

## **The Elders warn Brexit “hard border” could pose threat to peace in Northern Ireland**

**LONDON, 24 April 2018**

The Elders today expressed their deep concern about the potential risks posed by “Brexit” -- the decision of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union -- to the Good Friday Agreement that has helped secure peace in Northern Ireland for the past two decades.

At their recent board meeting in London, The Elders hailed the twentieth anniversary of the Agreement and the inspiration it has given to others around the world seeking to end bloody conflicts.

They warned that the imposition of a “hard border” between the six counties of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland as part of the Brexit process would seriously undermine the Agreement and all it has brought to communities across the island of Ireland.

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

*“The Good Friday Agreement has served Northern Ireland, the rest of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland very well for the past twenty years. It was painstakingly achieved after complex negotiations and difficult compromises on all sides. Amid the wider political and economic uncertainty caused by Brexit, all stakeholders should place the preservation of peace and security as a high priority.”*

The Elders noted the commitments by the UK Government, the Irish Government and the European Union to avoid the imposition of a hard border in the event of the UK leaving the EU’s Single Market and Customs Union after Brexit, and urged them to withstand any pressure to abandon this stance as negotiations continue.

[Mary Robinson](#), Elder and former President of Ireland, said:

*“Peace in Northern Ireland was hard-won and needs to be protected. The Elders welcome the assertion by UK Prime Minister Theresa May of the paramountcy of the Good Friday Agreement, and the importance of ensuring that nothing should be done to allow the reimposition of a hard border. All governments and parties in all parts of the UK and Ireland must work to make this promise a reality.”*

ENDS

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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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