

The Elders condemn US shift on Israeli settlements as attack on international law

LONDON, 20 November 2019

The Elders today strongly condemned the policy shift announced by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on the legality of Israeli settlements in Palestinian territories as injurious to peace and an attack on the broader system and values of international law.

They emphasised that the change in US policy does not alter the fact that settlements remain illegal under international law. No one state, however powerful, has the moral or legal authority to redefine these precepts unilaterally.

[Mary Robinson](#), Chair of The Elders and former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, said:

“The US position is bad law made in bad faith. Secretary Pompeo’s logic is flawed when he argues that upholding international law has not brought peace; in fact, it is the consistent failure of Israel to respect international law – sadly abetted by the current US Administration – plus an absence of principled and unified Palestinian leadership that means the conflict still festers, more than seven decades after the founding of the State of Israel.”

The Elders noted that UN Security Council Resolution 2334, passed in December 2016, called Israel’s settlement activity a “flagrant violation” of international law that has “no legal validity”. This resolution remains extant and all Council members, including the United States, have a responsibility to see it is implemented in full.

Only a two-state solution based on the 1967 borders that delivers rights, justice and security to Israelis and Palestinians alike can bring true peace to the region. If Israel moves further away from this principle, it will have to choose between a single state with equal rights for all citizens whether Jewish or Arab, or an ever-greater entrenchment of ethnic discrimination at odds with the principles of its Declaration of Independence.

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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 [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.

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