

The Elders call on US, UK to take action to stop civilian deaths in Yemen

London, 10 October 2016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Elders today expressed shock and deep dismay over the latest incident of heavy civilian casualties in Yemen resulting from the Saudi-led aerial bombing campaign. They called on the United States and United Kingdom, the two permanent members of the UN Security Council who are the main supporters of the campaign, to take decisive steps to prevent further needless deaths.

Over 140 people died and more than 500 were injured at a funeral hall in Sana'a, Yemen's capital, when it came under repeated attack from the air on Saturday.

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

"Over the past 18 months, civilians have borne the brunt of this bloody conflict. All too frequently, protected locations such as hospitals and civilian gatherings such as weddings and, now, even a funeral have found themselves under attack. This is simply unacceptable. As the principal supporters of the Saudi coalition, we believe the United States and United Kingdom have the main duty to ensure there is no recurrence."

Independent researchers estimate that over a third of coalition air strikes have hit civilian targets. The Houthi rebels and allied forces have frequently also been guilty of breaches of international humanitarian law during fighting.

The Elders noted that the US is "reviewing" its support for the Saudi-led military campaign in the wake of the weekend's attacks and that the UK's Foreign Office has raised its own concerns with Riyadh, stating that there can be "no military solution" to the conflict. Washington and London must now use their considerable leverage with Saudi Arabia to push hard for an early ceasefire and resumed negotiations for a political solution.

They also called for much greater international attention to be paid to the desperate plight of Yemen's civilian population. According to the UN, over half of Yemen's 27-million people are suffering from malnutrition and in need of humanitarian assistance.

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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.

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

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