PRESS RELEASE

Geneva and Madrid, 24 June 2025

Former UN Leaders and Club de Madrid Members Unite in Urgent Call to Defend the UN Charter on its 80th Anniversary

Former heads of state and government of the Club of Madrid join the solemn appeal of 299 former UN officials to urge governments, parliaments and citizens around the world to urgently reclaim the purpose, principles and values of the UN Charter, which has been massacred like never before, just as we prepare to celebrate its 80th anniversary on June 26.

At the end of World War II, on June 26, 1945, in a surge of collective intelligence following more than 50 million deaths, the Holocaust, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki, representatives of 50 countries signed the United Nations Charter, which all the world's states subsequently decided to adhere to. All committed to placing peace, justice, respect, human rights, tolerance, and solidarity at the heart of their actions and to resolving any disputes peacefully, prohibiting any recourse to force other than in self-defence.

On the eve of the 80th anniversary of the signing of the United Nations Charter, the human family is witnessing not just mere violations of international law but "the systematic dismantling of the rule of law - piece by piece, norm by norm," warn former heads of state and government and former UN officials who have signed an unprecedented Call in eight decades of steady progress despite some setbacks. They warn that when this international order born of the Charter collapses, "rebuilding it will take generations".

Signatories include former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Club de Madrid President Danilo Türk, former President of the Republic of Slovenia and former UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs. Like him, several signatories are Members of Club de Madrid and have held very high-ranking positions within the United Nations system. This is the case of former Prime Minister of Norway Gro Harlem Brundtland who was WHO Director-General and former Chair of the World Commission on Environment and Development; former President of Ireland Mary Robinson who was High Commissioner for Human Rights; and former Prime Minister of New Zealand Helen Clark who was UNDP Administrator. Club de Madrid members who have endorsed the Appeal include former President of Costa Rica, Carlos Alvarado, former President of the Swiss Confederation, Micheline Calmy-Rey, and former Colombian Finance Minister José Antonio Ocampo. On the UN side, we find in particular the former Secretary General of the International Atomic Energy Agency Hans Blix, the former Administrator of the UNDP James Gustave Speth, the former Secretary General of UNCTAD Rubens Ricupero, Jan Eliasson, former Deputy Secretary-General of the UN, and more than thirty former very senior officials of the UN system who held the rank of Under Secretary-General of the UN or Assistant Secretary-General.

The full text of the Call and the updated list of signatories can be consulted in more than ten languages on the dedicated webpage: https://www.foggs.org/prg/call-un-charter-at-80/ and Club de Madrid endorsements at : https://clubmadrid.org/former-un-leaders-and-club-de-madrid-members-unite-in-urgent-appeal-to-defend-the-un-charter-on-its-80th-anniversary/

The initiative was launched by the "Peace Reflection Group" (PRG), a network of former UN staff members, and is supported by the Foundation for Global Governance and Sustainability (FOGGS). They organize an online discussion in observance of the UN Charter's 80th anniversary on 26 June, at 9 am New York time, and welcome broad participation – this is the registration link: bit.ly/UN-Charter-80thAnniversary

The Call is also open for signature to all citizens of the "human family" referred to in the preamble to the United Nations Charter through the link:
https://secure.avaaz.org/community_petitions/en/world_countries_and_leaders_un_officials_global_ci_reclaim_the_purpose_of_the_un_charter_80_years_on/

The Call in support of the UN Charter will remain open for signatures till UN Day, 24 October 2025, when the 80th anniversary of the establishment of the UN itself as an organization will be observed. The expectation is that, in this period, heads of state/government and other senior state officials, parliamentarians and religious leaders from all continents will also align their voices and actions in support of the UN Charter along with a multitude of the world's citizens.

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