

The Elders applaud Palestinian unity agreement

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Elders welcome the reconciliation agreement signed in Gaza on 23 April by Hamas and Fatah representatives. Since 2007, the Fatah-Hamas division has been the source of a rift between the West Bank and Gaza, making a viable peace between Israelis and Palestinians more challenging.

The parties have agreed to form within five weeks an interim, technocratic Palestinian National Authority government and six months thereafter prepare for presidential and legislative elections in Palestine.

Jimmy Carter, former US President, said:

"I commend the Palestinians for having secured this agreement, and I urge all parties to implement it swiftly, and in good faith. Any remaining differences must be resolved peacefully. When the Palestinians elect a new leadership – provided the elections are conducted in accordance with international standards – I strongly urge the international community to respect the democratic choices of the Palestinian people."

Kofi Annan, Chair of The Elders and former UN Secretary-General, said:

"Palestinian reconciliation should not be seen as undermining prospects for a negotiated two-state solution. On the contrary, any lasting peace with Israel will have to be predicated on a peace agreement with a unified and democratic Palestinian government exercising its authority in both the West Bank and Gaza."

The Elders support US Secretary of State John Kerry's energetic efforts to assist the Israelis and Palestinians towards a just peace agreement. Any remaining differences towards this goal must be resolved peacefully.

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

"I believe the Palestinians' adherence to international conventions and treaties, and their membership in UN institutions is the best assurance of the peaceful pursuit of Palestinian rights under international law."

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.

Media enquiries

Sylvain Biville, Media Manager, The Elders
Email: media@theElders.org – T +44 75 4773 6371

Elliott Fox, Media Officer, The Elders
Email: media@theElders.org – T +44 77 9569 3903

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