

Press Releases: Conclusion of the Second Round of Negotiations To Modernize the Columbia River Treaty Regime

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
August 17, 2018

The United States and Canada held the second round of negotiations to modernize the Columbia River Treaty regime August 15-16, in Nelson, British Columbia. During the talks, the U.S. and Canadian negotiators continued to discuss shared objectives and reiterated the need for both sides to consider carefully the views of the people who live and work in the Columbia River Basin. U.S. objectives in this negotiation include careful management of flood risk, ensuring a reliable and economical power supply, and improving ecosystem benefits.

Jill Smail is the U.S. Chief Negotiator for the Columbia River Treaty. The U.S. negotiating team comprises representatives from the Bonneville Power Administration and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Northwestern Division (which together form the “U.S. Entity” responsible for arrangements necessary for U.S. implementation of the treaty); the Department of the Interior; and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The next round of negotiations will take place October 17-18, 2018, in Portland, Oregon.

On September 6, 2018, U.S. Columbia River Treaty Negotiator Jill Smail will lead a Town Hall in Portland, Oregon on the modernization of the Columbia River Treaty regime. For more information on the Town Hall, please see the Federal Register Notice: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2018/07/18/2018-15306/town-hall-meeting-on-modernizing-the-columbia-river-treaty-regime>. For more information on the Treaty, please visit <https://www.state.gov/p/wha/ci/ca/topics/c78892.htm>.

To receive regular updates regarding the Columbia River Treaty, please contact ColumbiaRiverTreaty@state.gov. For press inquiries, please contact WHAPress@state.gov.

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Press Releases: Syria Stabilization Efforts Continue With Coalition Contributions

Press Statement
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC
August 17, 2018

The enduring defeat of ISIS is a top priority of this Administration and of the State Department. Our diplomats are working closely with the Department of Defense to support upcoming operations in eastern Syria by the Syrian Democratic Forces, and with Coalition capitals to support stabilization initiatives that enable Syrians to voluntarily and safely return to their homes in Raqqa and other former ISIS strongholds.

Since April, the Department has elicited approximately \$300 million in contributions and pledges from Coalition partners to support critical stabilization and early recovery initiatives in areas liberated from ISIS in northeast Syria, including a generous contribution of \$100 million by Saudi Arabia and \$50 million pledged by the United Arab Emirates at the D-ISIS meeting Secretary Pompeo led in Brussels on July 12.

As a result of key partner contributions by Coalition members, Secretary Pompeo has authorized the Department of State to redirect approximately \$230 million in stabilization funds for Syria which have been under review. This decision was made by the Secretary, in consultation with the White House, and took into account the already significant military and financial contributions made by the United States to date, the President's guidance on the need to increase burden sharing with allies and partners, and significant new pledges made by Coalition partners. Working with Congress, the State

Department will redirect these funds to support other key foreign policy priorities.

This decision does not represent any lessening of U.S. commitment to our strategic goals in Syria. The President has made clear that we are prepared to remain in Syria until the enduring defeat of ISIS, and we remain focused on ensuring the withdrawal of Iranian forces and their proxies. We believe that neither of these events will happen without irreversible progress toward a political resolution of the conflict in accordance with UNSCR 2254.

This decision does not affect U.S. humanitarian assistance. The United States is the largest single country humanitarian donor for the Syria response, providing nearly \$8.1 billion in humanitarian assistance since the start of the crisis for those displaced inside Syria and the region. We will continue to provide life-saving, needs-based humanitarian assistance to vulnerable Syrians, support for the White Helmets and the UN's International Impartial and Independent Mechanism to hold the Assad regime accountable for serious crimes, as well as equipment and other measures to counter the effects of chemical weapons in northwest Syria.

We will also continue to work with our international partners towards the achievement of a peaceful resolution of the Syrian conflict under an UN-led political process.

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[Press Releases: Vietnam's Conviction of Peaceful Activist Le Dinh Luong](#)

Press Statement

Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC

August 17, 2018

We are deeply concerned that a Vietnamese court has convicted Le Dinh Luong to 20 years in prison and 5 years probation under vague charges of “attempting to overthrow the people’s administration.”

The trend of increased arrests and harsh sentences for peaceful activists in Vietnam is troubling.

The United States calls on Vietnam to release all prisoners of conscience immediately and to allow all individuals in Vietnam to express their views freely and assemble peacefully without fear of retribution.

We also urge the Vietnamese government to ensure its actions and laws, including the Penal Code, are consistent with the human rights provisions of Vietnam’s constitution and its international obligations and commitments.

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Press Releases: Maduro Regime Crackdown Following August 4 Incident

Press Statement
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC
August 17, 2018

The United States condemns the political violence that occurred on August 4, and urges the Maduro regime to respect the rule of law, exercise restraint,

and safeguard the presumption of innocence for all accused.

The Venezuelan government's response to this incident has been to arbitrarily detain some individuals and a failure to follow due process. In addition, there have been violations of parliamentary immunity, which is protected by Venezuela's Constitution. The United States condemns the alleged use of torture to elicit confessions.

We join the international community in calling for an independent expert commission to investigate the August 4 incident. We urge the Maduro regime to respect the human rights of all persons detained in Venezuela and reiterate our call for the immediate release of all those who are arbitrarily detained, including political prisoners.

The Government of Venezuela is responsible for the widespread instability and suffering in Venezuela. The Maduro regime has systematically stripped millions of Venezuelans of their basic rights as citizens, and limited their access to food, medical care, and basic security. We encourage the Maduro regime to accept international assistance and pursue policies that alleviate the humanitarian crisis and restore democratic freedoms.

The United States stands with the Venezuelan people in their dream of living free in a prosperous and democratic country.

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[Press Releases: U.S. Welcomes Saudi Contribution for Stabilization Efforts in Syria](#)

Press Statement
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC
August 16, 2018

The United States applauds today's announcement by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia of its generous contribution of \$100 million for ongoing, Coalition-supported stabilization efforts in areas liberated from ISIS in Syria. Saudi Arabia made this pledge when Secretary Pompeo hosted his counterparts at a meeting of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS in Brussels on July 12 and we appreciate that they are fulfilling this commitment.

This significant contribution is critical to stabilization and early recovery efforts and comes at an important time in the campaign; ISIS's territorial control is down to its last 400 square miles, nearly 150,000 internally displaced people have returned to the city of Raqqa; and, thanks to the Coalition, partners on the ground are restoring essential services to residents of northeast Syria. Stabilization and early recovery programming is critical to ensure ISIS cannot reemerge and use Syria as a base to threaten the people of the region or plot attacks against the international community.

This contribution follows the request from President Trump for partners to share the burden of promoting stability in Syria to safeguard the military gains achieved against ISIS and secure the enduring defeat of ISIS. Many Coalition partners have made pledges and contributions in recent months and the United States appreciates all partners who have stepped up to support this critical effort.

Saudi Arabia has been a leading partner in the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS from the outset. Saudi Arabia is a founding partner of the Coalition and hosted the meeting that helped establish it in 2014. Saudi Arabia has since contributed in many ways, including undertaking airstrikes in Syria, co-leading the Coalition's Counter Finance Working Group, establishing the Etidal Center to combat extremist ideology, receiving over 2 million Syrians fleeing the violence, and providing over \$1 billion in humanitarian assistance since the beginning of the Syrian conflict.

While we applaud the leadership Saudi Arabia has shown, there is still significant work to be done in the fight against ISIS, especially to assist stabilization efforts in liberated areas. We continue to call on all Coalition members, regional partners, and allies to do their share in this effort that helps bring greater stability and security to the region.

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