

# [Press Releases: On the Occasion of Turkey's National Day](#)

Press Statement  
Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

Washington, DC  
October 29, 2017

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Please accept my best wishes and those of the Government of the United States as you celebrate the 94<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Republic of Turkey.

Turkey has been a close American ally for more than 60 years. We are strategic partners in addressing the causes of instability throughout the world, including the Syrian civil war and our mutual fight against terrorism and violent extremism. We continue our steadfast efforts to enhance border security, increase trade and investment, and promote peace and prosperity across the globe.

As Turkey marks this anniversary, we reaffirm the strong and resilient ties that unite us, and are confident the close relationship between the Turkish and American people will continue to grow.

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[Press Releases: Acting Assistant](#)

# Secretary of State for Population, Refugees, and Migration Simon Henshaw Leads a Delegation to Burma and Bangladesh

Media Note

Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC

October 29, 2017

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Simon Henshaw, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, will lead a delegation to Burma and Bangladesh October 29-November 4 to discuss ways to address the humanitarian and human rights concerns stemming from the Rakhine State crisis and improve the delivery of humanitarian assistance to displaced persons in Burma, Bangladesh, and the region. Deputy Assistant Secretary Scott Busby of the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary Tom Vajda of the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, and Office Director Patricia Mahoney of the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs will accompany the Acting Assistant Secretary.

The delegation will meet with various stakeholders to discuss the U.S. and international responses to the ongoing crisis and to explore durable solutions.

In Burma, Acting Assistant Secretary Simon Henshaw and the delegation will meet with the diplomatic community, senior government officials, and UN, international, and NGO partners to discuss the current state of the crisis, promote protection for persons affected by the violence and accountability for reported human rights abuses, urge unhindered humanitarian access to affected communities in Rakhine State, and press for the establishment of protection mechanisms to enable individuals to voluntarily return in safety and with dignity.

In Bangladesh, Acting Assistant Secretary Simon Henshaw and the delegation will meet with senior government officials, donors, and humanitarian agencies to discuss efforts to improve conditions for the significant influx of refugees into Bangladesh to effectively meet life-saving needs. The delegation will also visit affected communities in Cox's Bazar District in southeastern Bangladesh to hear the stories of the people who have fled,

assess the impact of the emergency humanitarian response, identify gaps in assistance, and advise on ways to improve the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

For additional information, please contact the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration Press Office at [PRMPress@state.gov](mailto:PRMPress@state.gov).

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## **Press Releases: Lima Group's Declaration on Venezuela**

Press Statement  
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
October 27, 2017

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The United States welcomes the Lima Group's leadership in addressing the deteriorating situation in Venezuela. The Lima Group's recent declaration in Toronto – including its support for the provision of humanitarian assistance for the Venezuelan people, condemnation of electoral abuses and call for electoral reform including a new National Electoral Council, call for the release of political prisoners, and support for the democratically-elected National Assembly – reflects the same principles and concerns underpinning the unwavering position of the United States. We welcome all efforts in support of the Venezuelan people as they struggle to secure a more democratic, peaceful, and prosperous future.

We urge others in the international community to join the Lima Group and the United States in opposing the Maduro regime's authoritarian actions, which

are responsible for the worsening political, economic, and social crises facing the country and the Venezuelan people. As long as the Maduro regime conducts itself as a dictatorship, we will continue to bring the full weight of American economic and diplomatic power to bear in support of the Venezuelan people as they seek to restore their democracy.

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## **Press Releases: Cremation of His Late Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand**

Press Statement  
Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

Washington, DC  
October 27, 2017

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This week my thoughts are with the people of Thailand as we witness the cremation of His Late Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej – a true humanitarian, visionary, and friend to the United States.

Next year we will celebrate the bicentennial of the first official contact between our two great nations. His Late Majesty championed our strong, enduring friendship throughout his reign. His commitment to our alliance helped ensure regional security and created the conditions for Thailand's miraculous economic development.

As I expressed during my recent visit to Bangkok, I join Americans throughout the United States in extending our deepest respect to His Late Majesty. From

communities along the Pacific in California to those marking this occasion at King Bhumibol Square near the Late King's birthplace in Massachusetts, we remember a leader who shaped the course of history and strengthened the bonds of friendship that unite us.

Building on His Late Majesty's legacy, I am confident this alliance will thrive in a new century, to the continued benefit of the Thai and American people.

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## **Press Releases: Joint Investigative Mechanism Report on Khan Shaykhun and Um Housh**

Press Statement  
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
October 27, 2017

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On October 26, 2017, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) issued its latest report which concluded that the Assad regime used the chemical weapon sarin in the horrific April 4, 2017 attack that killed scores of people in Khan Shaykhun, Syria. The report also determined that the Islamic State extremist group was responsible for using the chemical weapon sulfur mustard on September 15 and 16, 2016 in Um-Housh, Syria.

This new report confirms unequivocally what the United States and many in the

international community have stated publicly for many months – that the Assad regime carried out the heinous April 4 attack killing approximately 100 innocent Syrian civilians, including many children, and injuring hundreds more.

The Security Council must send a clear message that the use of chemical weapons by anyone will not be tolerated, and must fully support the work of the impartial investigators. As Ambassador Haley has emphasized, countries that fail to do so are no better than the dictators or terrorists who use these terrible weapons. By attempting to undermine and eliminate the JIM, Russia has demonstrated once again that it values protecting its ally the Assad regime over stopping the monstrous use of chemical weapons. Syria's blatant disregard for international norms and standards should be met with condemnation and accountability by all members of the international community.

Syria's continued use of chemical weapons and failure to destroy its chemical weapons program in its entirety are clear violations of Syria's obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention and UN Security Council Resolution 2118. We condemn in the strongest possible terms the use of chemical weapons anywhere, by anyone, under any circumstances and reiterate our commitment that those responsible will be held to account.

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