

# Press Releases: The Passing of Human Rights Defender Ludmilla Mikhailovna Alexeeva

Press Statement  
Robert Palladino

Deputy Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
December 10, 2018

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Today, on International Human Rights Day, we mark with deep sorrow the passing in Russia of one of the world's great defenders of human rights, Ludmilla Mikhailovna Alexeeva, who died on December 8 at the age of 91. Until the last, she was a force for human dignity, inspiring and mentoring multiple generations of citizen activists in her native country. Her death is a profound loss to all who work for the cause of freedom in Russia and across the globe, and it comes at a time when human rights, and the men and women who courageously champion them, are under severe pressure in Russia and in many other countries. Ludmilla Alexeeva's lifelong efforts on behalf of human rights are lasting contributions to a freer, more peaceful world.

We extend our deepest condolences to Ludmilla Alexeeva's son Michael, her grandchildren and great grandchildren, and to her colleagues in Russia's human rights community, who, cherishing her memory, will carry on.

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# Press Releases: Armenia's 2018 Parliamentary Elections

Press Statement  
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Washington, DC  
December 10, 2018

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The United States congratulates the people of Armenia on the conduct of their December 9 parliamentary elections. We welcome the assessment by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's (OSCE) Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights that Armenia's parliamentary elections were competitive and that candidates were able to campaign freely. The United States concurs with the OSCE's preliminary conclusions that the elections process enjoyed broad public trust and respected fundamental freedoms. We encourage the authorities to address OSCE and Venice Commission recommendations for future elections.

This year has been a time of remarkable change in Armenia. For 27 years, the United States has sought to support the development of democratic processes and institutions in Armenia, and we will continue to do so. We look forward to working with the new Armenian Parliament and Government to deepen our bilateral partnership and cooperation to strengthen the rule of law and democratic institutions, combat corruption, promote trade and investment, and safeguard regional and global security.

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# Press Releases: Secretary Pompeo's Meeting With Senegalese Prime Minister Mohammed Dionne

Readout  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
December 10, 2018

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The below is attributable to Deputy Spokesperson Robert Palladino:□

Secretary Michael R. Pompeo met with Senegalese Prime Minister Mohammed Dionne today in Washington, D.C. The Secretary reiterated the United States' commitment to Senegal with the signing of Senegal's second Millennium Challenge Corporation Compact. The \$600 million compact will strengthen electrical transmission links in Senegal's capital, expand electricity coverage in rural areas, and improve overall governance of the power sector. The Secretary and the Prime Minister also discussed ways to cooperate on matters of regional security. Senegal is the eighth largest contributor to UN peacekeeping and has more than 1,400 troops as part of the peacekeeping mission in Mali. The Secretary and the Prime Minister agreed on the importance of maintaining Senegal's democratic traditions in the upcoming February 2019 election. The Prime Minister reaffirmed Senegal's commitment to ensure a peaceful transition of power during next year's elections.

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# Press Releases: Release of the Report on Human Rights Abuses and Censorship in North Korea

Press Statement  
Robert Palladino

Deputy Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
December 10, 2018

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Today, in commemoration of International Human Rights Day and as part of our continued efforts to promote accountability for North Korean officials, we are releasing our report, which identifies three individuals and three groups as responsible for serious human rights abuses or censorship. In conjunction with the report, the Department of the Treasury has added three North Korean persons to the Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons list.

We believe that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is an essential foundation of stable, secure, and prosperous societies. Standing up for such rights and freedoms is a foreign policy priority that represents the best traditions of the United States.

Human rights abuses in North Korea remain among the worst in the world and include extrajudicial killings, forced labor, torture, prolonged arbitrary detention, rape, forced abortions, and other sexual violence.

This report focuses primarily on the regime's efforts to suppress independent media and freedom of expression. Independent media cannot operate legally in North Korea. All media is strictly censored by government authorities who conduct pre-publication screenings to ensure there is no deviation from the official line. Authorities take steps to jam foreign radio broadcasts, and interagency task forces conduct warrantless searches for foreign media. Individuals accused of viewing foreign films are reportedly subject to imprisonment or even execution.

The report represents a continuation of U.S. government efforts to name those responsible for or associated with the worst aspects of the North Korean government's repression. Both the State Department report and actions by the Treasury Department are consistent with the North Korea Sanctions and Policy Enhancement Act of 2016, signed by the President into law on February 18,

2016.

A link to the full report can be found [here](#).

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## **Press Releases: Department of State Participates in Quick Response Force (QRF) Summit Challenge 2018**

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
December 10, 2018

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Today, the U.S. Department of State and the Government of Kenya launched the first SPEAR Quick Response Force (QRF) Summit Challenge, a tactical training and competition event in Nairobi for U.S.-trained Special Program for Embassy Augmentation and Response (SPEAR) teams.

The training and competition is being held in Nairobi from December 10-14, 2018.

The SPEAR program provides training to specially selected law enforcement officers in participating host-nations to enable their affiliated units to respond within minutes to emergencies involving U.S. diplomatic facilities or personnel. Currently, SPEAR teams support U.S. diplomatic missions in Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central Africa Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Chad, Iraq, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, South Sudan, Sudan, and Tunisia.

Participants from SPEAR teams from Mali, Tunisia, Niger, and Kenya will be

competing in the QRF Summit Challenge along with a crisis response unit from the Kenyan National Police Service and a team from the U.S. Embassy's Regional Security Office.

The five days of training and competition will include firearms proficiency, tactical medicine, explosive incident identification and response, personnel recovery and evacuation, and physical fitness.

For more information regarding the program, please click [here](#). For questions, please email [DS-Press@state.gov](mailto:DS-Press@state.gov).

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