

Press Releases: On the Occasion of Israel's National Day

Press Statement
John J. Sullivan

Acting Secretary of State

Washington, DC
April 19, 2018

On behalf of President Trump and the American people, I offer best wishes and congratulations to all Israelis as you mark the 70th anniversary of Israel's independence on April 19.

The State of Israel has prevailed over every challenge it has faced over the past 70 years. In just a short time, the people of Israel have created a successful nation that has flourished and continues to thrive. The United States established our diplomatic presence in Jerusalem well before the State of Israel was born, over 170 years ago. This year, we look forward to opening the new Embassy of the United States in Jerusalem on May 14 which coincides with the 70th anniversary of President Truman recognizing the nascent State of Israel.

Israel and the United States have an unshakeable bond that has endured and grown even stronger over the past seven decades. As President Trump said in Jerusalem last May, "...let us never forget that the bond between our two nations is woven together in the hearts of our people – and their love of freedom, hope, and dignity for all." The United States will continue to be a steadfast ally of Israel and will stand together with you today, and always.

Yom Ha'atzmaut Sameach.

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[Press Releases: Shooting of Five Civilian Employees of Donetsk Filtration Station](#)

Press Statement
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC
April 18, 2018

The United States condemns yesterday's shooting of civilian employees of the Donetsk Filtration Station in Ukraine, which left five individuals wounded. The filtration station has temporarily shut down following the incident. In addition to endangering the lives of innocent civilians, this attack threatened water supplies for almost 350,000 Ukrainians living on both sides of the line of contact.

Yesterday's incident follows closely shelling that severely damaged power lines near water pumping stations in the Donetsk region, which has endangered water supplies to over three million people. We urge Russia-led forces and Ukrainian Armed Forces to allow for maintenance workers to conduct repairs and prevent a new humanitarian crisis. We further call on all forces to withdraw from positions around the Donetsk Filtration Station and other critical civilian infrastructure.

The Department takes this opportunity to repeat its call on Russia to withdraw its forces from eastern Ukraine and fully implement its commitments under the Minsk agreements. As Russia instigated this conflict and continues to arm, train, lead, and fight alongside its proxy forces in the Donbas, Russia bears the responsibility for the worsening humanitarian situation in eastern Ukraine.

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Press Releases: Progress toward Strengthening and Expanding Central America's Regional Electricity Market

Press Statement
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC
April 18, 2018

The State Department applauds the regional institutions that govern Central America's regional electricity market (the Mercado Electrico Regional, or MER) for their accomplishments and new commitments to further develop the MER and expand the Central American Electrical Interconnection System (SIEPAC) announced at the High-Level Meeting at the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) in Washington, D.C. on April 17. The Department of State was represented by Deputy Assistant Secretary for Energy Diplomacy Sandra Oudkirk and Deputy Assistant Secretary John Creamer of the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs at the meeting, which was a commitment from the June 2017 Conference on Prosperity and Security in Central America.

Progress highlighted at the IDB meeting included plans to complete national transmission investments to upgrade regional electricity transmission capacity, finalize negotiations on amending the SIEPAC treaty, foster dialogue with private sector energy companies, and continue working with the Mexican government on a framework to enable power trade between Central America and Mexico.

Strengthening and expanding Central America's regional electricity market is a key part of the U.S. Strategy for Central America to help the region have secure, reliable, and affordable energy that enhances regional prosperity and competitiveness. The U.S. government is committed to helping Central America achieve its energy goals to promote a strong and prosperous Central America that also strengthens U.S. national security.

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Press Releases: Holding Russia Accountable for Chemical Weapons Use in Salisbury, UK

Press Statement
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC
April 18, 2018

Today, the UN Security Council and the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) met to discuss the OPCW's recent findings related to the March 4 use of a military-grade nerve agent in Salisbury, UK.

The OPCW's independent report, released last week, confirms the UK lab analysis regarding the identity of the chemical used in Salisbury. We applaud the OPCW's expeditious support and technical efforts to uncover the facts.

We fully support the UK and the need for today's special meetings of the OPCW Executive Council and the UN Security Council to discuss the chemical weapons attack in Salisbury and the OPCW's detailed independent analysis.

As we have made clear, the United States agrees with the UK's assessment that Russia is responsible for this use of chemical weapons on UK soil— either through deliberate use or through its failure to declare and secure its stocks of this nerve agent.

Only the Government of Russia has the motive, means, and record to conduct such an attack. Russia developed the type of military-grade nerve agent used in Salisbury and has a record of conducting state-sponsored assassinations.

Rather than changing its harmful and destructive behavior, the Russian government offers only denials and counteraccusations to deflect attention from its culpability.

The United States condemns the use of chemical weapons anywhere, anytime, by anyone, under any circumstances. We urge our colleagues on the UN Security Council and the OPCW Executive Council to join us, as they have before, to create a unified front against the use of chemical weapons. We cannot allow the normalization of chemical weapons use.

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[Press Releases: Acting Assistant Secretary Susan Thornton Travels to Seoul and Tokyo](#)

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
April 18, 2018

Acting Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Susan Thornton will travel to Seoul, Republic of Korea, April 22-24, followed by Tokyo, Japan, April 24-27. During her visits to our treaty allies in Northeast Asia she will reaffirm U.S. alliance commitments and coordinate on issues of importance for the maintenance of security and prosperity in the region. She will also discuss cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region and the continued close coordination on the DPRK.

Follow the Acting Assistant Secretary's travel via @USAsiaPacific on Twitter.

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