

Press Releases: Secretary Pompeo To Release the 2017 International Religious Freedom Report

Notice to the Press
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
May 25, 2018

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo will deliver remarks on the release of the 2017 Annual Report on International Religious Freedom (IRF) at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, May 29, 2018, in the Press Briefing Room at the U.S. Department of State.

Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom Sam Brownback will take questions in the Briefing Room immediately following Secretary Pompeo's remarks.

Religious freedom is both a core American value and a fundamental human right. Mandated by the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998, the International Religious Freedom Report details the status of religious freedom in nearly 200 foreign countries and describes U.S. actions and policies in support of religious freedom worldwide.

Remarks will be open to the press. The event will be streamed live on www.state.gov.

Journalists should be seated in the State Department's press briefing room no later than 8:45 a.m. The press briefing room is accessible from the 23rd Street Entrance of the Department.

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 a government-issued photo identification card (driver's license, passport).

Instructions for embargoed access to the report will be sent to members of the press only, on Tuesday, May 29, at 7:30 a.m. The entire report is EMBARGOED until the press briefing begins. The report will be available to

the public on [State.gov](https://www.state.gov) at approximately 9:30 am.

For more information, please contact DRL Press at DRL-Press@state.gov. Learn more about U.S. government engagement on international religious freedom by following @State_IRF or @StateDRL on Twitter.

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Press Releases: Guyana's Independence Day

Press Statement
Mike Pompeo

Secretary of State

Washington, DC
May 25, 2018

On behalf of President Trump and the people of the United States, I congratulate the people of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana on 52 years of independence on May 26.

Today, we celebrate our strong connections. We look forward to advancing prosperity by helping Guyana develop its emerging oil sector in partnership with U.S. business. We underscore our commitment to partnership via the Caribbean 2020 strategy.

We wish the people of Guyana, from the Corentyne to the Pakaraimas, from the Takutu to the Amakura, and across the entire "Land of Many Waters," a happy Independence Day celebration with peace and prosperity throughout the year to come.

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[Press Releases: The Shoot Down of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17](#)

Press Statement
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC
May 24, 2018

The United States has complete confidence in the findings of the Joint Investigation Team (JIT) as presented today by the Dutch Public Prosecutor: the missile launcher used to shoot down Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 originated from the 53rd Anti-aircraft Brigade of the Russian Federation, stationed in Kursk.

Today's announcement confirms and adds detail to what we have said from the earliest days of this tragedy: MH17 was shot down by a Russian-made BUK surface-to-air missile fired from territory in eastern Ukraine controlled by Russia and Russia-led forces.

We recall the UN Security Council's demand that "those responsible ... be held to account and that *all States* cooperate fully with efforts to establish accountability." We call upon Russia, in particular, to respect and adhere to UN Security Council Resolution 2166 (2014). It is time for Russia to cease its lies and account for its role in the shoot down.

We remain confident in the ability of the Dutch criminal justice system to prosecute those responsible in a manner that is fair and just.

We again extend our deepest sympathies to the families and friends of the victims and call for justice on behalf of the 298 innocent civilians who lost their lives on that day.

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Press Releases: Secretary Pompeo's Meeting With German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas

Readout
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
May 24, 2018

The below is attributable to Spokesperson Heather Nauert:□

Secretary Pompeo met with Germany's Foreign Minister Heiko Maas on May 23, 2018, in Washington, D.C., to reaffirm the two nations' strong commitment to the transatlantic partnership and to discuss key shared priorities.

During the meeting, Secretary Pompeo thanked Foreign Minister Maas for Germany's partnership with the United States and our allies in standing up to Russian aggression. The two discussed the upcoming NATO Summit and agreed NATO was essential to countering global threats.

Secretary Pompeo and Foreign Minister Maas also discussed approaches to countering Iranian aggression and supporting the Iranian people. The two agreed to stay in close contact as they address global challenges together.

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Press Releases: H-2A Agricultural Worker Visa Modernization Joint Cabinet Statement

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
May 24, 2018

Secretary Acosta, Secretary Nielsen, Secretary Perdue, and Secretary Pompeo

When President Trump addressed the American Farm Bureau Federation in January of this year, he reminded the audience that his commitment to our farmers has been clear since the day his Administration began: “From that day on, we have been working every day to deliver for America’s farmers just as they work every single day to deliver for us.”

In keeping with that commitment, our Departments are working in coordination to propose streamlining, simplifying, and improving the H-2A temporary agricultural visa program – reducing cumbersome bureaucracy and ensuring adequate protections for U.S. workers.

The Trump Administration is committed to modernizing the H-2A visa program rules in a way that is responsive to stakeholder concerns and that deepens our confidence in the program as a source of legal and verified labor for agriculture – while also reinforcing the program’s strong employment and wage protections for the American workforce. In addition, by improving the H-2A visa program and substantially reducing its complexity, the Administration also plans to incentivize farmers’ use of the E-Verify program to ensure their workforce is authorized to work in the United States.

As the agencies tasked with administering or facilitating the H-2A visa program, and thus closest to farmer and labor stakeholders, the Departments of State, Agriculture, Labor, and Homeland Security are embarking on a process to modernize the H-2A visa program by clarifying and improving the regulations governing the program. We look forward to delivering a more responsive program soon.

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