

# [Press Releases: The Gambia National Day](#)

Press Statement  
Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

Washington, DC  
February 18, 2018

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On behalf of the Government of the United States of America, I offer congratulations to the people of The Gambia on the 53rd anniversary of your country's independence on February 18, 2018.

We commend your impressive progress since the return of democracy to The Gambia. The Gambia's eligibility under the African Growth and Opportunity Act and its selection by the Millennium Challenge Corporation for a Threshold Program are endorsements of your commitment to good governance and economic development.

The United States remains committed to supporting The Gambia and its people as you strive to promote democratic principles, economic growth, and investment.

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## [Press Releases: Acting Assistant](#)

# Secretary Thornton To Travel to Berlin

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
February 16, 2018

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Acting Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Susan Thornton, will travel to Berlin, Germany, to meet with European counterparts to discuss issues of mutual interest in the Indo-Pacific region February 19-20, 2018.

For updates, please follow the East Asian and Pacific Bureau on Twitter at @USAsiaPacific.

For press inquiries please contact [EAP-P-Office-DL@state.gov](mailto:EAP-P-Office-DL@state.gov).

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## Press Releases: Troika Statement on Phase 2 of the High Level Revitalization Forum for South Sudan

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
February 16, 2018

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*The text of the following statement was issued jointly by the Governments of the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and Norway.*

The members of the Troika (Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States) welcome the parties' constructive efforts toward compromise for the benefit of the people of South Sudan at the High Level Revitalization Forum (HLRF) over the last two weeks in Addis Ababa. The Troika expresses its appreciation for and fully supports the continuing effort by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to restore peace through the HLRF, and commends the tireless efforts of the IGAD Special Envoy Ambassador Ismail Wais and the mediation team.

The Troika underscores the critical importance of the parties creating a conducive environment for peacemaking: fighting while talking is unacceptable and cannot be tolerated. The parties must make good on their promises to implement the Agreement on a Cessation of Hostilities (ACOH) signed in December 2017. We take note and support the intention by IGAD and the African Union to identify and impose consequences on those undermining peace as soon as possible and we stand ready to support them in their efforts. Implementation of the ACOH must also include the release of political prisoners and prisoners of war, the end to the use of child soldiers and sexual and gender-based violence as a weapon. The parties must also allow unfettered access for Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism (CTSAMM) monitors and for humanitarian assistance and aid workers responding to Africa's worst humanitarian crisis.

While useful dialogue has taken place over the past two weeks, there is much more for the parties to do if the HLRF is to make meaningful and sustainable progress towards peace. The Troika calls on all parties to reconvene as soon as possible, without preconditions, to address the important security and governance arrangements that are essential for peace. We urge all parties to take steps to maintain the momentum of the process and refrain from comments or actions that could make returning to dialogue more difficult. We urge the parties to agree that a negotiated arrangement for an inclusive transitional government that reflects South Sudan's diversity is needed. We encourage the parties to set as priorities the separation of powers, dispute resolution and reconciliation mechanisms, service delivery, and accountability. Arrangements must not advantage any political, armed, or ethnic group. We call on the parties to develop practical security arrangements that end violence and build confidence, and set out a realistic path to broader security sector reform. We urge the parties to support financial reforms that address corruption and build confidence in public institutions.

The Troika renews its firm view that elections in 2018 are not viable given the continuing conflict, lack of security, displacement of one third of the population, and severe food insecurity affecting half the population. It calls on all parties to reject any unilateral effort to extend power through the ballot box, the legislature, or military means. A negotiated path to

elections also means the protection of fundamental political freedoms, and significant improvements in security and humanitarian conditions. The Troika continues to stand with the people of South Sudan and urges their leaders to move expeditiously to achieve the peace their people deserve.

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## **Press Releases: Kosovo National Day**

Press Statement  
Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

Washington, DC  
February 16, 2018

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On behalf of the United States, I congratulate Kosovo and its people on celebrating 10 years of independence as a sovereign nation.

In the decade since independence, Kosovo has shown determination in maturing into a more stable, democratic, and inclusive country. The United States continues to support Kosovo's citizens as they work to strengthen democratic and multiethnic institutions, increase economic growth, and bolster the rule of law on the path toward full integration in the international community.

I wish the people of Kosovo a future filled with peace and prosperity.

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## **Press Releases: Joint Statement on Turkey-U.S. Strategic Partnership**

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
February 16, 2018

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The Republic of Turkey and the United States, as allies and strategic partners, reaffirm their mutual and unequivocal commitment to each other's security and defense.

As Allies within NATO and strategic partners for over 65 years, both nations consider their relations as vital to furthering their shared goals and interests, as well as to the promotion of democracy, rule of law and individual freedoms throughout the world.

The United States condemns the heinous coup attempt that took place in Turkey on July 15, 2016 and stands in full solidarity with the democratically elected Government of Turkey and the Turkish people.

In the spirit of our longstanding alliance, we reaffirm our commitment to resolving outstanding issues in the bilateral relationship. The two sides agreed to establish a results-oriented mechanism for this purpose. This mechanism will be activated no later than mid-March.

We reaffirm that our common agenda is a global one, which includes many critical issues ranging from the fight against terrorism, countering proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, bringing lasting peace and stability to the Middle East including in Syria and Iraq, ensuring energy security and combatting radicalism, violent extremism and Islamophobia.

The Republic of Turkey and the United States, as longstanding Allies, reaffirm their determination to jointly combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Turkey and the United States reiterate their resolve to fight

against DAESH, PKK, Al Qaeda, and all other terrorist organizations and their extensions. We recognize the right to self-defense of our countries against terrorist threats directly targeting our nations.

Turkey and the United States reaffirm their commitment to the preservation of the territorial integrity and national unity of Syria. To this end, we will decisively stand against all attempts to create faits accomplis and demographic changes within Syria, and are dedicated to coordination on transition and stabilization of Syria.

Recognizing the fact that there can only be a political solution to the Syrian crisis, and that it requires a viable political transition, Turkey and the United States agree to intensify their cooperation to bring about this result within the framework of established parameters, namely the UNSC Resolution 2254, and through the Geneva process.

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