

# [Press Releases: Religious Freedom in Ukraine](#)

Press Statement  
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
September 25, 2018

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The United States strongly supports religious freedom, including the freedom of members of groups to govern their religion according to their beliefs and practice their faiths freely without government interference. The United States respects the ability of Ukraine's Orthodox religious leaders and followers to pursue autocephaly according to their beliefs. We respect the Ecumenical Patriarch as a voice of religious tolerance and interfaith dialogue.

The United States maintains unwavering support for Ukraine and its territorial integrity in the face of Russian aggression in eastern Ukraine and the Russian occupation of Crimea. We also support Ukraine as it charts its own path and makes its own decisions and associations, free of external interference.

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## [Press Releases: Death of an American](#)

# Diplomat in Antananarivo, Madagascar

Press Statement  
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
September 24, 2018

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We are deeply saddened to confirm that a U.S. Foreign Service Officer was found dead in their residence in the overnight hours of Friday, September 21. Our deepest sympathies go out to the family and the U.S. Embassy Antananarivo community. U.S. investigators have opened an investigation into the matter as have the local Malagasy authorities, and a suspect is currently in custody. Out of respect for the family of the deceased as well as the ongoing investigative process, the Department does not have any additional comments at this time.

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## Press Releases: Congratulations on Maldivian Election

Press Statement  
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC

September 24, 2018

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The United States congratulates Ibrahim Mohamed Solih on his victory in Maldives' September 23 presidential election. The United States commends the Maldivian people for their commitment to the democratic process and exceptional level of participation in an election that has ushered in a new chapter in their country's history. We expect all parties to respect the will of the Maldivian people and support a peaceful transition of power through the November 17 inauguration. As a fellow democracy, the United States stands ready to work closely with the next Maldivian government to expand cooperation on our shared interests in an independent and prosperous Maldives as well as a free and open Indian Ocean region.

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

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
September 24, 2018

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From September 24 to October 31, international sports leaders and American

mentors in the sports sector across the country will take part in the annual U.S. Department of State and espnW [Global Sports Mentoring Program](#) (GSMP). In its seventh year, this professional development exchange supports the State Department's ongoing efforts to empower women and girls around the world through sports.

Working side-by-side with emerging female leaders, senior female U.S. sports executives open their respective organizations as host sites to share business, entrepreneurship, and strategic management insights. In return, the American mentors receive new cultural perspectives and an expanded global network. The mentors also guide international delegates in developing action plans to empower women and girls through sports in their home countries. Whether blazing trails for women to run in Peru or using kick-boxing in India, through their action plans, the sportswomen of GSMP have positively and directly impacted 225,000 people in every corner of the world.

This year's GSMP participants, hailing from Bangladesh, Brazil, Burma, Israel, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Palestinian Territories, Russia, Serbia, South Africa, Timor Leste, Vietnam, and Zambia, will join the 99 outstanding alumnae – Olympians, Paralympians, journalists, ministerial officials, civil society leaders, sports administrators, and others – from over 50 countries.

This year's mentors represent: the BIG EAST, Burton Snowboards, Creative Artists Agency, ESPN, FOX Sports, Gatorade, Google, National Collegiate Athletic Association, National Hockey League, Saatchi & Saatchi LA, University of Connecticut, the U.S. Tennis Association, and Spurs Sports and Entertainment. With the University of Tennessee's Center for Sport, Peace, and Society as the cooperative partner since its inception, GSMP has proven to be a successful partnership between government, private sector, and academia.

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 Tara Chozet at [Tara.c.chozet@ESPN.com](mailto:Tara.c.chozet@ESPN.com).

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# Press Releases: Deputy Secretary Sullivan Co-Hosts UNGA Side Event on Human Trafficking With U.K. Secretary of State for International Development Penny Mordaunt and Six Other Governments

Readout  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
September 24, 2018

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The below is attributable to Spokesperson Heather Nauert:□

Deputy Secretary John J. Sullivan today co-hosted a public event on the margins of the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly entitled “Stepping up Action to End Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking,” proudly joining the governments of Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Bahrain, Canada, Nigeria, and the United Kingdom to affirm the importance of government action to combat human trafficking.

During the event, Deputy Secretary Sullivan announced on behalf of the United States, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom [Principles To Guide Government Action To Combat Human Trafficking in Global Supply Chains](#), a framework other countries can build on to prevent human trafficking in public and private sector supply chains. The Principles highlight the critical role of governments and acknowledge the necessity of strategic cooperation with civil society, survivors, and the business community.

Deputy Secretary Sullivan also announced additional U.S. funds to support the Department of State’s Program to End Modern Slavery (PEMS), bringing the Department’s total investment for this important program to \$75 million. PEMS aims to support transformational programs and projects to achieve a measurable and substantial reduction of the prevalence of modern slavery in targeted populations in priority countries and regions.

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