

The Elders welcome P5 statement on nuclear weapons and call for concrete action

LONDON, 5 January 2022

Following the [joint statement](#) of the five leaders of the recognised nuclear-weapon states under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (China, France, Russia, UK and US), Chair of The Elders, [Mary Robinson](#), said:

“I welcome the 3 January statement by the leaders of the P5 countries affirming the Reagan-Gorbachev maxim that ‘a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought’. This must now be followed by concrete action to address the growing risks of nuclear conflict. The P5 statement on its own is a small step. But, as in 1985, these words present hope for rapprochement and collaboration on an existential threat faced by humanity.

The Elders have consistently called on all nuclear powers to affirm the fundamental principle of the Reagan-Gorbachev maxim. The P5 statement could help build momentum ahead of this year’s Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference. It must serve as a catalyst for strengthening arms controls and agreeing detailed nuclear risk reduction measures.

This positive step must be viewed in the alarming context of increasing nuclear risks in recent years, which have seen the breakdown of arms control agreements, the emergence of destabilising new technologies, and the growing threat of a new nuclear arms race between the nuclear powers. Serious efforts in good faith by the P5 to address these disturbing developments are now essential if they are to persuade the rest of the world that they are serious about meeting their disarmament obligations under the NPT, and following through on the logic of their recent statement.”

The Elders are calling on all nuclear-weapon states to adopt a ‘minimisation agenda’ as a first step towards disarmament. [Find details of our policy and advocacy efforts.](#)

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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 \(Deputy Chair\)](#), [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](#), [Lakhdar Brahimi](#), [Fernando Henrique Cardoso](#) and [Jimmy Carter](#) are Elders Emeritus.

[Desmond Tutu](#) (1931-2021) and [Kofi Annan](#) (1938-2018) was a founding member of The Elders and served as Chairs from 2007 to 2013 and 2013 to 2018 respectively.

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