

# Press Releases: International Human Rights Day

Press Statement  
Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

Washington, DC  
December 10, 2017

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Sixty-nine years ago today, in the aftermath of World War II, the UN General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to recognize and elevate the inherent dignity and equal and inalienable rights of all individuals, and that these rights are the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world.

For those who are caught in or displaced by internal unrest, or who are fighting against repressive governments and being exploited for the profit of others, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a beacon of hope. Standing up for human rights and democracy is a foreign policy priority that represents the best traditions of our country.

In commemoration of International Human Rights Day, we renew our commitment to our core democratic values and to advocating for the human rights, freedom, and dignity of all people. The United States urges all nations to respect their commitments enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and apply them equally to all. The world is safer when every person can live up to his or her full potential, and every nation is free from tyranny.

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# Press Releases: U.S. Applauds Iraqi Government's Announcement of the Full Liberation of Iraqi Territory From ISIS Control

Press Statement  
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
December 9, 2017

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After a courageous three year campaign of intense fighting, Prime Minister Abadi has announced the complete liberation of all Iraqi territory from ISIS control. The United States applauds the leadership of Prime Minister Abadi, and we offer our sincere congratulations to the Iraqi people and to the brave Iraqi Security Forces, many of whom lost their lives heroically fighting ISIS. The Iraqi announcement signals the last remnants of ISIS's self-proclaimed "caliphate" in Iraq have been erased and the people living in those areas have been freed from ISIS's brutal control.

The United States joins the Government of Iraq in stressing that Iraq's liberation does not mean the fight against terrorism, and even against ISIS, in Iraq is over. The United States, along with the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, will continue to partner with the Iraqi Security Forces, advising, training, and equipping them. Together, we must be vigilant in countering all extremist ideologies to prevent the return of ISIS or the emergence of threats by other terrorist groups.

Throughout its vile occupation of large areas of Iraq, ISIS showed its despicable nature by using children and other civilians as human shields and turning hospitals, mosques, universities, and schools into weapons-making and storage facilities and bases for its terrorist operations. The Global Coalition has been proud to support the Iraqi Security Forces who fought bravely to defeat these terrorists.

Beyond human casualties, ISIS left a trail of destruction in its wake, with an unprecedented number of Iraqis displaced from their homes and massive damage to infrastructure. The United States has contributed nearly \$1.7 billion in humanitarian assistance and committed more than \$265 million in

stabilization assistance to Iraq since 2014. The United States has also contributed \$112 million to assist in clearing improvised explosive devices, mines, and unexploded ordinance, as well as educating Iraqis on the dangers of explosive hazards that ISIS left behind. These efforts have helped facilitate the safe and voluntary return of more than 2.7 million Iraqis to their homes.

Working “by, with, and through” the Government of Iraq, we will continue to help our displaced Iraqi friends return to their communities and support them as they begin to reestablish their lives. We remain committed to standing with the Government of Iraq and the Iraqi people to stabilize areas liberated from ISIS control.

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## **[Press Releases: Special Representative for North Korea Policy Joseph Yun Travels to Tokyo and Bangkok](#)**

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
December 8, 2017

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Special Representative for North Korea Policy Joseph Yun will travel to Japan and Thailand December 11-15 to meet with government officials to discuss ways to strengthen the pressure campaign following the DPRK’s latest ballistic missile test. The United States looks forward to continuing its partnership with both these nations so that the DPRK will return to credible talks on denuclearization.

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## **Press Releases: Attack on MONUSCO**

Press Statement  
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
December 8, 2017

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The United States strongly condemns last night's attack against MONUSCO, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), which killed at least 14 Tanzanian peacekeepers and wounded more than 50 others, in addition to at least five members of the DRC armed forces. We express our deepest condolences to the families of those killed, to the Government of Tanzania, the Government of the DRC and to MONUSCO. We wish those wounded a full and swift recovery.

The United Nations has reported that this is one of the deadliest attacks on UN peacekeepers in recent history. The United States reiterates that peacekeepers are not targets, and that these deliberate attacks against them are unacceptable. We call on the Government of the DRC to investigate this attack and to ensure the perpetrators of such attacks are swiftly brought to justice.

The United States further emphasizes its full commitment to supporting MONUSCO in its efforts to protect civilians from violence, prevent atrocities, and support peace and stability in the DRC. We are grateful to the brave men and women serving in the mission.

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## **Press Releases: Modernizing the Columbia River Treaty Regime**

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
December 7, 2017

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The United States and Canada will begin negotiations to modernize the landmark Columbia River Treaty regime in early 2018. Certain provisions of the Treaty—a model of transboundary natural resource cooperation since 1964—are set to expire in 2024.

The Columbia River's drainage basin is roughly the size of France and includes parts of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Utah, Wyoming, and British Columbia. The Treaty's flood risk and hydropower operations provide substantial benefits to millions of people on both sides of the border. The Treaty has also facilitated additional benefits such as supporting the river's ecosystem, irrigation, municipal water use, industrial use, navigation, and recreation.

For further information, please email [WHAPress@state.gov](mailto:WHAPress@state.gov).

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