

The Elders urge US to recommit funding for UN Palestinian refugees agency

LONDON, 8 June 2018

The Elders have urged the United States to recommit funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) to prevent a drastic cut in its essential services such as healthcare and education to those in need across the Middle East.

In a letter to the US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, the Chair of The Elders, [Kofi Annan](#), wrote:

“UNRWA is an essential bulwark against further instability and radicalisation in a Middle East that is wracked by strife. My fellow Elders join me in this urgent appeal to you to continue the vital support that the United States has generously provided in the past.”

The US Administration severely cut its funding to UNRWA earlier this year and the agency is currently facing a shortfall of \$250 million.

The Elders noted that three Arab states – Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates – have recently pledged \$150 million for UNRWA, but stressed that this is insufficient to compensate entirely for the United States as the largest single donor.

“If the current shortfall... is not met soon, UNRWA may be unable to provide schooling for half a million children in the coming school year, and be obliged to reduce other key humanitarian services,” **Kofi Annan** warned.

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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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