

# [Press Releases: On the Passing of Liu Xiaobo](#)

Press Statement  
Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

Washington, DC  
July 13, 2017

---

Today, I join those in China and around the world in mourning the tragic passing of 2010 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Liu Xiaobo, who died while serving a lengthy prison sentence in China for promoting peaceful democratic reform. Mr. Liu dedicated his life to the betterment of his country and humankind, and to the pursuit of justice and liberty.

My heartfelt condolences go out to Liu's wife Liu Xia and all of his loved ones. I call on the Chinese government to release Liu Xia from house arrest and allow her to depart China, according to her wishes.

In his fight for freedom, equality, and constitutional rule in China, Liu Xiaobo embodied the human spirit that the Nobel Prize rewards. In his death, he has only reaffirmed the Nobel Committee's selection.

*The Office of Website Management, Bureau of Public Affairs, manages this site as a portal for information from the U.S. State Department. External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views or privacy policies contained therein.*

---

## [Press Releases: 2017-18 Fulbright-](#)

# National Geographic Digital Storytellers Announced

Media Note

Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC

July 13, 2017

---

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and the National Geographic Society announce the selection of the 2017-2018 [Fulbright-National Geographic Digital Storytelling Fellows](#).

The Fulbright-National Geographic Fellowship is a partnership between the U.S. Department of State and the National Geographic Society that provides a unique platform for U.S. Fulbrighters to undertake an in-depth exploration of globally relevant issues. Fellows utilize a variety of digital storytelling tools and media, including blogs, photography, video, and social media, to share their stories by providing content to a National Geographic Society [blog](#) and other platforms, with the support and mentorship of National Geographic's storytelling team. These storytelling tools are a powerful resource in building lasting ties across cultures, helping Americans and people from around the world better understand each other. This is the fourth group of five Fulbright-National Geographic Storytellers selected through a highly competitive, merit-based, multi-tiered application process.

The five American Fulbright-National Geographic Storytellers are:

- **Toby Cox**, who will explore the theme of religious identity in the **Kyrgyz Republic**, Kyrgyz citizens' relationships with Islam, and how their views have developed over time. She will use personal interviews as a way to gain insight into the many dimensions of Kyrgyz identity.
- **Isaí Madriz**, an entomologist and zoologist who will travel to **Chile** to hike, "bikepack," and "packraft" to unexplored areas and secluded fjords in search of some of the rarest insects on the planet, telling the story of deglaciation in the Northern Patagonia Ice Field.
- **Abby McBride**, an artist who will travel to **New Zealand** to sketch endangered seabirds – penguins, prions, storm-petrels, shearwaters, shags, gulls, gannets, mollymawks, and more – to tell the stories of New Zealanders' extraordinary efforts to save these species in the "seabird capital of the world."
- **Lillygol Sedaghat**, who will document the human narratives shaping Taiwan's waste management system and the innovations emerging in

plastics and electronics recycling, using interactive photo galleries, audio files, and a live Instagram campaign.

- **Destry Maria Sibley**, who will travel to **Mexico** to produce a podcast series dedicated to telling the stories of *Los Niños de Morelia*, a group of more than 400 child refugees who fled the Spanish Civil War and settled in Mexico in 1937.

The Fulbright Program is the flagship international educational exchange program sponsored by the U.S. government and is designed to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries. Since its inception in 1946, the Fulbright Program has provided more than 370,000 participants – chosen for their academic merit and leadership potential – with the opportunity to exchange ideas and contribute to finding solutions to shared international concerns.

The Fulbright-National Geographic Storytelling Fellowship was launched in 2013 as a component of the Fulbright U.S. Student Program. It sends U.S. citizens abroad to engage in an academic year of digital storytelling projects in up to three countries on globally significant themes. This Fellowship is made possible through a partnership between the U.S. Department of State and the National Geographic Society.

Interested media should contact the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at 202-632-6452 or [eca-press@state.gov](mailto:eca-press@state.gov).

*The Office of Website Management, Bureau of Public Affairs, manages this site as a portal for information from the U.S. State Department. External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views or privacy policies contained therein.*

---

## [Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity](#)

On May 11, 2017, President Donald J. Trump signed an [Executive Order establishing the Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity](#). Vice President Mike Pence chairs the Commission, and Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach serves as the vice chair.

Any member of the public wishing to submit written comments for the Commission's consideration may do so via email at [ElectionIntegrityStaff@ovp.eop.gov](mailto:ElectionIntegrityStaff@ovp.eop.gov). Please note that the Commission may post such written comments publicly on our website, including names and contact

information that are submitted.

***Please check back regularly for further updates regarding the Commission and its future meetings and agendas.***

## **Statements & Releases**

### **May 2017**

- [President Announces Formation of Bipartisan Presidential Commission on Election Integrity](#) (5/11/2017)

### **June 2017**

- [Readout of the Vice President's Call with the Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity](#) (6/28/2017)

### **July 2017**

- [Statement from Kris Kobach, Kansas Secretary of State and Vice Chair of the Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity](#) (7/05/2017)

## **Commission Members**

- Vice President Mike Pence, *Chair*
- Kris Kobach, Secretary of State of Kansas, *Vice-Chair*
- Connie Lawson, Secretary of State of Indiana
- Bill Gardner, Secretary of State of New Hampshire
- Matthew Dunlap, Secretary of State of Maine
- Ken Blackwell, Former Secretary of State of Ohio
- Christy McCormick, Commissioner, Election Assistance Commission
- David Dunn, Former Arkansas State Representative
- Mark Rhodes, Clerk of Wood County, West Virginia
- Hans von Spakovsky, Senior Legal Fellow and Manager of Election Law Reform Initiative, Edwin Meese Center for Legal & Judicial Studies, The Heritage Foundation
- J. Christian Adams, President and General Counsel, Public Interest Legal Foundation
- Alan King, Probate Judge, Jefferson County, Alabama

## **Meetings**

### **July 19, 2017 – First Meeting of the Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity**

The first meeting of the Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity will be held on Wednesday, July 19, 2017 from 11:00 a.m. until no later than 5:00 p.m., Eastern Daylight Time. The meeting will be held at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, Room 350, located at 1650 Pennsylvania Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20502. It will be open to the public through livestreaming on <https://www.whitehouse.gov/live>.

This meeting will consist of a ceremonial swearing in of Commission members,

introductions and statements from members, a discussion of the Commission's charge and objectives, possible comments or presentations from invited experts, and a discussion of next steps and related matters.

## Commission Documents

- [Federal Register Notice – Meeting Announcement](#)
- Meeting Agenda
- Meeting Materials
- [Public Documents](#)

Any member of the public wishing to submit written comments for the Commission's consideration may do so via email at [ElectionIntegrityStaff@ovp.eop.gov](mailto:ElectionIntegrityStaff@ovp.eop.gov). Please note that the Commission may post such written comments publicly on our website, including names and contact information that are submitted.

***Please check back soon for further updates regarding the Commission and its future meetings and agendas.***

## Mission

Pursuant to Executive Order 13799, the Commission shall, consistent with applicable law, study the registration and voting processes used in Federal elections. The Commission shall be solely advisory and shall submit a report to the President that identifies the following:

(a) those laws, rules, policies, activities, strategies, and practices that enhance the American people's confidence in the integrity of the voting processes used in Federal elections;

(b) those laws, rules, policies, activities, strategies, and practices that undermine the American people's confidence in the integrity of the voting processes used in Federal elections; and

(c) those vulnerabilities in voting systems and practices used for Federal elections that could lead to improper voter registrations and improper voting, including fraudulent voter registrations and fraudulent voting.

---

## **[Press Releases: The Administration Extends Sudan Sanctions Review Period](#)**

Press Statement  
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
July 11, 2017

---

Today, the President issued an Executive Order (E.O.) extending the review period established by E.O. 13761 of January 13, 2017, which set forth criteria for the revocation of certain sanctions on Sudan. The President's E.O. extends the review period for an additional three months and provides for the revocation of those sanctions if the Government of Sudan (GOS) sustains the positive actions that gave rise to E.O. 13761, including maintaining a cessation of hostilities in conflict areas in Sudan; improving humanitarian access throughout Sudan; and maintaining its cooperation with the United States on addressing regional conflicts and the threat of terrorism.

The United States will revoke the sanctions if the GOS is assessed to have sustained progress in these areas at the end of the extended review period. The general license issued by the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control, which became effective on January 17, 2017, remains in place and broadly authorizes U.S. persons to process transactions involving persons in Sudan; engage in imports from and exports to Sudan; and engage in transactions involving property in which the GOS has an interest.

While we recognize that the GOS has made significant, substantial progress in many areas, the Administration has decided that some more time is needed for this review to establish that the GOS has sustained sufficient positive actions across all areas listed in E.O. 13761. We remain deeply committed to engagement with the GOS and working toward further progress on achieving a sustainable peace in Sudan, removing remaining obstructions to the delivery of humanitarian assistance, and bolstering cooperation to counter terrorism and promote regional stability. Beyond these key areas connected with the potential revocation of most sanctions on Sudan and the GOS, the Administration is also committed to intensifying engagement with the GOS on a broader range of vital issues, including our ongoing dialogue on improving Sudan's human rights and religious freedom practices, and ensuring that Sudan is committed to the full implementation of UN Security Council resolutions on North Korea.

*The Office of Website Management, Bureau of Public Affairs, manages this site as a portal for information from the U.S. State Department. External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views or privacy policies contained therein.*

---

# Press Releases: Republic of Kiribati Independence Day

Press Statement  
Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

Washington, DC  
July 11, 2017

---

On behalf of the people of the United States, our best wishes to the people of Kiribati as they celebrate 38 years of independence on July 12. Since World War II, the United States has been committed to preserving the friendship between our nations. Kiribati's stable democracy, dedication to expanding free education, and people-centered approach to domestic development make it an example to the region and the world.

*The Office of Website Management, Bureau of Public Affairs, manages this site as a portal for information from the U.S. State Department. External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views or privacy policies contained therein.*