

The Elders urge European leaders to stand firm on Israeli annexation threats

LONDON, 3 July 2020

The Elders have called on European leaders to maintain their resolve against Israel's plans to annex swathes of the West Bank, and to insist that any such moves would have negative political and economic consequences for bilateral relations.

The absence of any direct military and legal moves towards annexation on 1 July – the deadline unilaterally declared by Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu – should not be taken as grounds for complacency. Annexation of any part of the West Bank, including illegal settlement blocs, would constitute a flagrant breach of international law.

In letters to French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs Josep Borrell, The Elders underscored the damage annexation would cause not only to any hopes of a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but also to global respect for the rule of law.

Annexation "is fundamentally contrary to the long term interests of both the Israeli and the Palestinian peoples. [It] will not dampen future Palestinian demands for rights and self-determination, but destroying hopes in a two-state compromise will increase the risks of future violence in one of the most combustible areas in the world", the Elders warned in their appeal to Europe's leaders.

They called on the EU leaders to consider suspending the bloc's Association Agreement with Israel if annexation does go ahead in any form, and recalled the UK's historical and abiding responsibility to the region as the colonial Mandate holder in pre-1948 Palestine.

The Elders also reiterated their support for human rights defenders and civil society activists in Israel and Palestine, whose voices need to be protected and amplified at this challenging time.

ENDS

Media enquiries

William French, Head of Communications

T: +44 (0) 7795 693 903

media@theElders.org

Sign up to [receive The Elders' press releases](#).

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 [Ban Ki-moon](#) (Deputy Chair), [Lakhdar Brahimi](#), [Gro Harlem Brundtland](#), [Zeid Raad Al Hussein](#), [Hina Jilani](#), [Ellen Johnson Sirleaf](#), [Ricardo Lagos](#), [Graça Machel](#) (Deputy Chair), [Juan Manuel Santos](#), [Mary Robinson](#) (Chair) and [Ernesto Zedillo](#).

[Martti Ahtisaari](#), [Ela Bhatt](#), [Fernando Henrique Cardoso](#), [Jimmy Carter](#) and [Desmond Tutu](#) are Elders Emeritus.

[Kofi Annan](#) (1938-2018) was a founding member of The Elders and served as Chair from 2013 to 2018.

Find out more

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

Follow The Elders on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Flickr](#) and [YouTube](#).