

The Elders applaud Palestinian reconciliation; renew call for end to blockade of Gaza

LONDON, 16 October 2017

The Elders warmly welcomed the reconciliation agreement reached by Fatah and Hamas in Cairo last Thursday. The agreement is an essential step towards the full reunification of the West Bank and Gaza, and keeps alive prospects for the peaceful emergence of a Palestinian state.

After 10 years of internal conflict, and several previous failed attempts at reconciliation, the latest developments also hold out the prospect of an end to the blockade of Gaza. During this period, the lives of over two million Gazans have been blighted by three destructive wars and tight restrictions on the movement of people and goods in and out of the territory.

The Elders commended the crucial role played by the Egyptian Government in bringing about this latest – and most promising – reconciliation initiative.

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

“The restoration of a single authority throughout the occupied territories is long overdue. The feud between Hamas and Fatah has done no good to the Palestinian people and has seriously damaged prospects for the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state. Those in the international community who have rightly decried the absence of Palestinian unity must now seize this opening to push decisively for resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.”

[Lakhdar Brahimi](#), a member of The Elders and former Algerian Foreign Minister, commented:

“There are difficult challenges ahead before we can begin to speak of full unity having been restored to Palestinian ranks. Egypt's constructive role will be needed over the coming weeks and months.”

Supporting a peaceful resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, along the lines of the two-state solution, has been a key priority for The Elders since the organisation was founded by Nelson Mandela in 2007. Elders’ delegations have visited the region on four occasions, meeting Israeli and Palestinian leaders and supporting their civil societies. The Elders have also spoken out regularly on the urgent need to end the unjust Gaza blockade and restore Palestinian unity.

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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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