

The Elders condemn US refugee ban, call for global protection of vulnerable

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Elders today condemned President Donald Trump's Executive Order banning Syrian refugees from entering the United States and restricting migration from seven predominantly Muslim countries. They are concerned that the policy is at odds with the United States' distinguished record in resettling refugees and protecting victims of conflict.

The Elders believe that the complex challenges posed by refugee movements amid unprecedented levels of global migration, including legitimate security concerns, can only be resolved through international cooperation and coordination, not unilateral actions.

[Kofi Annan](#), Chair of The Elders, said:

"It is deeply regrettable that a nation of immigrants should turn its back so harshly on refugees escaping violence and war. Curtailing the US resettlement programme, the last lifeline to so many, undermines the great values of a nation that has always championed humanitarian principles and human rights."

[Hina Jilani](#), Elder and international human rights defender, added:

"The United States has been a sanctuary for refugees for centuries, and has played a key role in developing the current global framework including the 1951 Refugee Convention. These decisions by the new President are at odds with both universal human rights and fundamental American traditions. Any weakening of the international system to manage and protect refugees, including resettlement programmes, will hurt vulnerable people, stoke resentment and threaten greater insecurity."

In their September 2016 report ["In Challenge Lies Opportunity: How the World Must Respond to Refugees and Mass Migration"](#), The Elders set out four key principles that they believe should inform global policy. They participated in the United Nations summit on refugees in September 2016 and support the ongoing negotiations to develop Global Compacts on Refugees and Migration.

This is the best way of developing a workable framework based on shared responsibilities that delivers protection, human rights and security for refugees and host communities alike.

The Elders believe all refugees should receive equal treatment for protection and assistance, regardless of religion, nationality or race. They are concerned that the measures announced by President Trump are already disrupting the lives of people who desperately need protection from war and tyranny, dividing families and threatening livelihoods.

Developing an effective and humane global refugee policy requires concerted political will and The Elders hope that the United States will provide leadership in line with its honourable historical and humanitarian traditions.

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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 [Martti Ahtisaari](#), [Kofi Annan](#) (Chair), [Lakhdar Brahimi](#), [Gro Harlem Brundtland](#) (Deputy Chair), [Hina Jilani](#), [Ricardo Lagos](#), [Graça Machel](#), [Mary Robinson](#) and [Ernesto Zedillo](#).

[Ela Bhatt](#), [Fernando Henrique Cardoso](#), [Jimmy Carter](#) and [Desmond Tutu](#) are Elders Emeritus.

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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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