

# Press Releases: Readout of Secretary Tillerson's Phone Call With Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov

Readout  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
December 27, 2017

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The following is attributable to Spokesperson Heather Nauert:

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov spoke yesterday by phone.

The two discussed concerns related to the DPRK's destabilizing nuclear program and emphasized that neither the United States nor Russia accepts the DPRK as a nuclear power. Both sides agreed that they will continue to work toward a diplomatic solution to achieve a denuclearized Korean peninsula. On Syria, they discussed the importance of supporting the Geneva process to achieve a peaceful resolution of the Syrian conflict as called for in the Joint Statement made by Presidents Trump and Putin in DaNang, Vietnam. Underscoring the U.S. concern with the rising violence in eastern Ukraine, the Secretary requested that Russia return its representatives to the Joint Center on Coordination and Control and lower the level of violence.

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# **Press Releases: Illegitimate Constituent Assembly Undermining Democracy in Venezuela**

Press Statement  
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
December 22, 2017

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The United States condemns the illegitimate Constituent Assembly's continued attacks on Venezuelan democracy. On December 20, it passed a decree to effectively ban certain political opposition parties from participating in the 2018 presidential election. The Venezuelan people deserve better. The U.S. calls for respect for the Venezuelan constitution and the will of the Venezuelan people through the democratically elected National Assembly. Venezuela must have free and fair presidential elections in 2018.

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# **Press Releases: Announcement of the Selection of the UNICEF Executive Director**

Press Statement  
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
December 22, 2017

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The United States welcomes Secretary-General Guterres' appointment of Henrietta Holsman Fore as Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Ms. Fore has had a long and distinguished career in public service, private sector, and nonprofit leadership, including as Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development and Under Secretary of State for Management. Over the course of her career, Ms. Fore has worked to champion economic development, education and health, security and good governance, and humanitarian assistance for the most vulnerable in the world. Most recently, Ms. Fore has served as Chairperson and Board Member for several private sector and non-profit institutions.

Ms. Fore will be a powerful voice on behalf of the world's children in her new position with the UN. In January, she will succeed current Executive Director Anthony Lake, whose leadership, dedication, and compassion have been exemplary. We thank Mr. Lake for his seven years of tireless service to UNICEF.

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## **[Press Releases: On the Presidential Elections in Honduras](#)**

Press Statement  
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC

December 22, 2017

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We congratulate President Juan Orlando Hernandez on his victory in the November 26 presidential elections, as declared by the Honduran Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE).

The close election results, irregularities identified by the OAS and the EU election observation missions, and strong reactions from Hondurans across the political spectrum underscore the need for a robust national dialogue. A significant long-term effort to heal the political divide in the country and enact much-needed electoral reforms should be undertaken.

We call upon the TSE to transparently and fully review any challenges filed by political parties. We urge Honduran citizens or political parties challenging the result to use the avenues provided by Honduran law.

We reiterate the call for all Hondurans to refrain from violence. The government must ensure Honduran security services respect the rights of peaceful protestors, including by ensuring accountability for any violations of those rights.

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## **[Press Releases: The Troika Welcomes the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, Protection of Civilians, and Humanitarian Access Concerning the Conflict in South Sudan](#)**

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
December 21, 2017

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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.*

On Thursday, December 21, the parties to the conflict in South Sudan signed the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, Protection of Civilians, and Humanitarian Access in Addis Ababa. The members of the Troika (Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States) congratulate the parties on their willingness to compromise for the benefit of the people of South Sudan and hope that they immediately take action to make good on that agreement. The Troika fully supports the continuing effort by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to build peace through the High Level Revitalization Forum (HLRF).

We would like to recognize in particular the meaningful contributions of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki, the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Hailemariam Desalegn Boshe, and the members of the IGAD Council of Ministers. We further recognize the tireless work undertaken by IGAD Special Envoy Ismail Wais and the High Level Facilitators to bring the parties together and the inclusion of a number of civil society organizations and women representatives at the Forum. The Troika calls on all the parties to implement the Agreement immediately including the parties' obligations regarding humanitarian access. We are encouraged by the strong statements from the African Union and IGAD making clear their intent to hold the parties accountable. The Troika calls on the parties to reconvene urgently to address the important security and governance arrangements that are essential for peace.

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