

The Elders condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine as a reckless threat to world peace

25 February 2022

The Elders today condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine as a flagrant violation of the United Nations Charter and a reckless, unjustifiable act of aggression that threatens to destabilise world peace and security.

They reaffirmed their support for the Ukrainian people's right to self-determination and dignity, and called on the international community to maintain a united stance in opposition to Russia's actions, including comprehensive sanctions.

[Ban Ki-moon](#), Deputy Chair of The Elders and former Secretary-General of the United Nations, said:

"Russia's invasion of Ukraine is an outrageous act that demands an immediate and decisive reaction by the international community. There is no justification for this unprovoked attack on an independent state. President Putin will find himself an international pariah if he persists on this course, and civilians on both sides will pay the price for his aggression."

The Elders warned that if military operations continue to escalate, the risk of a confrontation between Russian and NATO forces becomes ever more significant.

All parties, even at this stage, should do their utmost to keep open diplomatic channels. The crisis cannot be solved by military means. The United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, together with the other fourteen members of the UN Security Council, must use all means at their disposal to encourage dialogue.

[Mary Robinson](#), Chair of The Elders and former President of Ireland, said:

"President Putin has chosen to start a war that is not in the interests of the Russian people. Our hearts go out to the people of Ukraine already suffering death, injury and widespread destruction. Russia has violated not only Ukraine's borders but the whole notion of a rules-based international order that has shaped the modern era. Given both Russia and NATO forces have

nuclear weapons, the risk of a confrontation between them could carry catastrophic consequences for all humanity.”

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Media enquiries

William French, Head of Communications

T: +44 7795 693903

media@theElders.org

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

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

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