-renowned Munich Security Conference. At a time of worsening tensions in the Middle East, Ukraine and other conflict zones, the need for credible and effective international governance is stronger than ever and Munich is the right place and right time to make the case for strengthening the UN.

Seventy years since its foundation, the UN is still not delivering its Charter pledge “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war”. The organisation is seen as not truly representative of all member states and insufficiently transparent in its decision-making.

To this end The Elders issue four proposals to build a better and fairer UN system. Key to this is breaking the Security Council stalemate. The dominance of the “P5” permanent members (US, UK, France, Russia and China) can lead to institutional deadlock and exclusion of the Global South. A new category of Security Council membership is needed: non-permanent members but who are immediately eligible for re-election, thus making them *de facto* permanent members if they secure the confidence of fellow member states.

P5 states must also be more responsible in using their veto, especially during a crisis where people are threatened with genocide or other atrocities. Beyond the veto, the Security Council should take care to regularly consult those people who are affected by its decisions, especially in conflict zones, and the whole UN should establish a more transparent and accountable system for choosing its next Secretary-General.

The full statement of The Elders’ proposals for strengthening the United Nations can be found at [www.theElders.org/un-fit-purpose](http://www.theElders.org/un-fit-purpose).

Today’s call is the first step in a long-term initiative to secure meaningful change. The Elders are determined to keep up the pressure and make their voices heard from now until the election of the next UN Secretary-General.

The Elders are represented in Munich by their Chair, Kofi Annan; Deputy Chair Gro Harlem Brundtland; Martti Ahtisaari; and Graça Machel.

---

### **Media enquiries**

Jennifer Woodside, Communications Director, The Elders  
Email: [media@theElders.org](mailto:media@theElders.org) – T +44 7880 230977

Sign up to [receive The Elders' press releases](#).

---

### **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.

---

### **Find out more**

For biographies of the Elders, blogs, photos, videos and more information about their work please go to [www.theElders.org](http://www.theElders.org).

Follow The Elders on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Flickr](#) and [YouTube](#).