

'We are heading towards a one-state outcome'

'The two-state solution is vanishing' - Jimmy Carter, Gro Harlem Brundtland and Mary Robinson urge a fresh approach to achieving lasting peace in the Middle East

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PRESS RELEASE

The Elders have concluded a two-day visit to Israel and the West Bank by saying that the two-state solution is in deep peril and may soon be out of reach. They urge a fresh, concerted approach to explore all alternatives to the current stalemate in negotiations, stressing that a two-state solution is the only realistic path to lasting peace in the Middle East.

During their visit the Elders met the President of Israel, Shimon Peres, the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, international officials and a range of Israeli and Palestinian groups. They will continue their discussions on this issue in Cairo in the coming days.

Jimmy Carter, former President of the United States and Elders' delegation leader, said:

"We are heading towards a one-state outcome, which will fail to ensure the security and democratic rights of the people of Israel and renege on the promise of self-determination for Palestinians. The two-state solution is vanishing. We urgently need a fresh approach by all parties if a Palestinian state is to be achieved.

"The Elders share the view that the two-state solution is the only realistic path to peace and security for Israel and the Palestinians. But changes on the ground, including the construction of settlements beyond the Green Line and the growing isolation of East Jerusalem from the West Bank, make a Palestinian state unviable."

The Elders toured Jerusalem to view the changing urban landscape and demography of the city, a result of policies designed to expand and deepen the Israeli presence and restrict the Palestinian presence.

Gro Harlem Brundtland, former Prime Minister of Norway, said:

"It has been very sad to hear of the considerable problems that long-standing Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem face in their everyday lives – from having to reapply every year for the right to stay, to businesspeople waiting years for licenses, to those who have lost their homes to settlers or demolition. The effect of this system is to create great suffering,

and erode the diverse character of this city, which is so important for people of all faiths and traditions from all around the world.

“As a medical doctor, I was particularly affected by our visit to Augusta Victoria Hospital in East Jerusalem, a Palestinian model of excellence for the entire region which faces enormous difficulties in treating those people nearest to it from the West Bank – never mind Palestinians from Gaza – due to Israeli travel restrictions. It tragically illustrates the direct human impact of the present deadlock.”

The Elders expressed their concern about the ongoing divisions between the leading Palestinian parties, Fatah and Hamas, again evident in Hamas’ boycott of the municipal elections in the West Bank on Saturday (20 October). Unity is urgently needed so that the vital interests of the Palestinian people are properly represented and to bridge the widening gulf between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland and former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, said:

“The aspirations of Palestinians are being crushed, not only by the complete failure of negotiations with Israel but by a lack of unified political leadership. They deserve much better. Reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas remains an essential ingredient in Palestinian self-determination. The leaders have to be more attuned to the demands of the people, especially given the broader changes sweeping the region.”

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MEDIA INQUIRIES

Contact: media@theElders.org

Follow The Elders' visit to the Middle East on the [Live Blog](#)

The Elders' work on Middle East peace

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been one of The Elders' top priorities since the group was founded.

In **August 2009**, an Elders delegation visited Israel and the West Bank to meet youth representatives, non-violent activists, women's organisations, human rights experts and UN agencies, as well as Israeli and Palestinian officials. From both Israelis and Palestinians, they heard a consistent message that peace is possible and achievable.

The Elders next travelled to the region as a group in **October 2010**, visiting Israel, the West Bank and Gaza, Egypt, Jordan and Syria. They called for a more comprehensive approach to the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks following discussions with government officials, civil society, business leaders and young people. The Elders emphasised that ending the occupation of Palestinian land is the only way for Israel to achieve peace and enjoy normal relations with Palestinians and their Arab neighbours.

In **October 2012**, former Prime Minister of Norway Gro Harlem Brundtland, former US President Jimmy Carter and former President of Ireland Mary Robinson are returning to Israel and the West Bank. During their visit, the Elders will express concern about the future of the two-state solution and highlight the effect of settlement expansion and other changes in the city of Jerusalem as a major impediment to peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

While The Elders actively support international efforts to achieve a comprehensive settlement, they do not act as mediators in this conflict. Working both privately and publicly, The Elders aim to build awareness and popular support for a just and secure peace for all.

For further information: <http://theelders.org/middle-east-peace>

Members of The Elders travelling to Israel and the West Bank



Jimmy Carter – delegation leader

Jimmy Carter was the 39th President of the United States of America (1977-1981). His achievements include brokering the Camp David peace accords between Egypt and Israel, and establishing US diplomatic relations with the People’s Republic of China. In 1982, he founded The Carter Center which works to advance peace and health worldwide. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2002 for his “untiring effort to find peaceful solutions to international conflicts, to advance democracy and human rights, and to promote economic and social development.”



Gro Harlem Brundtland

Gro Harlem Brundtland, a medical doctor, was Norway’s first woman Prime Minister, serving a total of ten years as head of government. She chaired the World Commission on Environment and Development – known as the Brundtland Commission – which articulated the principle of sustainable development for the first time at a global level. She was Director-General of the World Health Organization from 1998-2003, and in 2011, she was appointed member of the United Nations Secretary-General’s Global Sustainability Panel.



Mary Robinson

Mary Robinson was the first woman President of Ireland and is a former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. As an academic, legislator and barrister, she sought to use law as an instrument for social change. A tireless advocate for justice, she was President of Realizing Rights: The Ethical Globalization Initiative from 2002 to 2010, and now leads efforts to ensure that the most vulnerable populations in the world do not disproportionately suffer the effects of climate change. She is Chair of the Mary Robinson Foundation – Climate Justice.

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](#), [Ela Bhatt](#), [Lakhdar Brahimi](#), [Gro Harlem Brundtland](#), [Fernando Henrique Cardoso](#), [Jimmy Carter](#), [Graça Machel](#), [Mary Robinson](#) and [Desmond Tutu](#) (Chair).

[Nelson Mandela](#) is an honorary Elder.

For biographies of the Elders, blogs, photos, videos and more information about their work please go to www.theElders.org.

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