

Press Releases: Department of State Antiterrorism Assistance Program Graduates First All-Female Iraqi Police Class

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
July 27, 2018

On July 26, the Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) program graduated its first class of all-female Iraqi law enforcement officers at a training facility in Jordan.

U.S. representatives from U.S. Embassy Amman and Embassy Baghdad joined Jordanian and Iraqi officials at the graduation of 20 Iraqi police women at the Jordanian Public Security Department's Princess Basma Institute for Training Police Women.

The police officers, all from the Iraqi Ministry of the Interior police units, were trained in terrorist crime scene investigation techniques taught by ATA trainers with the Diplomatic Security Service.

The officers will return to their units in Iraq, where they will apply their new skills to investigate terrorist attacks and related incidents. They will join the nearly 11,000 other women police officers who make up the 500,000-strong Iraqi police forces.

About the Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) Program

Established in 1983, the Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) program is the U.S. Government's premier counterterrorism training and equipment provider for foreign law enforcement agencies. All ATA assistance is delivered within a rule-of-law framework that promotes respect for human rights and fosters development of a self-sustaining capability through best practices such as embedded mentors and train-the-trainer programs.

ATA receives funding and policy guidance from the Bureau of Counterterrorism and is administered by the Bureau of Diplomatic Security and its Diplomatic

Security Service.

Through ATA, DSS personnel build the critical counterterrorism capabilities of law enforcement partners abroad with both knowledge-enhancing training courses and tactical skills development to detect, deter, and disrupt terrorist activities. With its cutting-edge curriculum and equipment grants, the ATA program continues to contribute greatly to the security of our nation, our partners worldwide, and overall international peace and stability.

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Press Releases: US-Japan-ROK Experts Meeting on Cybersecurity

Media Note
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Washington, DC
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On July 27, 2018, the United States hosted a trilateral cyber experts meeting with Japan and the Republic of Korea on cybersecurity in Washington, DC. The three countries reaffirmed their commitment to promoting an open, interoperable, reliable, and secure Internet. They also committed to advancing trilateral cooperation to enhance international cyber stability, deter malicious activities in cyberspace, and counter cyber threats, including from state actors. Participants also discussed cybersecurity of the 2018 and 2020 Olympics, capacity building efforts, and regional cyber policy coordination. The meeting builds on President Trump's, Prime Minister Abe's, and President Moon's commitment to enhance cyber cooperation.

The U.S. delegation included representatives from the Departments of State,

Homeland Security, Justice, and Commerce.

To learn more about the Department of State's cyber policy efforts, please follow us on Twitter @State_Cyber. For press inquiries, please contact SCCI_Press@state.gov.

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Press Releases: Pakistan Election

Press Statement
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC
July 27, 2018

The United States takes note of yesterday's election results in Pakistan. The United States commends the courage of the Pakistani people, including many women, who turned out to vote and showed resolve to determine their country's future.

We condemn the horrific acts of terrorist violence that marred this process, including the latest attack outside a polling station in Quetta on election day. We offer our deepest condolences to the victims and their families, and wish a speedy recovery to those injured.

The development of strong democratic and civilian institutions of governance and a vibrant civil society is critical to Pakistan's long-term stability and prosperity. In that context, the United States shares concerns about flaws in the pre-voting electoral process, as expressed by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. These included constraints placed on freedoms of expression and association during the campaign period that were at odds with Pakistani authorities' stated goal of a fully fair and transparent election. The United

States concurs with the conclusions of the European Union Election Observation Mission, whose report notes that while there were positive changes to the legal framework for elections in Pakistan, these were overshadowed by restrictions on freedom of expression and unequal campaign opportunities. The United States also has deep reservations over the participation of terrorist-affiliated individuals in the elections, but we commend Pakistani voters for fully rejecting these candidates at the ballot box on Wednesday.

Along with our international partners, the United States will continue to encourage a broadening of opportunities for political participation for all Pakistanis, and for the further strengthening of legitimate, democratic institutions. As Pakistan's elected leaders form a new government, the United States will look for opportunities to work with them to advance our goals of security, stability, and prosperity in South Asia.

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Press Releases: U.S. Department of State Awards U.S. ASPIRE Prize to Personalized Medicine Scientist

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
July 27, 2018

The U.S. Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Science Prize for Innovation, Research, and Education (ASPIRE) Competition named Dr. Kara Spiller of Drexel University as the 2018 U.S. nominee to represent the United States for the APEC-wide ASPIRE Prize.

ASPIRE is an annual award hosted by the APEC Policy Partnership for Science, Technology, and Innovation (PPSTI) that recognizes young scientists from APEC economies who have demonstrated a commitment to both excellence in scientific research, as evidenced by scholarly publication, and cooperation with scientists from other APEC member economies. ASPIRE, as well as the competition for the U.S. ASPIRE nominee, is co-sponsored by Wiley and Elsevier, publishers of scholarly scientific knowledge and coordinated by the U.S. Department of State. The winner of the APEC-wide competition will receive a cash prize of \$25,000 and will be announced at the August meeting of PPSTI in Papua New Guinea.

An emerging leader in immune engineering and personalized medicine, Dr. Spiller was selected because of her innovative research on the design of “smart” biomaterials that can control the behavior of innate immune cells to promote tissue repair and wound healing. She developed a point-of-care diagnostic to tailor optimal treatment for patients based on the state of their immune system, depending on factors such as age, genetics, and nutrition. Her work has been published in journals including Biomaterials, Journal of Investigative Dermatology, Blood, Immunobiology, and the Journal of Neuroscience.

While only one nominee can be put forward from the United States to compete for the broader ASPIRE prize, the U.S. nominee and three runner-ups will be celebrated at a public lecture roundtable with government officials, and a U.S. award ceremony in Washington, DC, later this year. Runners-up for the 2018 U.S. ASPIRE prize include:

Dr. Jordan Green, Associate Professor at Johns Hopkins University, a world leader in gene therapy and the use of biodegradable particles to teach the immune system to recognize cancer cells.

Dr. Manu Prakash, Assistant Professor of Bioengineering at Stanford University, is a designer of novel techniques to deliver health solutions in the world’s most resource poor conditions.

Dr. Jorge M. Zuniga, Assistant Professor of Biomechanics at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, is the creator of the first open source 3D printed hand prosthesis for children in the United States named Cyborg Beast.

For more information, please contact OES-PA-DG@state.gov.

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Press Releases: Remarks at the Close of the Ministerial Advancing Religious Freedom

Remarks
Michael R. Pompeo

Secretary of State

Dean Acheson Auditorium
Washington, DC
July 26, 2018

SECRETARY POMPEO: Good afternoon, everyone. Since the earliest days of his presidency, President Trump has directed his administration to advance and defend the rights of religious freedom at home and abroad, because religious freedom is a universal God-given right to which all people are entitled. It is also an essential building block for all free societies.

Ensuring religious freedom around the world is a key priority of the Trump administration's foreign policy. To that end, today we concluded the first ever Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom. The success of this event was truly unbelievable. The level of enthusiasm from partner groups and other governments was so high that I've already committed to doing this again, to holding the second ministerial a year from now.

This week, we were joined by more than 80 foreign delegations and religious leaders from all across the world who work closely with civil society groups, who are often on the frontlines of reporting and responding to cases of religious intolerance and persecution. I want to thank the dozens of ministerial-level foreign dignitaries that attended. I interact professionally with them every day in the course of diplomacy, but as a man of faith their presence this week was significant to me personally as well.

Two, we had survivors of religious persecution with us sharing their stories and driving home why this work is so important. The Vice President and I had a chance to sit with a number of them and hear their stories, to talk about why they were working in this field, why religious freedom meant so much to them.

And also today, Vice President Pence gave a speech to bring attention to the plight of religious minorities of all faiths who are persecuted for what they believe, often by their own governments.

The Vice President also announced that in the coming months the United States Government will launch a Genocide Recovery and Persecution Response initiative. This is a diplomatic and assistance effort specifically focused on ensuring communities of faith and local organizations are part of the solution in recovering from atrocities. While focused first on our ongoing response to the genocide committed by ISIS in Iraq, our hope is that this program will assist victims in many different places.

The department was also proud to host several other U.S. senior government officials to speak this week, including Senior Advisor to the President Jared Kushner, OMB Director Mick Mulvaney, and USAID Administrator Mark Green. And tonight, UN Ambassador Nikki Haley will be giving remarks.

We at the State Department are also undertaking several new initiatives to further the cause of religious freedom around the world. First, as the Vice President announced this morning, we've created an International Religious Freedom Fund. This is a joint fund with other nations that will support the work of religious freedom defenders and assist victims of religious persecution.

Second, we have created a new International Visitor Leadership Program to bring those working on the frontlines of religious freedom issues together, all different faiths from all around the world, to come to the United States. It's a ten-day project and will focus on promoting religious pluralism and protecting the rights of religious minorities. If you are a champion of religious freedom, be on the lookout for announcements coming soon.

Third, in just a couple months, the State Department will host a three-day accelerated workshop called Boldline to support and scale innovative public-private partnerships that promote and defend religious freedom around the world. The open calls for proposals is now live on challenge.gov.

Fourth, we all know that persecution and violence aren't constrained by borders. We look forward to announcements by several partner countries who have offered to host follow-up regional conferences to explore specific measures that whole regions can take to promote religious freedom.

And finally, in just a few moments, we'll release the Potomac Declaration and the Potomac Plan of Action. The Potomac Declaration is a formal affirmation that says right up front that the United States takes religious freedom seriously, that we will work with others around the world to help those under attack for their beliefs, and that we expect leaders around the world to make it their priority as well. The plan of action provides concrete ways the international community and governments can do more to protect religious freedom and to protect vulnerable religious communities in their own countries.

In closing, I'd like to thank Ambassador Brownback and his staff for their

work on this event. What you all have done to put this on is remarkable and an incredibly important moment in America's support for religious freedom. I want to – I want also to commend the entire State Department for executing an event whose goal is ensuring the sacred right of every man, woman, and child to worship as they please. There is truly eternal significance in the work that we have done.

I will now invite Ambassador Brownback for a few comments and to take a few questions. Thank you.

QUESTION: (Off-mike.) Mr. Secretary, can you (inaudible)?

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