

# 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

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**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](https://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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## [Press Releases: The Sixth U.S.-Japan Cyber Dialogue](#)

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
July 26, 2018

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The sixth United States-Japan Cyber Dialogue was held in Washington, D.C. on July 26th. Through this dialogue, the United States and Japan affirmed the strength of our alliance partnership and our shared values, which remain the cornerstone of peace, prosperity, and freedom in the Indo-Pacific region. The United States and Japan share a common commitment to ensure an open, interoperable, reliable, and secure cyberspace and confront emerging cyber challenges.

The United States and Japan reinforced mutual understandings on a wide range of cyber issues, including our shared commitment to deter cyber adversaries and malicious cyber activities, to protect the cybersecurity of critical infrastructure, to enhance information sharing, to improve military-to-military cyber cooperation, and to address international security issues in

cyberspace. The United States and Japan also reaffirmed their shared commitment to cooperate on cyber issues in relevant multilateral venues, including the United Nations and the ASEAN Regional Forum.

Mr. Robert Strayer, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Cyber and International Communications and Information Policy at the Department of State, led the U.S. delegation that included representatives from the National Security Council, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Commerce, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Department of Defense. Mr. Masato Otaka, Japan's Ambassador in charge of Cyber Policy and Deputy Director-General of Foreign Policy Bureau, led Japan's interagency delegation, which also included representatives from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, National Security Secretariat, National Center of Incident Readiness and Strategy for Cybersecurity, Cabinet Intelligence and Research Office, National Police Agency, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, Public Security Intelligence Agency, and Ministry of Defense.

For updates on U.S. cyber and Internet policy, follow DAS Strayer and the Economic and Business Affairs Bureau at [@StateCIP](#) or the State Department's Office of the Coordinator for Cyber Issues at [@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: Pastor Brunson Moved to House Arrest](#)**

Press Statement  
Michael R. Pompeo

Secretary of State

Washington, DC  
July 25, 2018

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This morning the United States received long overdue news that Pastor Andrew Brunson was moved from Buca Prison to house arrest in Turkey. We understand that he will be monitored electronically. While this move is a positive development, it is not enough. We have seen no credible evidence against Mr. Brunson, and we call on Turkish authorities to resolve his case immediately in a transparent and fair manner.

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## **Press Releases: Deputy Secretary Sullivan's Meeting With UK Minister of State Lord Ahmad**

Readout  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
July 25, 2018

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The below is attributable to Spokesperson Heather Nauert:□

Deputy Secretary of State John J. Sullivan met today with Lord Ahmad, the UK's Minister of State for the Commonwealth and the United Nations on the sidelines of the Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom. Deputy Secretary Sullivan highlighted the importance of an orderly and predictable Brexit and reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to the transatlantic relationship. The two also discussed U.S.-UK cooperation on human rights, religious freedom, and combatting trafficking-in-persons, as well as a range of other bilateral and

global priorities.

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## **Press Releases: U.S. Condemns Deadly Attacks in Syria's Sweida Province**

Press Statement  
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
July 25, 2018

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The Department of State strongly condemns today's barbaric ISIS-claimed attacks that took place in Syria's southwestern Sweida province, deliberately targeting and killing scores of civilians and injuring many more. We extend our condolences to the families of these innocent victims. We remain steadfast in our efforts to defeat ISIS and de-escalate the violence in Syria to bring greater peace and stability to this region.

The destruction of ISIS remains one of President Trump's top priorities and the administration is unwavering in our commitment to working with the U.S.-led Global Coalition to achieve that goal.

We reiterate our support for the people of Syria and continue to work with the UN to end the violence and form a lasting political settlement to the seven-year crisis in accordance with UNSCR 2254, which must include full representation for all Syrians.

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