

Press Releases: Yom HaShoah Remembrance Day

Press Statement
Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

Washington, DC
April 24, 2017

Today on Yom HaShoah – Holocaust Remembrance Day, marking the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising – we honor the six million Jews systematically murdered by the Nazis and their collaborators. We also remember all individuals targeted for persecution and death by the Nazis. This year, the State Department hosted an event, along with the Embassies of Lithuania, Japan, and Israel, to honor the memory of Chiune Sugihara, Japanese Consul to Lithuania in 1939-40. Consul Sugihara saved the lives of some 6,000 Jews and others by providing them with transit visas to Japan.

Leo Melamed, a child survivor saved by Consul Sugihara, reminded us during the event that Sugihara knew instinctively that to save lives was “the right thing to do.” Tens of thousands of Jews and others are alive today because Consul Sugihara followed that simple yet incredibly courageous dictum. We are blessed that Holocaust survivors continue to inspire us with their first-hand experiences and to steel our resolve to combat antisemitism and all forms of hatred.

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Press Releases: Australian and New Zealand Army Corps Day

Press Statement
Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

Washington, DC
April 24, 2017

On behalf of the people of the United States of America, I am honored to send my thoughts, prayers, and best wishes to the people of Australia and New Zealand on Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (Anzac) Day this April 25.

While this year marks the 100th anniversary of U.S. participation in the Great War, we will not forget that by the time the American Expeditionary Forces were organized in 1917, the Anzac had already been fighting for over two years, from the shores of Gallipoli to the Western Front. Your courage against all odds inspired news stories that spread across the United States, exposing the American people to your steadfastness and deeply-held sense of mateship. The tenacity and sacrifice of your brave service men and women represent to this day the determination of the people of Australia and New Zealand to defend democracy and freedom.

Australia and New Zealand continue their dedication to these ideals by working side by side with the United States in global humanitarian and disaster relief efforts and in peacekeeping missions worldwide.

This Anzac Day we are honored to stand with New Zealand and Australia to remember the past, reflect on the present, and, most solemnly, honor your fallen.

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Press Releases: Death of Special Monitoring Mission Member in Eastern Ukraine

Press Statement
Mark C. Toner

Acting Spokesperson

Washington, DC
April 23, 2017

The United States is shocked and deeply saddened by the death of a U.S. citizen serving as a paramedic with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Special Monitoring Mission (SMM), when his vehicle struck an explosive in separatist controlled territory in eastern Ukraine. We extend our deepest and heartfelt condolences to his family, friends, and loved ones, and we wish a quick recovery for those injured in the blast. This death underscores the increasingly dangerous conditions under which these courageous monitors work, including access restrictions, threats, and harassment. The United States urges Russia to use its influence with the separatists to allow the OSCE to conduct a full, transparent, and timely investigation.

Since its establishment in 2014, the OSCE SMM has played a vital role in its role of monitoring the Minsk agreements designed to bring peace to eastern Ukraine. This incident makes clear the need for all sides- and particularly the Russian-led separatist forces- to implement their commitments under the Minsk Agreements immediately. This includes a real and durable ceasefire, withdrawal of heavy weapons, and disengagement from the line of contact. The brave monitors of the SMM have the full support of the United States, and we condemn in the strongest terms all acts of hostility and intimidation toward SMM monitors. They must also have safe, full, and unfettered access throughout the conflict zone.

The United States again calls upon Russia to use its influence with the separatists to take the first step toward peace to eastern Ukraine and ensure a visible, verifiable, and irreversible improvement in the security situation.

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Press Releases: Secretary Tillerson's Call with Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko

Readout
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
April 23, 2017

The following is attributable to Acting Spokesperson Mark Toner, :

Secretary Tillerson phoned Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko today to discuss his recent trip to Moscow and his message to the Russian leadership that, although the United States is interested in improving relations with Russia, Russia's actions in eastern Ukraine remain an obstacle. The Secretary emphasized the importance of Ukraine's continued progress on reform and combating corruption.

The Secretary accepted condolences from President Poroshenko on the death today of a U.S. member of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Special Monitoring Mission (SMM). The leaders agreed that the OSCE SMM has played a vital role in its role of monitoring the Minsk agreements designed to bring peace to eastern Ukraine, and that this tragic incident makes clear the need for all sides- and particularly the Russian-led separatist forces-to implement their commitments under the Minsk Agreements immediately.

Secretary Tillerson reiterated the United States' firm commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and confirmed that sanctions will remain in place until Russia returns control of the Crimean peninsula to Ukraine and fully implements its commitments in the Minsk agreements.

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Press Releases: Secretary Tillerson's Call with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov

Readout
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
April 21, 2017

The following is attributable to Acting Spokesperson Mark Toner:

Secretary Tillerson spoke with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov today to follow up on bilateral issues discussed during his April 11-12 visit to Moscow.

The Secretary and Foreign Minister also discussed a range of other topics, including the OPCW investigation into Syria's use of chemical weapons on April 4. The Secretary reiterated his support for the OPCW's existing investigative mechanism.

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