

# Press Releases: Repression of Civil Society, Human Rights Defenders, and Independent Media in Nicaragua

Press Statement  
Robert Palladino

Deputy Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
December 13, 2018

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The Nicaraguan regime's recent actions to strip legal status from non-governmental organizations, including groups monitoring human rights, reveal President Ortega's and Vice President Murillo's continued contempt for human rights in their own country. Their efforts to harass, threaten, and repress independent media will not succeed in hiding the systematic oppression of the Nicaraguan people.

Ortega and Murillo continue to degrade their country's institutions in a desperate bid to hold on to power. Arbitrary and anti-democratic measures further discredit the Ortega regime in the eyes of Nicaraguans and the world. The United States continues to stand with the people of Nicaragua in their quest to restore democracy through early, free and fair elections.

Pursuant to the Executive Order signed by President Trump on November 27, the United States will hold accountable those responsible for the abuses taking place in Nicaragua, including any individuals complicit with the regime. We urge the international community to join us condemning these actions and take concrete measures to impose additional costs for the regime's anti-democratic behavior.

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# Press Releases: Secretary Pompeo's Meeting With Greek Acting Foreign Minister George Katrougalos

Readout  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
December 13, 2018

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The below is attributable to Deputy Spokesperson Robert Palladino:□

Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo and Greek Acting Foreign Minister George Katrougalos launched the inaugural U.S.-Greece Strategic Dialogue today at the State Department. The two reaffirmed their commitment to deepen bilateral cooperation in key areas for the mutual benefit of both countries. The Secretary underscored Greece's importance as a pillar of stability in the Eastern Mediterranean and Balkans and commended Greece's contributions as a NATO Ally. The Secretary reiterated the strong support of the United States for Greece's leadership in reaching the historic Prespa Agreement. The Secretary also congratulated Greece on its exit from the bailout memorandums and offered continued support for Greece's economic recovery. The two agreed to continue working closely together to promote stability and prosperity in the Eastern Mediterranean and Balkans.

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# Press Releases: Death of Iranian Political Prisoner and Human Rights Activist Vahid Sayadi-Nassiri

Press Statement  
Robert Palladino

Deputy Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
December 13, 2018

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We are deeply saddened by the reports of the unconscionable death of Mr. Vahid Sayadi-Nassiri, a human rights activist who the Iranian regime arbitrarily detained and who died in prison. Mr. Sayadi-Nassiri went on a hunger strike to protest his arbitrary arrest and detention in Qom, where he had no access to legal counsel, was held in inhumane conditions, and was charged with spurious national security offences such as “insulting the Supreme Leader.” Mr. Sayadi-Nassiri languished in prison without his voice able to reach the outside world and he is just one of many more unjustly detained prisoners held at the mercy of the Iranian regime’s whims.

The United States condemns in the strongest possible terms the Iranian regime for its unceasingly flagrant human rights violations. We demand that the regime stops subjecting Iranians who are peacefully voicing their opinions to brutal conditions and slow deaths and that it release all those unjustly imprisoned; such as Dr. Farhad Meisami – who is also on hunger strike, and Nissrin Satoudeh. How many more people will die because of the Iranian regime’s disregard for human life and dignity? Ayatollah Khamenei recently said “No one in Iran is prosecuted or placed under pressure for criticizing the government, and if any one claims they have been, he or she has lied.” Who is the liar?

We offer our sincere condolences to the family of Mr. Sayadi-Nassiri and we demand that the regime give the Iranian people the respect and rights that they deserve.

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## **Press Releases: Conclusion of Yemen Consultations in Sweden**

Press Statement  
Michael R. Pompeo

Secretary of State

Washington, DC  
December 13, 2018

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The United States commends participants from the Yemen consultations in Sweden for making progress on key initiatives, including a cease-fire and withdrawal of forces in Hudaydah, prisoner exchanges, and opening humanitarian corridors to the city of Taiz. Although many details remain subject to further discussion, these consultations between the Republic of Yemen Government and the Houthis marked a pivotal first step. All parties have an opportunity to build upon this momentum and improve the lives of all Yemenis. Moving forward, all must continue to engage, de-escalate tensions, and cease ongoing hostilities. This is the best way to give these and future consultations a chance to succeed. The United States thanks UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths for his leadership on these efforts, continued optimism, and ability to inspire reconciliation. We also thank the Government of Sweden for hosting, as well as the governments of Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and the many others that helped facilitate and support the consultations. The work ahead will not be easy, but we have seen what many considered improbable begin to take shape. Peace is possible. The end of these consultations can be the beginning of a new chapter for Yemen.

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# Press Releases: Joint Statement Regarding the Inaugural United States- Greece Strategic Dialogue

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
December 13, 2018

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*The text of the following statement was released by the Governments of the United States of America and Greece on the occasion of the U.S.-Greece Strategic Dialogue.*

*Begin Text:*

The Governments of the United States and Greece held the inaugural U.S.-Greece Strategic Dialogue in Washington, D.C. on December 13, 2018. U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Greek Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs George Katrougalos launched the Dialogue, which included high-level interagency representation from both countries.

The Strategic Dialogue builds on a year of intensive engagement, highlights the strength of the bilateral relationship, and confirms the mutual commitment of the United States and Greece to deepen cooperation in the areas described below.

## **Regional Cooperation**

The United States and Greece shared views of the Eastern Mediterranean and Balkans, noting their common vision for a peaceful and prosperous region, the need to integrate the countries of the Western Balkans into European and transatlantic institutions, according to the choice of their people, and the aim of further linking partners in the Eastern Mediterranean in a framework of political and economic ties. The two countries underlined the importance of respect for international law and the peaceful resolution of differences, as a guiding principle to good neighborly relations and as a means to resolving problems and addressing tensions. The United States lauded Greece's leadership and vision in promoting regional stability and cooperation, in particular, Athens' initiatives in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans

to facilitate common regional economic and security benefits, as well as in reaching the Prespes Agreement with Skopje and working towards its implementation. The two sides also reviewed investment and infrastructure development in the Western Balkans. Greece emphasized the continued challenges related to refugees and migrants in Europe, and the two governments discussed the possibility for U.S. support in this area. Greece discussed its trilateral partnerships in the Eastern Mediterranean and the United States expressed interest in increasing its support for the Greece-Israel-Cyprus trilateral discussion, as invited.

### **Defense and Security**

The United States and Greece discussed common security concerns, such as international terrorism and instability in the Eastern Mediterranean region and reaffirmed their commitment to further enhance their strategic defense and security partnership, which promotes stability and prosperity in the region and contributes to the strength of NATO. The two governments also expressed their desire to modernize and expand their multifaceted defense relationship in order to better meet the needs of both countries and to more effectively address regional and global security challenges, citing recent successes in combined joint training and security exercises, and an increase in our joint activities.

### **Law Enforcement and Counterterrorism**

Both sides emphasized the importance of their cooperation on law enforcement and counterterrorism issues that has led to many important successes in the areas of convictions, seizures of weapons and many-hundred kilogram quantities of illicit narcotics, repatriation of antiquities, and disruption and dismantling of transnational criminal organizations. The United States highlighted Greece's participation in the Visa Waiver Program and the positive progress Greece has made toward fulfilling the commitments of the 2016 Joint Statement. The two governments committed to enhance law enforcement cooperation, including in the areas of information exchange, border security cooperation, and countering illicit activity.

### **Trade and Investment**

Building on the positive momentum from the Thessaloniki International Fair, Greece, and the United States committed to boosting bilateral trade and investment, including in key sectors such as energy, defense, IT, entertainment, and infrastructure. The United States congratulated Greece on its exit from financial support programs and on opening a new economic chapter, while acknowledging the challenges Greece still faces as it continues on the path to recovery. The United States highlighted the increasing role of Greece as an energy, transport, and commercial hub in the region, and the two countries committed to cooperate in further strengthening this role. The United States and Greece committed to work together to strengthen intellectual property rights protection in Greece. The United States reaffirmed its support for Greek efforts to make the necessary reforms to improve competitiveness, with the two sides committing to continued engagement through the Trade and Investment Working Group.

## **Energy**

The two governments noted the need to improve Europe's energy security and diversification, highlighting the recent spot purchase of U.S. LNG and ongoing negotiations for a long-term supply agreement. The United States commended Greece's progress on energy projects to expand regional interconnectivity to include the enlarged Revithoussa LNG terminal, the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline, and the Greece-Bulgaria Interconnector, and supports additional infrastructure designed to diversify routes and supplies, to include the proposed LNG terminal in Alexandroupolis and the Eastern Med pipeline, where commercially feasible. The two sides also discussed cooperation on renewables and clean and efficient coal technologies. The United States supports Greece's joining the Three Seas Initiative and related efforts to strengthen Europe's North-South interconnectivity.

## **People-to-People Ties**

Both sides recognized the strong people-to-people ties connecting the two countries and the vital role these ties play in fortifying the bilateral relationship. The two governments discussed ways to increase cooperation between museums, student exchange programs and English language programs, and celebrated the summer 2019 launch of the FLEX exchange program. The United States announced the selection of Greece as the host for the first-ever Gilman Scholar Regional Summit, expected to take place in 2019. The two sides also reaffirmed their commitment to the Fulbright Program on its 70th anniversary.

The United States and Greece look forward to continuing these discussions throughout the coming year, with the aim of reviewing progress at the next Dialogue in Greece in 2019.

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