

The Elders demand Israel respects international law to stop further Gaza protest killings

LONDON, 10 May 2018

The Elders today called on the Israeli Government to fully comply with international humanitarian law and respect the right to peaceful protest of Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip. Their call follows the killing of 48 demonstrators and injury of almost 7,000 others, many of them children, by the Israeli army in the past month.

They warned of the danger of more casualties in the run-up to 15 May, when Palestinians mark what they call the “*nakba*”, or catastrophe – a day after Israel commemorates the 70th anniversary of its independence. Two-thirds of Gaza’s residents are classified by the UN as refugees, having been expelled from or fled nearby Arab towns and villages in 1947 and 1948, or else are their descendants.

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

“This is a sensitive – and important - anniversary for Israelis and Palestinians alike. But Israel’s heavy-handed military tactics are inflaming the situation needlessly. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s government should exercise the utmost restraint and care over the coming weeks, to avoid further deaths.”

[Mary Robinson](#), Elder and former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, added:

“International humanitarian law prohibits the use of deadly force against unarmed demonstrators. We should remember that despite Israel’s disengagement from the Gaza Strip in 2005, under international law Gaza remains occupied territory and the occupying power has a legal duty to protect its population – not endanger their lives.”

[Lakhdar Brahimi](#), Elder and former Algerian Foreign Minister, said:

“Palestinians have the right to fight for their rights with all the legitimate means available to them. This includes peaceful protest; Palestinians in Gaza are just as entitled to exercise this right as Israelis in Tel Aviv or Americans in Washington.”

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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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For biographies of the Elders, blogs, photos, videos and more information about their work please go to www.theElders.org.

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