

Global call by women leaders against annexation and for peace

Call signed by over 40 women leaders Heads of State and Government, Ministers, Parliamentary leaders, Nobel Peace Laureates, Senior UN officials and Human Rights figures.

As the UN Charter marks its 75th anniversary, the most protracted conflict in the world is taking a most dangerous turn with the announcement of Israel's plan to annex large and vital parts of Palestinian territory on the basis of the Trump Middle East plan which contradicts the internationally agreed parameters for peace and international law. Such a move would unravel half a century of efforts for peace in the region and the vision of two sovereign states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security, based on the pre-1967 borders, with far-reaching consequences.

It is in this context, and on this 20th anniversary of the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, that Israeli and Palestinian women reminded the world why it was so important to hear and heed the voices of women in situations of conflict. We have received urgent appeals against annexation sent by both Palestinian and Israeli women. Their strong appeals, while separate and distinct, have in common a sense of shared humanity, and a common rejection of subjugation and discrimination, oppression and violence.

Both appeals are grounded in international law and in the landmark resolution 1325 which calls for protection of civilians, notably women and girls, the critical importance of women's voices and meaningful participation in conflict resolution and peace negotiations, in ensuring durable peace and building a just and hopeful future for both peoples based on respect for international law and accountability.

Their voices resonate as they stress that annexation is an existential threat to Palestinians, to Israelis, to regional stability and to an already fragile global order. We must not leave their appeal unanswered as they ask for our "support and engagement in a global partnership to save the prospect for a just, equal, and lasting resolution to the conflict", for the well-being

of present and future generations. They remind us that we have “the power of our collective will to challenge aggression, coercion, and violence and to end impunity and injustice so freedom and peace can prevail”.

Annexation is a breach of international law and the UN Charter, and of UN Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. It contravenes the fundamental international norm banning the acquisition of territory by force and aims at perpetuating the illegal Israeli settlement enterprise, entrenching occupation instead of ending it. It will severely jeopardize the prospect of regional peace, security and stability with grave implications for the Palestinian and Israeli peoples, but also for Jordan and the wider region. It will fragment Palestinian land and effectively consecrate Palestinian enclaves under permanent Israeli military control.

The dignity and rights of the Palestinian people, the ability of Israel to be an integral and accepted part of the region, regional peace, security and prosperity and the wider international rules-based order are at stake. Annexation cannot go unchallenged, and strong international engagement is more needed than ever, including through effective measures to deter illegal unilateral actions, and achieve just and lasting peace.

We support the Palestinian and Israeli women’s call against unilateral annexation and back their efforts to prevent its disastrous consequences. It was conceived almost entirely by men without any reference to the diverse perspectives of women. We must be guided by the humanity and resolve of courageous women who have suffered greatly from the conflict and yet refuse to be blinded by hate. Their words envision the future the region needs and deserves. Our actions must help this vision prevail.

Signatories:

Micheline Calmy-Rey, former President, Switzerland

Tarja Halonen, former President, Finland

Roza Otunbayeva, former President, Kyrgyzstan

Mary Robinson, former UN Commissioner for Human Rights, former President, Ireland

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Nobel Peace Laureate, former President, Liberia

Gro Harlem Brundtland, former Director-General of the World Health Organisation, former Prime Minister, Norway

Helen Clark, former UNDP Administrator, former Prime Minister, New Zealand

Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir, former Prime Minister, Iceland

Graça Machel, co-founder of the Elders with Nelson Mandela, International advocate for women's and children's rights, first Minister of Education, Mozambique

Baleka Mbete, former Deputy President, former Speaker of the National Assembly, South Africa

Isabel Saint Malo de Alvarado, former Vice President, Panama

Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, former Chairperson of the African Union Commission

Lena Hjelm-Wallen, former Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Sweden

Margot Wallström, former Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Sweden

Benita Ferrero-Waldner, former European Commissioner for External Relations and former Foreign Minister, Austria

Susana Malcorra, former Foreign Minister, Argentina

Asha Rose Migiro, former United Nations Deputy Secretary-General, former Foreign Minister, Tanzania

Barbara Hogan, former political prisoner, former Minister of Health, South Africa

Patricia B. Licuanan, former Chairperson, UN Commission on the Status of Women; former Minister of Higher Education, Philippines

Nathalie Loiseau, Chair of the European Parliament Subcommittee on Security and Defence, former Minister of European Affairs, France

Pia Olsen Dyhr, former Minister of Trade and Investments, Denmark

Sima Samar, former Minister of Women's Affairs, Afghanistan

Christiane Taubira, former Minister of Justice, France

Melanne Vermeer, former Ambassador for Global Women's Issues, USA

Luisa Morgantini, former Vice-President and former Chair of the Committee on Development of the European Parliament, Italy

Claudia Roth, Vice-President of the German Parliament, former Federal Government Commissioner for Human Rights Policy and Humanitarian Aid, Germany

Shirin Ebadi, Nobel Peace Laureate

Mairead Maguire, Nobel Peace Laureate

Jody Williams, Nobel Peace Laureate

Rebecca Johnson, Co-founding first President of the Nobel Peace Laureate International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN)

Karen AbuZayd, former UN Under-Secretary-General, former Commissioner General for UNRWA

Radhika Coomaraswamy, former UN Under-Secretary-General and Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict

Noeleen Heyzer, former Executive Director, UN Development Fund for Women, UNIFEM; former UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Angela Kane, former UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and UN Under-Secretary-General for Management

Navi Pillay, former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

Joanne Sandler, former Deputy Executive Director, UN Development Fund for Women, UNIFEM

Fatiha Serour, former Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary General, Member of the Africa Group for Justice and Accountability

Farida Shaheed, former UN Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights

Mary Kerry Kennedy, President of Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Organisation, USA

Charlotte Bunch, Distinguished Professor and Founding Director, Center for Women's Global Leadership, Rutgers University, Recipient of the Eleanor Roosevelt Award for Human Rights, USA

Anne Marie Goetz, former Chief Advisor on Governance, Peace and Security for the United Nations Development Fund for Women, Professor, Center for Global Affairs, New York University, USA

Anne-Marie Slaughter, Former director of policy planning for the US Department of State, Recipient of the Secretary's Distinguished Service Award, Bert G. Kerstetter '66 University Professor Emerita of Politics and International Affairs, Princeton University, USA

Nayerreh Tohidi, Professor, former Chair of the Department of Gender & Women Studies and founding Director of the Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, California State University, USA