

# [Press Releases: Poland: Independence of the Judiciary](#)

Press Statement  
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
July 21, 2017

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The Polish government has continued to pursue legislation that appears to undermine judicial independence and weaken the rule of law in Poland. We urge all sides to ensure that any judicial reform does not violate Poland's constitution or international legal obligations and respects the principles of judicial independence and separation of powers.

Poland is a close ally of the United States, and a strong and healthy democracy in Poland is vital to relations between our two countries.

We remain confident about the strength of Poland's democracy and the ability of Poles to address these issues through dialogue and compromise to ensure Poland's democratic institutions and system of checks and balances are fully functioning and respected.

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[Press Releases: Remarks With Omani](#)

# Foreign Minister Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah Before Their Meeting

Remarks

Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

Treaty Room

Washington, DC

July 21, 2017

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**SECRETARY TILLERSON:** Good morning, all. Your Excellency, welcome to the State Department. It's a pleasure to have you here.

**QUESTION:** Mr. Secretary, are you disappointed that the Qatar crisis has not been resolved yet or that more progress hasn't been made?

**SECRETARY TILLERSON:** Well, I think as a follow-on to our trip over there last week, there has been some, I think, positive movement. The Qataris have continued to move forward on the MOU that the U.S. and Qatar entered into to address many of the terrorism, terror financing, counterterrorism concerns that people have, and they have been very aggressive in implementing that agreement. So we're – I think we're satisfied with the effort they're putting forth. I think they also have indicated a willingness to sit with the four parties and negotiate, discuss the demands. I think they have indicated they think it's important that the sovereignty and dignity of all five countries be respected in those discussions.

And so what – I hope the four countries will consider as a sign of good faith lifting this land blockade, which is really having the most, I think, negative effects on the Qatari people. And that would be a good – I think a good sign if the four countries would do that. And I'm hopeful they'll consider that seriously.

**QUESTION:** Are you disappointed in the four countries so far?

**SECRETARY TILLERSON:** I hope they will begin to take some positive action. Thank you.

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## **Press Releases: Colombia Independence Day**

Press Statement  
Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

Washington, DC  
July 20, 2017

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On behalf of the United States, congratulations to the Colombian people on the 207th anniversary of your independence.

As the first Independence Day celebrated since the historic peace agreement which ended half a century of conflict, this is an especially meaningful day for the people of Colombia. Colombia and the United States are key partners in maintaining security, fighting transnational crime, and ensuring regional stability. We look forward to strengthening the economic and cultural relationships that will continue to produce opportunities for both our people.

We congratulate all Colombians on this momentous anniversary of your nation's independence.

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# Press Releases: 40th Annual British American Parliamentary Group Arrives in the United States

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
July 20, 2017

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On July 24, eight British Members of Parliament (MPs) will begin the 40th annual [British American Parliamentary Group](#) (BAPG) exchange program in Washington, D.C. The MPs will meet with Republican and Democratic members of Congress before traveling to their counterpart U.S. Representatives' home districts. The BAPG exchange has been exchanging ideas since 1977 under the auspices of the U.S. Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program. These collaborations strengthen the special relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom that is necessary to solve global challenges.

This year, participating MPs representing the Conservative Party, Labour Party, and the Scottish National Party include Suella Fernandes, Rehman Chishti, David Morris, Kerry McCarthy, Michelle Donelan, Gerald Jones, Holly Lynch, and Tommy Sheppard. They will experience U.S. regional diversity in Nebraska, Arkansas, California, Alabama, New York, and Arizona. The MPs will network with leaders and staffers, and discuss significant domestic and foreign policy issues at the federal, state, and local levels. The program concludes with a final meeting in Boston, Massachusetts.

For further information, please contact the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at [eca-press@state.gov](mailto:eca-press@state.gov).

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# Press Releases: Belgium National Day

Press Statement  
Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

Washington, DC  
July 20, 2017

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On behalf of the United States of America, best wishes to the people of Belgium on the occasion of your national day.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the U.S. entry into World War I, when U.S. and Belgian soldiers fought and died together in defense of a free and peaceful Europe. Since then, our steadfast alliance has continued to grow and deepen through World War II and our joint founding of NATO to the present, as we work together to combat terrorism and defeat ISIS, safeguard nuclear security, and work together towards a better future for both of our peoples.

America's strong and enduring relationship with Belgium is a foundation for the promotion of peace and prosperity. We look forward to continuing our partnership as we overcome shared challenges and enjoy shared success.

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