

Press Releases: Presidential Elections in Sierra Leone

Press Statement
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC
April 9, 2018

The United States congratulates the people of Sierra Leone on its peaceful presidential elections held on March 31. The election proves the strength and resilience of Sierra Leone's democracy, and we look forward to working with President Julius Maada Bio to further strengthen our bilateral relationship.

We commend the National Electoral Commission for administering an orderly, well-managed process. We also recognize the important role Sierra Leone's political parties and civil society organizations played in the elections. We welcome the statements by international and domestic observer missions affirming the credibility of the election. We would also like to recognize Presidential candidate Samura Kamara for his campaign and his gracious concession, and President Ernest Bai Koroma for his commitment to an orderly and timely political transition.

We look forward to advancing our longstanding mutual interests in economic development, trade, health care, and the strengthening of democratic institutions.

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Press Releases: Department of State Event Commemorating Yom HaShoah – Holocaust Remembrance Day 2018

Notice to the Press
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
April 9, 2018

On Wednesday, April 11, 2018, during the Holocaust Days of Remembrance, the Department of State and the Embassies of Israel and Poland will sponsor a Yom HaShoah observance event at the U.S. Department of State. The event will commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and honor the memory of Mrs. Irena Sendler, a Polish citizen who defied the Nazis to save thousands of victims – including an estimated 2,500 Jewish children – by smuggling them out of the Warsaw Ghetto. There will be a screening of the documentary, “The Irena Sendler Story.” The keynote speaker for the program will be Mr. Zygmunt Rolat, a Holocaust survivor who has worked tirelessly to ensure that the legacy of Irena Sendler lives on. There will be a question and answer session after the screening.

Holocaust Remembrance Day – or Yom HaShoah in Hebrew—also marks the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Yom HaShoah will be officially observed in the United States this year on Thursday, April 12, which corresponds to the 27th day of Nisan on the Hebrew calendar.

The program will take place on April 11, 2018 starting at 12:15 p.m. in the Department of State’s Dean Acheson Auditorium.

This event is open to the press. Video cameras will need to arrive at the 23rd Street entrance to the Department of State by 11:15 a.m. Journalists and still photographers should arrive there by 11:30 a.m.

Media representatives may attend this event upon presentation of one of the following: (1) A U.S. Government-issued identification card (Department of State, White House, Congress, Department of Defense or Foreign Press Center), (2) a media-issued photo identification card, or (3) a letter from their employer on letterhead verifying their employment as a journalist, accompanied by an official photo identification card (driver’s license, passport).

For further information from the U.S. Department of State, please contact the

Office of Press Relations at (202) 647-2492 or via e-mail at papressduty@state.gov.

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Press Releases: State Department Announces Gilman Top Producing Institutions

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
April 9, 2018

The U.S. Department of State is pleased to announce the inaugural list of U.S. higher education institutions that sent the most students overseas on the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program in academic year 2016-2017. The list recognizes the institutions that made international study and internships more accessible and inclusive for the highest number of American students of all backgrounds through the Gilman Program.

The State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, in collaboration with the Institute of International Education, compiles the list, organized by institution size and type.

Topping this year's list of four-year institutions sending the highest number of Gilman Scholars abroad are Spelman College (GA), Georgetown University (DC), and University of California, Berkeley (CA). Portland Community College (OR) topped the list of associate's colleges.

Top producing institutions are highlighted for their success in sending the most first-generation college students, racial or ethnic minority students,

students with disabilities, and students studying in STEM fields. Institutions that sent the most Gilman Scholars to the largest number of different overseas destinations also receive recognition for their role in broadening geographical diversity in study abroad.

For a full list of the institutions by category, please visit the Gilman Scholarship website at www.GilmanScholarship.org.

The Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program, with the support of the U.S. Congress, is reshaping study abroad to make it more accessible and inclusive for American students. The Gilman Program broadens the U.S. student population studying and interning abroad by providing scholarships to outstanding undergraduates who, due to financial constraints, might not otherwise participate. Since the program's establishment in 2001, over 1,300 U.S. institutions have sent more than 25,000 Gilman scholars to 145 countries around the globe.

Interested media should contact the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at eca-press@state.gov.

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[Press Releases: On the Chemical Attack in Douma](#)

Press Statement
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC
April 7, 2018

We continue to closely follow disturbing reports on April 7 regarding another

alleged chemical weapons attack, this time targeting a hospital in Douma, Syria. Reports from a number of contacts and medical personnel on the ground indicate a potentially high number of casualties, including among families hiding in shelters. These reports, if confirmed, are horrifying and demand an immediate response by the international community.

The United States continues to use all efforts available to hold those who use chemical weapons, in Syria and otherwise, accountable. The regime's history of using chemical weapons against its own people is not in dispute, and in fact nearly one year ago on April 4, 2017, Assad's forces conducted a sarin gas attack on Khan Sheikhoun, which killed approximately 100 Syrians.

The Assad regime and its backers must be held accountable and any further attacks prevented immediately. Russia, with its unwavering support for the regime, ultimately bears responsibility for these brutal attacks, targeting of countless civilians, and the suffocation of Syria's most vulnerable communities with chemical weapons. By shielding its ally Syria, Russia has breached its commitments to the United Nations as a framework guarantor. It has betrayed the Chemical Weapons Convention and UN Security Council Resolution 2118. Russia's protection of the Assad regime and failure to stop the use of chemical weapons in Syria calls into question its commitment to resolving the overall crisis and to larger non-proliferation priorities.

The United States calls on Russia to end this unmitigated support immediately and work with the international community to prevent further, barbaric chemical weapons attacks.

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[Press Releases: Commemoration of the 24th Anniversary of the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda](#)

Press Statement
John J. Sullivan

Acting Secretary of State

Washington, DC
April 7, 2018

We stand today with the people of Rwanda in commemorating the 1994 genocide during which more than 800,000 men, women, and children were brutally murdered. On this solemn occasion, we remember those who lost their lives and honor the courage of those who risked their lives to save others.

The United States values its strong partnership with Rwanda, and we are inspired by the remarkable progress that Rwanda has made in rebuilding since 1994. We are proud to support Rwanda as it continues to fight impunity for atrocities, lift millions of its people out of poverty, and build a peaceful and prosperous future for its citizens.

We also honor the contributions of Rwandans such as Godelieve Mukasarasi, recipient of the Department's 2018 International Woman of Courage Award, who have dedicated their lives to fighting for a culture of peace and non-violence in Rwanda. We are inspired by their bravery and dedication to justice and reconciliation.

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