

The Elders support Palestinian move to sign international treaties

“This move should not be seen as a blow to the peace talks” – Jimmy Carter

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Elders are deeply worried by the impasse in peace negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians. They express their continued support to US Secretary of State John Kerry and commend him for his tireless efforts to bring the parties together.

The Elders take note of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas’ decision to sign letters of accession to 15 international treaties. They recognise that this move is consistent with the [UN non-member observer state status](#) obtained by Palestine in November 2012.

Gro Harlem Brundtland, former Prime Minister of Norway and Deputy Chair of The Elders, said:

“As a UN non-member observer state, Palestine is entitled to join international bodies. We welcome President Abbas’ decision to sign the Geneva Conventions and other important international human rights treaties.

“This move opens the way to more inclusive and accountable government in the West Bank and Gaza. It has the potential to strengthen respect for human rights and provide ordinary Palestinians with essential legal protections against discrimination or abuses by their own government. In global terms, it will also increase their ability to enjoy, in practice, the protection of their basic rights granted to them by international law.”

Former US President **Jimmy Carter** said:

“The decision by the Palestinians to exercise their right to join international organisations should not be seen as a blow to the peace talks. I hope that, on the contrary, it will help to redress the power imbalance between Israelis and Palestinians, as we approach the 29 April deadline set by Secretary Kerry.

“More than ever, both parties urgently need to make the necessary compromises to reach a lasting peace with two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security.”

The Elders have long supported the [recognition of Palestinian statehood](#) by the United Nations. In July 2013, they [welcomed US efforts](#) to restart Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, after a meeting with John Kerry in Washington DC.

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.

Read more about The Elders' work on Israel-Palestine:
<http://www.theelders.org/israel-palestine>

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