

# Press Releases: Joint Statement From the Ministerial Discussion on Syria

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
September 21, 2017

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Ministers of Canada, Denmark, Egypt, European Union, France, Germany, Italy, Jordan, Netherlands, Norway, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the United States met September 18 to discuss Syria and related issues. They agreed on the following points, which will guide their united efforts:

- 1) There is only a political solution to the Syria crisis to be arrived at through full implementation of UNSCR 2254. The ministers reiterated strong support for UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura, UN-led efforts in Geneva, and strong and effective participation in meaningful negotiations by credible representatives of the Syrian opposition.
- 2) Recovery and reconstruction support for Syria hinges on a credible political process leading to a genuine political transition that can be supported by a majority of the Syrian people.
- 3) De-escalation zones and other ceasefire initiatives contribute to setting the foundation for a political solution. The ministers welcomed the progress achieved through the Astana process and in the separate process for southwest Syria negotiated by the United States, Jordan, and Russia, and in the process for eastern Ghouta and Northern Homs facilitated by Egypt and Russia. The progress achieved must also translate to rapid, unhindered and sustained humanitarian access throughout the country. The ministers also reiterated their commitment to the territorial integrity of Syria.
- 4) The campaign against ISIS and efforts to defeat Jabhat al-Nusra must be completed to ensure that these terrorist organizations retain no safe haven in Syria from which they can threaten the Syrian people, Syria's neighbors, and all of our homelands. This, alongside de-escalation, the provision of unimpeded humanitarian aid, and a credible political process are our current priorities.
- 5) The situation in Iraq is integral to the stability of Syria. Accordingly, the ministers welcomed the enormous progress in Iraq and called on the Kurdish Regional Government not to move forward with the scheduled September

25 referendum and embrace a process of genuine dialogue with Baghdad.

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## **Press Releases: Zoonackathon 2017 Launches in the United States, the U.K., and India**

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
September 21, 2017

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The U.S. Department of State will host the second annual Zoonackathon on September 22-24 at the San Diego Zoo and on October 6-8 at the Zoological Society of London and the World Wildlife Fund in New Delhi.

Wildlife trafficking – the poaching, illegal transit, trade and sale of wildlife – is the world’s fourth largest transnational crime. In addition to decimating populations of Earth’s most iconic species, wildlife trafficking enriches transnational criminal networks that profit from the illicit sales of exotic pets, delicacies, jewelry, and traditional medicines all over the world. According to the Environmental Crime Crisis report produced by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and INTERPOL, the illegal trade in fauna and flora (other than fisheries and timber) has been estimated by different sources to be worth as much as \$23 billion annually.

Zoonackathon is an event organized by the Department of State’s Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, in partnership with the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, that challenges the public to develop solutions that will help stop wildlife trafficking. Over two

different weekends this fall, coders, designers, and conservation enthusiasts from around the world will gather to develop new technological applications and tools that will help address the challenges of wildlife trafficking.

At each Zoonackathon site, participants will have 24-48 hours to hack their way toward solutions to challenge statements solicited from conservation experts around the world. At the end of the hackathons, teams will present their ideas and a panel of judges will nominate a winner for each site. All of the winners from the three host sites will be eligible for a global prize.

For further information about Zoonackathon, please visit [www.zoonackathon.com/](http://www.zoonackathon.com/). Follow Zoonackathon on social media at [@StateDeptOES](https://twitter.com/StateDeptOES), [#Zoonackathon](https://twitter.com/Zoonackathon), and [#EndWildlifeTrafficking](https://twitter.com/EndWildlifeTrafficking).

For media inquiries, please contact [Zoonackathon@state.gov](mailto:Zoonackathon@state.gov).

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## **[Press Releases: Armenian National Day](#)**

Press Statement  
Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

Washington, DC  
September 21, 2017

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On behalf of the Government of the United States of America, congratulations to the people of Armenia on the 26th anniversary of your independence.

We commend the progress your country has made since independence and are proud of the work we have done together. We are committed to advancing democracy and promoting a robust and transparent economy in Armenia. We thank you for your dedication to regional stability and international peacekeeping

operations. We greatly appreciate these endeavors toward building a more peaceful world.

Again, congratulations on your 26th year of independence. We look forward to many more years of continued friendship and partnership with Armenia and its people.

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## **[Press Releases: U.S. Department of State and espnW Join Forces for the Annual Global Sports Mentoring Program](#)**

Media Note

Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC

September 21, 2017

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From September 25 to October 31, seventeen international delegates and American sports sector mentors will take part in the annual U.S. Department of State and espnW [Global Sports Mentoring Program](#) (GSMP). In its sixth year, this program supports the U.S. Department of State's global efforts to advance the rights and participation of women and girls through sports.

Working side-by-side with these emerging female leaders, senior executives in the American sports sector open their respective organizations as host sites while sharing personal entrepreneurial and management insights. During the mentorship, emerging global leaders develop business plans to support "sport for social change" initiatives in their home countries. These strategies allow communities at home and around the world to experience the benefits that come from cross-cultural relations and participation in sports, thereby

creating more resilient and stable societies. In turn, the American mentors are enriched by new perspectives and an expanded domestic and international network.

The GSMP class of 2017 hails from Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, China, France, India, Kosovo, Morocco, Nigeria, the Palestinian Territories, Peru, South Korea, Taiwan, Uganda, and Venezuela. This delegation will join the ranks of 82 global alumnae—Olympians, Paralympians, journalists, ministerial officials, civil society leaders, entrepreneurs, and sports administrators—from over 45 countries who are providing opportunities for thousands of individuals to become leaders on the field, in the boardroom, and in their schools and governments.

This year, U.S. mentors represent the following companies and organizations: America East, the Big East, Burton Snowboards, Eli Lilly & Company, ESPN, Fox Sports, Gatorade, Google, the NCAA, the National Hockey League (NHL), PGA of America, Saatchi & Saatchi LA, Under Armour, Spurs Sports & Entertainment, the University of Connecticut and the Women's Sports Foundation. The GSMP is implemented in cooperation with the University of Tennessee's Center for Sport, Peace, and Society.

Join the conversation on social media using the hashtag #EmpowerWomen. For more information, please contact the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at [ECA-Press@state.gov](mailto:ECA-Press@state.gov) and ESPN's Jane Bullock at [Jane.Bullock@espn.com](mailto:Jane.Bullock@espn.com).

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## **[Press Releases: A Message of Solidarity for Dominica and the Caribbean](#)**

Press Statement  
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
September 20, 2017

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The United States stands in solidarity with the people of Dominica and all those across the Caribbean region affected by the devastating impact of Hurricane Maria. The United States stands ready to work with you and our international partners to provide immediate disaster relief. We are in the process of coordinating the best possible package of assistance.

The recent natural disasters underscore our interconnectedness and the importance of strong partnership with the Caribbean. The Department of State has an ongoing Task Force working to determine the extent of the damages, to coordinate evacuation efforts, and to provide assistance to U.S. citizens in the affected countries. Our thoughts and prayers are with the people of the Caribbean region.

For more information on how the public can support disaster relief efforts, please go to the Center for International Disaster Information at [www.cidi.org](http://www.cidi.org).

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