

# Press Releases: The Opening of the Kerch Bridge in Crimea

Press Statement  
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
May 15, 2018

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The United States condemns Russia's construction and partial opening of the Kerch Strait Bridge between Russia and occupied Crimea, which was done without the permission of the government of Ukraine. Crimea is part of Ukraine. Russia's construction of the bridge serves as a reminder of Russia's ongoing willingness to flout international law.

The bridge represents not only an attempt by Russia to solidify its unlawful seizure and its occupation of Crimea, but also impedes navigation by limiting the size of ships that can transit the Kerch Strait, the only path to reach Ukraine's territorial waters in the Sea of Azov. We call on Russia not to impede this shipping.

The United States has sanctioned numerous individuals and entities involved in this project. These and our other Crimea-related sanctions will remain in place until Russia returns control of the peninsula to Ukraine.

We once again reaffirm our commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and recall the international community's expression of that commitment in UN General Assembly Resolution 68/262.

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# Press Releases: Oppression of Baha'is in Yemen

Press Statement  
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Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
May 14, 2018

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The United States is deeply concerned by the harassment and detention of Baha'is by the Houthis in Sana'a, Yemen. The Houthis have targeted the Baha'i community in inflammatory speech along with a wave of detentions, "court summons," and punishment without a fair or transparent legal process. These actions over the past year indicate a persistent pattern of mistreatment of Baha'is in Yemen. These actions appear to be an effort to pressure Yemeni Baha'is to recant their faith.

Recent actions and rhetoric by Houthi leaders exemplify the vilification and oppression of the Baha'is in Yemen. In a televised speech broadcast in March to a wide audience, Houthi leader Abdel-Malek al-Houthi denounced the Baha'i faith, calling Baha'is "satanic" and alleging that they are at war against Islam. Further, since mid-2017, Houthi leaders have repeatedly harassed and detained dozens of Baha'is for their faith. After four years of imprisonment, Hamed bin Haydara, a Baha'i community member, was sentenced to public execution in Sana'a on January 2, 2018.

We call on the Houthis to end their unacceptable treatment of Baha'is and call on them to allow the Baha'i community to practice their religion without fear of intimidation or reprisals.

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# Press Releases: United Arab Emirates: Discussions Seek Level Playing Field

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
May 14, 2018

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U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) welcomed the result of recent discussions on civil aviation aimed at ensuring a level playing field in the global aviation sector while maintaining the Open Skies framework of U.S. international aviation policy.

Memorialized in a Record of Discussion dated May 11, the understandings reached between our two governments represent important high-level political commitments to address concerns raised by U.S. carriers regarding government support for the UAE's flagship carriers. Reflecting our two countries' strong and multi-faceted political, economic, and strategic partnership, the Record of Discussion affirms both governments' intention to promote best practices for marketplace participation by their airlines providing scheduled service under the 2002 Air Transport Agreement, all rights and provisions of which remain in force. The two governments recognize the possible adverse impact of government support on competition. They express their understanding that financial transparency is best served when airlines issue annual financial reports audited in accordance with internationally-recognized accounting standards. Emirates Airline and the U.S. airlines that provide or have provided scheduled combination international air services under the Agreement have issued such reports for years, and Etihad Airways intends to do so upon completion of its restructuring and reorganization. Those airlines should endeavor to take steps to ensure that material transactions with government-owned providers of goods and services of either country are based on commercial terms. Both governments also intend to meet again within the next year to review progress.

This outcome is a result of the Department of State-led effort to address concerns about subsidized competition and a lack of transparency in the global aviation sector. We are maintaining the Open Skies framework, which continues to yield real benefits for airlines, airports, labor, the travel industry, and consumers, among others. Our goal is to provide beneficial

results for as many U.S. stakeholders as possible.

Information on U.S. aviation policy and Open Skies agreements currently in force is available on the Department of State's website here:  
<https://www.state.gov/e/eb/tra/ata/>

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## [Press Releases: U.S.-Brazil Bilateral Cooperation on Cyber and Internet Policy](#)

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
May 14, 2018

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The text of the following joint statement was issued by the governments of the United States and Brazil following the third meeting of the U.S.-Brazil Internet and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Working Group, April 25-26, 2018.

**Begin text:**

Senior representatives and other non-governmental stakeholders from the United States and Brazil participated in the U.S.-Brazil Internet and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Working Group to strengthen our joint commitment to an open, interoperable, reliable, and secure cyberspace.

The meeting focused on key cyber and Internet policy topics, such as cybersecurity, data protection, and the free flow of data in the digital age.

Officials also discussed recent developments in the field of international security in cyberspace. Working Group discussions facilitated ongoing engagement on cyber and ICT issues in relevant regional and international fora. The dialogue further affirmed our partnership in cyber defense and combatting cybercrime.

Mr. Robert Strayer, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Cyber and International Communications and Information Policy at the U.S. Department of State, led the U.S. government interagency delegation that included representatives from the Department of State, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Justice, the National Security Council, the Department of Defense, and the Department of Commerce. Experts from the U.S. Trade Representative's Office, the Federal Communications Commission, and the Federal Trade Commission also participated in the Working Group.

Ambassador Benedicto Fonseca Filho, Director of the Department of Science, Technology, and Innovation at the Ministry of External Relations, and Thiago Camargo, Secretary for Digital Policy at the Ministry of Science, Technology, Innovation, and Communications, led the Brazilian delegation. The Brazilian delegation also included officials from the Office of the Presidency, Institutional Security Cabinet, Cyber Defense Command, the telecommunications regulatory body Anatel, as well as Brazilian Embassy Attachés from the Federal Policy, Ministry of Defense, and Brazilian Intelligence Agency.

The United States and Brazil agreed to explore a series of technical exchanges and conduct consultations to share best practices on data protection, cross border data flows, ICT procurement, international security in cyberspace, cybersecurity, and military and law enforcement cooperation. The delegations committed to work towards consensus on issues of mutual priority at the International Telecommunication Union in the lead-up to the 2018 Plenipotentiary Conference, in the Inter-American Telecommunication Union, and in other relevant international arenas. The Department of State will share these outcomes and follow-on activities with the non-governmental stakeholders that participated in the Working Group.

For updates on U.S. cyber and Internet policy, follow DAS Strayer and the Economic and Business Affairs Bureau at [@StateCIP](https://twitter.com/StateCIP) or the State Department's Office of the Coordinator for Cyber Issues at [@State\\_Cyber](https://twitter.com/State_Cyber) on Twitter. Please send interview requests to [SCCI\\_Press@state.gov](mailto:SCCI_Press@state.gov) and [EB-A-PD-Clearances@state.gov](mailto:EB-A-PD-Clearances@state.gov).

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# [Press Releases: Secretary Pompeo's Calls With French Foreign Minister Le Drian, UK Foreign Secretary Johnson, and German Foreign Minister Maas](#)

Readout  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
May 14, 2018

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The below is attributable to Spokesperson Heather Nauert:□

Secretary Pompeo has spoken over the last several days with French Foreign Minister Le Drian, UK Foreign Secretary Johnson, and German Foreign Minister Maas. The Secretary underlined that the United States and our European allies share strong interests in preventing Iran from ever developing a nuclear weapon and in countering the Iranian regime's destabilizing activities in the region. The Secretary highlighted the good work that we have done over the past several months to address our common threats and said that he is hopeful we can continue strong cooperation moving forward.

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