

## The Elders condemn political paralysis in South Sudan in the face of famine

YEREVAN, Armenia, 28 May 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Elders today condemned the political paralysis and failure of leadership at all levels in South Sudan in the face of worsening famine and humanitarian disaster.

They reiterated their view that all parties to the conflict, including the government of South Sudan and armed opposition groups, are directly contributing to the famine by leading military operations that destroy civilian homes and livelihoods. This is compounded by the brazen obstruction of humanitarian access.

At the same time, the international community has shown paralysis bordering on disinterest in regard to meaningful conflict resolution efforts and financial support to humanitarian aid.

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

*“South Sudan is a young country, but its people have been consistently let down by their leaders who have been unable or unwilling to move away from conflict and personal enrichment at the expense of the nation. Alleged war crimes and gross human rights violations committed by parties to the conflict, including the government and armed opposition groups, are prolonging the suffering of the people, and those who are responsible need to be held accountable.”*

The Elders expressed particular outrage on the widespread use of sexual violence, including mass rape, as a tactic of war in South Sudan’s crisis. All warring parties, including the state and other armed groups have a responsibility under international law to protect rather than violate the inviolable human rights of civilians.

[Mary Robinson](#), Elder and former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, said:

*“The suffering in South Sudan should shame us all. It is an affront to civilised values, and the longer the international community allows the conflict and human rights abuses to persist, the weaker those values become. As Elders we stand in solidarity with the people of South Sudan and will continue to press for peace and justice.”*

ENDS

Note to editors: Two of the Elders – [Hina Jilani](#) and [Ernesto Zedillo](#) – are attending the Aurora Prize ceremony in Yerevan, Armenia. They are issuing this statement to draw attention to the crisis in South Sudan and stand in solidarity with its people.

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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](http://www.theElders.org).

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