

The Elders endorse IAEA's call for safety and security protection zone at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant

14 September 2022

Statement: The Elders remain seriously concerned about the risk of a severe nuclear accident at Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine's and Europe's largest nuclear power plant, and reiterated their call for the immediate cessation of military activity at the site. The potential radiation spill-over effects of such an accident could have disastrous consequences for humanity and the environment.

They welcomed the recent report by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that recommends the establishment of a safety and security zone at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, and are encouraged by the start of consultations on this issue.

As Russia's war on Ukraine continues to evolve it is essential that no party does anything to compromise the safety of this nuclear facility.

[Juan Manuel Santos](#), Nobel Peace Laureate, former President of Colombia and member of the Elders, said:

"The IAEA's initiative to establish a safety and security zone at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant is vital to prevent further shelling and reduce the risk of a nuclear accident. I urge all parties to work constructively with the IAEA to reach agreement on the zone without delay. All military activity near the plant must cease immediately if we are to avoid the risk of an international nuclear catastrophe."

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

"Since Russia's occupation of Zaporizhzhia in March 2022, the threat of a nuclear accident has been unacceptably high. The IAEA's Support and Assistance Mission has paved the way towards stability and security at the site, and all necessary measures must now be taken to prevent risks in line with the IAEA's recommendations. Securing the Zaporizhzhia plant is a vital component in preventing further unnecessary death and suffering in Ukraine and beyond."

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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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