

# Press Releases: Remarks With Omani Foreign Minister Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah Before Their Meeting

Remarks

Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

Treaty Room

Washington, DC

July 21, 2017

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**SECRETARY TILLERSON:** Good morning, all. Your Excellency, welcome to the State Department. It's a pleasure to have you here.

**QUESTION:** Mr. Secretary, are you disappointed that the Qatar crisis has not been resolved yet or that more progress hasn't been made?

**SECRETARY TILLERSON:** Well, I think as a follow-on to our trip over there last week, there has been some, I think, positive movement. The Qataris have continued to move forward on the MOU that the U.S. and Qatar entered into to address many of the terrorism, terror financing, counterterrorism concerns that people have, and they have been very aggressive in implementing that agreement. So we're – I think we're satisfied with the effort they're putting forth. I think they also have indicated a willingness to sit with the four parties and negotiate, discuss the demands. I think they have indicated they think it's important that the sovereignty and dignity of all five countries be respected in those discussions.

And so what – I hope the four countries will consider as a sign of good faith lifting this land blockade, which is really having the most, I think, negative effects on the Qatari people. And that would be a good – I think a good sign if the four countries would do that. And I'm hopeful they'll consider that seriously.

**QUESTION:** Are you disappointed in the four countries so far?

**SECRETARY TILLERSON:** I hope they will begin to take some positive action. Thank you.

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## **Press Releases: Colombia Independence Day**

Press Statement  
Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

Washington, DC  
July 20, 2017

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On behalf of the United States, congratulations to the Colombian people on the 207th anniversary of your independence.

As the first Independence Day celebrated since the historic peace agreement which ended half a century of conflict, this is an especially meaningful day for the people of Colombia. Colombia and the United States are key partners in maintaining security, fighting transnational crime, and ensuring regional stability. We look forward to strengthening the economic and cultural relationships that will continue to produce opportunities for both our people.

We congratulate all Colombians on this momentous anniversary of your nation's independence.

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# Press Releases: 40th Annual British American Parliamentary Group Arrives in the United States

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
July 20, 2017

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On July 24, eight British Members of Parliament (MPs) will begin the 40th annual [British American Parliamentary Group](#) (BAPG) exchange program in Washington, D.C. The MPs will meet with Republican and Democratic members of Congress before traveling to their counterpart U.S. Representatives' home districts. The BAPG exchange has been exchanging ideas since 1977 under the auspices of the U.S. Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program. These collaborations strengthen the special relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom that is necessary to solve global challenges.

This year, participating MPs representing the Conservative Party, Labour Party, and the Scottish National Party include Suella Fernandes, Rehman Chishti, David Morris, Kerry McCarthy, Michelle Donelan, Gerald Jones, Holly Lynch, and Tommy Sheppard. They will experience U.S. regional diversity in Nebraska, Arkansas, California, Alabama, New York, and Arizona. The MPs will network with leaders and staffers, and discuss significant domestic and foreign policy issues at the federal, state, and local levels. The program concludes with a final meeting in Boston, Massachusetts.

For further information, please contact the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at [eca-press@state.gov](mailto:eca-press@state.gov).

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## **Press Releases: Belgium National Day**

Press Statement  
Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

Washington, DC  
July 20, 2017

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On behalf of the United States of America, best wishes to the people of Belgium on the occasion of your national day.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the U.S. entry into World War I, when U.S. and Belgian soldiers fought and died together in defense of a free and peaceful Europe. Since then, our steadfast alliance has continued to grow and deepen through World War II and our joint founding of NATO to the present, as we work together to combat terrorism and defeat ISIS, safeguard nuclear security, and work together towards a better future for both of our peoples.

America's strong and enduring relationship with Belgium is a foundation for the promotion of peace and prosperity. We look forward to continuing our partnership as we overcome shared challenges and enjoy shared success.

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## **Press Releases: Troika and EU Joint**

# Statement on South Sudan

Media Note

Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC

July 20, 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, Norway, and the European Union.*

Begin Text:

The members of the Troika (Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States) and the European Union condemn the continuing violence in South Sudan, especially the Government of South Sudan's current offensive against SPLM-In Opposition (SPLM-IO) forces near Pagak, as well as ongoing road ambushes and attacks by the SPLM-IO. The Pagak offensive is a clear violation of the unilateral ceasefire declared by President Salva Kiir on May 22, and calls into question the government's commitment to reach peace through the National Dialogue, notwithstanding the sincere efforts undertaken by the leaders of the Steering Committee.

The Troika and EU repeat and endorse the June 12 call by the leaders of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) for President Kiir to ensure that his forces respect the unilateral ceasefire, for the armed opposition groups to reciprocate the ceasefire, and for all groups to allow the unfettered delivery of humanitarian assistance to all those in need. We also welcome IGAD's announcement of a High-Level Revitalization Forum for the South Sudan peace process. We call upon IGAD to expeditiously convene the Forum, and to include the current principal parties to the conflict. Likewise, we urge all parties to fully participate in the Forum. The Troika and EU agree with IGAD that the Forum should focus on achieving a ceasefire and resuming political dialogue that focuses on updating the agreement's timelines and other provisions that are now obsolete in light of the expansion of conflict since 2015.

The proliferation of violence, displacement, and food insecurity renders any discussion of elections in the foreseeable future as an unnecessary diversion from the primary goals of achieving peace and reconciliation. South Sudan's leaders, neighbors, and regional and international partners must first focus on achieving peace in order to create the conditions needed to hold credible elections. To achieve these urgent goals, we look forward to the prompt

revitalization of an inclusive and credible peace process by IGAD; such progress would be required in order for the Troika and EU to commit further resources to institutions designed to implement the agreement.

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