

The Elders express dismay at United States and Israel withdrawal from UNESCO

LONDON, 13 October 2017

The Elders today expressed dismay over the announcements by the United States and Israel that they intend to withdraw from membership of UNESCO, the UN's education, social and cultural organisation.

[Kofi Annan](#), Chair of The Elders and former UN Secretary-General, said:

"While I very much regret the decisions of the US and Israel to pull out of UNESCO over alleged anti-Israel bias, I hope this will not be the final word. I encourage the governments concerned to choose engagement ahead of disengagement and reconsider their positions over the next year"

The Elders are particularly concerned that the departure from the family of international organisations of two member states could undermine the multilateral system.

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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), [Ban Ki-moon](#), [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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