

Press Releases: Establishment of the Health Incidents Response Task Force

Press Statement
Mike Pompeo

Secretary of State

Washington, DC
June 5, 2018

At my request, Deputy Secretary Sullivan established a task force on May 23 to direct a multi-agency response to the unexplained health incidents that have affected a number of U.S. government personnel and family members stationed overseas. The Health Incidents Response Task Force serves as the coordinating body for Department and interagency activities, including identification and treatment of affected personnel and family members, investigation and risk mitigation, messaging, and diplomatic outreach. The Task Force includes interagency partners, such as the Departments of Health and Human Services, Commerce, Justice, Defense and Energy, as well as other members of the foreign affairs community.

At this time, 24 U.S. government personnel and family members who served in Cuba have been medically-confirmed as having symptoms and clinical findings similar to those noted following concussion or minor traumatic brain injury. On May 16, 2018, a U.S. government employee serving in China was medically-confirmed with similar findings. The precise nature of the injuries suffered by the affected personnel, and whether a common cause exists for all cases, has not yet been established.

U.S. government personnel and family members at affected locations have been directed to alert their mission's medical unit if they note new onset of symptoms that may have begun in association with experiencing unidentified auditory sensations. Reported symptoms have included dizziness, headaches, tinnitus, fatigue, cognitive issues, visual problems, ear complaints and hearing loss, and difficulty sleeping.

Public or congressional inquiries regarding American Citizen Services' issues in the affected countries may be referred to the Office of Overseas Citizens Services at 888-407-4747, or from overseas at 202-501-4444. Please direct media inquiries during regular business hours to the Press Office at (202) 647-2492, or after hours via the Operations Center at (202) 647-1512.

The Office of Website Management, Bureau of Public Affairs, manages this site as a portal for information from the U.S. State Department. External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views or privacy policies contained therein.