

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 17	<u>633</u>
International Conflict Resolution and Avoidance	<u>633</u>
A. MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS	<u>633</u>
B. PEACEKEEPING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION	<u>634</u>
1. Afghanistan	<u>634</u>
2. Syria	<u>639</u>
3. Ukraine.....	<u>644</u>
4. India and Pakistan	<u>644</u>
5. Ethiopia and Eritrea	<u>644</u>
6. Nicaragua	<u>645</u>
7. Sudan.....	<u>645</u>
8. South Sudan	<u>646</u>
9. Libya	<u>651</u>
10. Yemen	<u>653</u>
C. CONFLICT AVOIDANCE AND ATROCITIES PREVENTION	<u>656</u>
1. Burma.....	<u>656</u>
2. HRC on Prevention of Genocide and Other Atrocities.....	<u>657</u>
3. Responsibility to Protect.....	<u>659</u>
Cross References	<u>662</u>

CHAPTER 17

International Conflict Resolution and Avoidance

A. MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS

On August 31, 2018, the State Department issued a press statement regarding U.S. assistance to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (“UNRWA”). The statement is excerpted below and available at <https://www.state.gov/on-u-s-assistance-to-unrwa/>.

* * * *

The Administration has carefully reviewed the issue and determined that the United States will not make additional contributions to UNRWA. When we made a U.S. contribution of \$60 million in January, we made it clear that the United States was no longer willing to shoulder the very disproportionate share of the burden of UNRWA’s costs that we had assumed for many years. Several countries, including Jordan, Egypt, Sweden, Qatar, and the UAE have shown leadership in addressing this problem, but the overall international response has not been sufficient.

Beyond the budget gap itself and failure to mobilize adequate and appropriate burden sharing, the fundamental business model and fiscal practices that have marked UNRWA for years—tied to UNRWA’s endlessly and exponentially expanding community of entitled beneficiaries—is simply unsustainable and has been in crisis mode for many years. The United States will no longer commit further funding to this irredeemably flawed operation. ...

Accordingly, the United States will intensify dialogue with the United Nations, host governments, and international stakeholders about new models and new approaches, which may include direct bilateral assistance from the United States and other partners, that can provide today’s Palestinian children with a more durable and dependable path towards a brighter tomorrow.

* * * *

On September 10, 2018, the Trump Administration announced the closure of the office of the General Delegation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (“PLO”) in Washington, D.C. based on the PLO’s failure to take steps to advance the Middle East peace process. The State Department’s press statement on the closure of the PLO office follows and is available at <https://www.state.gov/closure-of-the-plo-office-in-washington/>. Notice of the closure appeared in the Federal Register on September 17, 2018. 83 Fed. Reg. 46,990 (Sep. 17, 2018). The action was taken pursuant to legal authorities, including, inter alia, the Antiterrorism Act of 1987 (title X of Pub. L. 100–204), the Foreign Missions Act of 1982 (22 U.S.C. 4301-4316), and the Department of State’s Designation and Determination of June 21, 1994 (U.S. Department of State, Public Notice 2035, 59 FR 37121, 37122 (July 20, 1994)). *Id.*

* * * *

The Administration has determined after careful review that the office of the General Delegation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in Washington should close. We have permitted the PLO office to conduct operations that support the objective of achieving a lasting, comprehensive peace between Israelis and the Palestinians since the expiration of a previous waiver in November 2017. However, the PLO has not taken steps to advance the start of direct and meaningful negotiations with Israel. To the contrary, PLO leadership has condemned a U.S. peace plan they have not yet seen and refused to engage with the U.S. government with respect to peace efforts and otherwise. As such, and reflecting Congressional concerns, the Administration has decided that the PLO office in Washington will close at this point. This decision is also consistent with Administration and Congressional concerns with Palestinian attempts to prompt an investigation of Israel by the International Criminal Court.

The United States continues to believe that direct negotiations between the two parties are the only way forward. This action should not be exploited by those who seek to act as spoilers to distract from the imperative of reaching a peace agreement. We are not retreating from our efforts to achieve a lasting and comprehensive peace.

* * * *

B. PEACEKEEPING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

1. Afghanistan

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Alice G. Wells addressed the United States Institute of Peace on March 9, 2018 regarding the prospect for Afghanistan peace talks. Her remarks are excerpted below.

* * * *

... I really want to congratulate the government of Afghanistan on the Second Kabul Process Conference. And I also want to thank, of course, the Afghan, the U.S. and the NATO forces for continuing to ensure the safety of the conference and all that they do, of course, to ensure the safety of Afghanistan.

I believe that the Second Kabul Process Conference was really a landmark event. President Ghani endorsed a dignified path to a political settlement, and put forward a vision of reconciliation that was both credible and detailed. This was a true pan-Afghan overture to the Taliban with President Ghani's partners in the National Unity Government, including Dr. Abdullah and Foreign Minister Rabbani participating, along with members of civil society including women.

The conference was attended by 25 countries, the UN and EU, and a Joint Declaration adopted by consensus showed the strong international support for a vision of peace shared across Afghan society.

It's now up to the Taliban leaders to respond to this serious offer. This is a peace offer that the United States supports and is prepared to facilitate, but we cannot substitute for the direct negotiations that are required between the Afghan government and the Taliban leadership.

Today in my remarks I want to outline this inter-Afghan peace that was offered by the National Unity Government, the U.S. role in a peace process, the Taliban's stated grievances, Pakistan's role, and the benefits of peace. But I'll do it briefly because I'm looking forward to the questions and answers.

I assume that all of you have reviewed President Ghani's remarks. I was struck by the President's description of peace as both a national and religious responsibility. He made clear that there are no preconditions to negotiations while underscoring that the rights of all citizens, especially Afghan women, must be safeguarded.

He discussed the political framework for talks that produce a ceasefire, the Taliban's registration as a political party, and participation in an electoral process. He noted the important signals that were sent by the Hezbi Islami deal, Hekmatyar's return to the political mainstream, the prisoner releases, the delisting, and the demobilization. He discussed the legal framework for peace, which would include a constitutional review through legal mechanisms as well as legal processes for prisoner releases and sanctions release. He suggested methods for reaching peace, such as official recognition of the Afghan government, respect for rule of law, further efforts for government reform and balanced development, the return of Afghan refugees, programs for social development including for refugees and former insurgents, and security measures for all citizens, particularly the reconciling Taliban. And underscoring the need for a dignified process, I think President Ghani also talked about very important elements—an office for the Taliban, a path towards travel documents, being allowed to travel freely, help in the removal of sanctions, access to the media, repatriation for their families.

When it comes to the United States, our conditions-based South Asia Strategy ensures the Taliban cannot win on the battlefield. But it recognizes that a resolution to the conflict will be through a negotiated political settlement.

The recent Taliban letter to the people of the United States I believe misses the point. For eight years the United States has been prepared to support a peace process, but we cannot be a substitute again for the Afghan people and the Afghan government in a negotiation with the

Taliban. The Taliban was at war with the Afghan people long before U.S. military operations began in 2001.

Now obviously, the United States has a direct interest in the resolution of this conflict, and the Taliban have frequently stated the need for all foreign troops to depart Afghanistan as a precondition for negotiations. We are in Afghanistan as a guest of a sovereign Afghan government that's recognized by the United Nations and international community. With our presence enshrined in the Strategic Partnership Agreement, and a Bilateral Security Agreement which were approved by a traditional Loya Jirga, we'll continue our mission so long as a sovereign, independent Afghan government agrees to host us and work with us.

For those Taliban who have grievances, the legitimate path to resolving their concerns is going to be through negotiation. The Afghanistan of 2018 is not the Afghanistan of 2002. The institutional capacity, governance and security are greater. A technocratic, political and economic leadership is emerging.

While the Taliban are part of the social fabric of Afghanistan, they do not speak for all of the Afghan people, and consistently we see that only a small percentage of the population claim sympathy for them.

The United States does not have any hidden agenda or motives in Afghanistan. We acted in self-defense to bring justice to those who plotted the September 11, 2001 attack. Let us not forget that it was the Taliban who repeatedly refused to hand over Osama bin Laden. And to this day, the Taliban retain relations with al-Qaida and a host of other terrorist organizations.

We will remain in Afghanistan as long as it takes to keep it from becoming a terrorist safe haven. We will help the Afghan people [s]ecure their country, and we envision Afghanistan to have friendly, state-to-state relations with all of its neighbors.

We are not in Afghanistan to acquire its natural resources, to impose our own form of government, to prevent the free practice of Islam, or to destabilize the region.

Pakistan has an important role to play in a peace process and in stabilizing Afghanistan. We believe that Pakistan can help change and shape the calculus of the Taliban. We're engaged with Pakistan on how we can work together, as well as address Pakistan's legitimate concerns through a negotiated process. Pakistani officials have long expressed concerns ranging from border management to refugees to terrorism that emanate from ungoverned spaces in Afghanistan. These are issues that need to be addressed during the course of a reconciliation process.

We've not yet seen decisive or sustained changes in Pakistan's behavior, and as a result we suspended our military assistance. But we're not walking away from Pakistan. This relationship is important to us, and we're continuing our intensive dialogue through both our military and our civilian channels to discuss how we can better work together. Just yesterday the Deputy Secretary Sullivan and I met with Foreign Secretary Janjua.

In conclusion, for those Taliban who seek a peaceful, prosperous and just society, now is the time to step up and chart with the government of Afghanistan a new way forward. The majority of Afghan people refuse to return to the oppression and isolation of Taliban rule.

Today nearly 40 percent of Afghans are under the age of 14. The next generation of Afghan leaders are building trade routes, they're establishing business networks, they're studying abroad at top global universities, and they're connecting with the rest of the world through the internet and social media. Afghans are wealthier, healthier, living longer, and are more educated than at any time in recent decades. The Afghan people want peace, but not at the

cost of their own dignity and advancement. The Afghan people want to maintain the constitutional legal system, representative democracy and strong ties to the rest of the world. Ultimately, the United States wants a peaceful Afghanistan that is part of a stable region with strong connections to the international community and the global economy.

* * * *

The government of Afghanistan does not recognize the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan as the Taliban like to call themselves. The Taliban don't recognize the government of Afghanistan. But at the end of a process is where you achieve that mutual understanding. The Taliban have imposed a precondition that I think has made it impossible so far for them to take up what have been sincere offers from the government of Afghanistan. But I see with this proposal, I think we're seeing signs that the Taliban is assessing and analyzing the proposal, and we certainly believe now is the time for the Taliban to put forward its vision of a road map to peace.

* * * *

I think it's clear that the Resolute Support Mission is in Afghanistan as a result of the war and of the continued presence of multiple terrorist organizations, which is why we have the additional 3500 troops that are dedicated to counterterrorism operations. You know, if the war goes away and the terrorist groups are defeated obviously the question of presence can be taken up and will be taken up.

But what I would underscore is that this is not an occupying force. This is not a force that has been imposed on the Afghan government. This is a presence, an international presence and a United States presence that has come at the invitation of the government and that has been affirmed in the traditional way by the Afghan people.

* * * *

We look forward to participating in the Tashkent Conference which is coming under the aegis of the Kabul Process where again, we will have I think 21 countries gathering in Tashkent on March 25th to I think really reaffirm what came out of Kabul and to provide a regional dimension of support for the vision laid out by President Ghani.

* * * *

On April 25, 2018, Acting Secretary of State John J. Sullivan issued a statement condemning the Taliban's announcement of a spring offensive. The statement is available at <https://www.state.gov/on-taliban-announcement-of-spring-offensive/>. Acting Secretary Sullivan said:

The announcement affirms the Taliban's responsibility for the insecurity that destroys the lives of thousands of Afghans each year.

President Ghani recently extended an historic invitation for the Taliban to join a peace process, and there is no justification for the announcement of a new

offensive. There is no need for a new “fighting season.” Still, the Taliban announced another campaign of senseless violence targeting the democratically elected and internationally recognized Afghan government and their fellow Afghans.

The United States stands with the Afghan people in response to the Taliban’s announcement. We support the brave Afghan security forces who are standing against the Taliban and terrorist groups that seek to destroy Afghan society. We commend the Afghan people, who are carrying on their lives, raising families, attending universities, building businesses, preparing for elections, and strengthening their communities despite violence and continued bloodshed.

As President Ghani recently said, the Taliban should turn their bullets and bombs into ballots. They should run for office. They should vote. We encourage Taliban leaders to return to Afghanistan from their foreign safe havens and work constructively for Afghanistan’s future. More violence will not bring peace and security to Afghanistan.

On June 7, 2018, the State Department held a special briefing with a senior official regarding the announcement of a temporary ceasefire in Afghanistan. The briefing is excerpted below and available at <https://www.state.gov/senior-state-department-official-on-afghanistan-ceasefire-announcement/>.

* * * *

... This offer of a ceasefire and an intent by the Afghan Government and Afghan Security Forces to temporarily suspend offensive operations against the Taliban during the Eid holiday comes in response to a call earlier in the week from the Afghan Ulema for reductions in violence, an end to the violence and the conflict overall, and I think underscores the Afghan Government’s continued commitment to searching for ways to bring this conflict to a close and, in the meantime, to look for ways to reduce its horrible impact on the Afghan people.

We understand that prior to announcing the ceasefire offer, President Ghani consulted with leaders of the prominent organizations and groupings that participated in the jihad against the Soviets and received pretty much unconditional, uniform support from them for this concept. And in so offering this ceasefire opportunity, I think President Ghani is responding to and indeed reflecting the desire of a wide cross-section of Afghans—both geographically, ethnically, and in terms of both urban and rural populations—in desiring to see a reduction in violence and a way forward to an end to the conflict.

* * * *

...[W]e believe anything that reduces the violence in Afghanistan, whether it’s temporarily or more importantly in the long term, is a good thing. Now, in this case, we have the Government of Afghanistan expressing a willingness to reduce violence, because frankly most of

the violence in Afghanistan these days comes in response to operations and violence perpetrated by the Taliban or Daesh, by ISIS Khorasan.

With respect to the Taliban, they have an opportunity here to respond to calls from a wide cross-section of Afghans asking for a reduction in violence, which we think would show that it's possible in the course of this long conflict to reduce violence. Obviously, it would be better in the long term if a ceasefire stemmed from a negotiated political settlement, but a temporary ceasefire for an Eid certainly doesn't preclude that possibility down the road and hopefully helps contribute to realizing that objective.

* * * *

We certainly don't want to sustain force levels and operations in Afghanistan any longer than is absolutely necessary. And what we're all focused on is trying to find the right formula that enables us to reduce operations, and that comes from a political settlement where the Taliban is no longer posing a threat to the Afghan people and no longer creating the conditions under which ISIS Khorasan or other international terrorist organizations can take advantage of instability in Afghanistan to plot and plan attacks against the United States or our allies.

* * * *

On June 16, 2018, Secretary Pompeo issued a statement welcoming the ceasefire agreed for the period of the celebration of Eid al-Fitr. The statement, which is available at <https://www.state.gov/on-president-ghanis-offer-to-extend-the-ceasefire-and-open-negotiations/>, expressed support for extending the ceasefire and beginning peace talks.

On August 19, 2018, Secretary Pompeo issued a statement welcoming the announcement by the Afghan government of a ceasefire conditioned on Taliban participation. The statement is available at <https://www.state.gov/statement-on-afghan-governments-ceasefire-announcement/>. Secretary Pompeo said:

The last ceasefire in Afghanistan revealed the deep desire of the Afghan people to end the conflict, and we hope another ceasefire will move the country closer to sustainable security. The United States and our international partners support this initiative by the Afghan people and the Afghan government, and we call on the Taliban to participate. It is our hope, and that of the international community, that the Afghan people may celebrate Eid al-Adha this year in peace, free from fear.

The United States supports President Ghani's offer for comprehensive negotiations on a mutually agreed agenda. We remain ready to support, facilitate, and participate in direct negotiations between the Afghan government and the Taliban. There are no obstacles to talks. It is time for peace.

2. Syria

On February 24, 2018, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations Nikki Haley delivered remarks on the adoption of UN Security Council resolution 2401 on a ceasefire

in Syria. Her remarks are excerpted below and available at <https://usun.usmission.gov/remarks-at-the-adoption-of-un-security-council-resolution-2401-on-a-ceasefire-in-syria/>.

* * * *

Today, the Security Council finally took a step toward addressing the[] devastating levels of human suffering in Syria. The United States wants nothing more than to see the ceasefire in this resolution implemented immediately across the country.

It is critical that the Assad regime and its allies comply with our demand to stop the assault on eastern Ghouta and immediately allow food and medicine to reach everyone who needs it.

All of us on this Council must do our part to press the Assad regime as hard as we can to comply.

But we are late to respond to this crisis. Very late. On Wednesday, the Secretary-General made an emotional plea for an immediate ceasefire in Syria to allow the very basic necessities to get to the people. Kuwait and Sweden had a version of this resolution ready to go for a vote. But Russia called for a delay.

On Thursday, in an effort to stall, Russia called for an open meeting on the humanitarian situation in Syria. At that meeting, 14 members of this Council were ready to impose a ceasefire. But Russia obstructed the vote again.

And then yesterday, this Council sat around for hours, ready to vote, only to have Russia delay it again.

Every minute the Council waited on Russia, the human suffering grew. Getting to a vote became a moral responsibility for everyone, but not for Russia, not for Syria, not for Iran. I have to ask, why?

At least 19 health facilities have been bombed since Sunday. Nineteen.

As they dragged out the negotiation, the bombs from Assad's fighter jets continued to fall. In the three days it took us to adopt this resolution, how many mothers lost their kids to the bombing and the shelling? How many more images did we need to see of fathers holding their dead children?

All for nothing, because here we are voting for a ceasefire that could have saved lives days ago.

And after all of this time, hardly anything has changed in the resolution except a few words and some commas.

The Syrian people should not have to die waiting for Russia to organize their instructions from Moscow or to discuss it with the Syrians. And why did the Council allow this? There is no good reason we shouldn't have done this Wednesday, or Thursday, or Friday.

We may not know the faces that we're talking about. We may not know their names, or these people, but they know us. And we all failed them this week. I guess there is unity in that.

Today, Russia has belatedly decided to join the international consensus and accept the need to call for a ceasefire, but only after trying every possible way to avoid it.

This resolution marks a moment of Council unity that we must seize and maintain beyond the 30-day timeframe. We hope this resolution will be a turning point, where Russia will join us

in pushing for the political settlement to this conflict and take action to re-establish real accountability for the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

Progress starts by adhering to the ceasefire with no excuses. After so many years of defying this Council's demands, the Assad regime must change course.

None of us should be so naïve as to accept that the Assad regime can continue indiscriminately bombing schools, hospitals, and homes under the fake excuse of "counterterrorism."

Assad's bombing must stop. The ceasefire must be given a chance to work.

We look to the Assad regime's backers, especially Russia and Iran, to address what the Secretary-General rightly called a "hell on Earth." All eyes will now be on the Syrian regime, Iran, and Russia.

Our goal with this resolution is clear: The Assad regime needs to stop its military activities around eastern Ghouta, and for once, allow humanitarian access to all of those who need it.

We are deeply skeptical that the regime will comply. But we supported this resolution because we must demand nothing less. We owe this to the innocent people of Syria begging for help.

In the days to come, our resolve to stand by our demands in this resolution will be tested. All of us must rise to the challenge of maintaining this ceasefire, just as we came together today.

All of us must do everything we can to make the demands of this resolution a reality. It's the only way to restore the credibility of this Council. The Syrian people have been waiting long enough.

* * * *

On June 14, 2018, the State Department issued a press statement on preserving the Southwest De-escalation Zone in Syria. The statement is available at <https://www.state.gov/preserving-the-southwest-de-escalation-zone-in-syria/> and excerpted below.

* * * *

The United States remains concerned by reports of impending Syrian government operations in southwest Syria within the boundaries of the de-escalation zone negotiated between the United States, Jordan, and the Russian Federation last year and reaffirmed between Presidents Trump and Putin in Da Nang, Vietnam in November. The United States remains committed to maintaining the stability of the southwest de-escalation zone and to the ceasefire underpinning it.

We reiterate that any Syrian government military actions against the southwest de-escalation zone risk broadening the conflict. We affirm again that the United States will take firm and appropriate measures in response to Syrian government violations in this area.

The ceasefire arrangement and southwest de-escalation zone were initiatives by Presidents Trump and Putin to de-escalate the Syrian conflict, save lives, and create conditions for the displaced to safely and voluntarily return to their homes. A military offensive by the Syrian regime into this ceasefire zone would defy these initiatives, which have been a success to date. It is vitally important that the three nations supporting the southwest de-escalation zone do

everything they can to enforce and implement the understandings reached last year. Existing diplomatic channels have successfully monitored and de-escalated the situation in the southwest, avoiding any resumption of fighting for nearly a year. The ceasefire must continue to be enforced and respected.

Russia is duly responsible as a permanent member of the UN Security Council to use its diplomatic and military influence over the Syrian government to stop attacks and compel the government to cease further military offensives. We request that Russia fulfill its commitments in accordance with UNSCR 2254 and the southwest ceasefire arrangement.

* * * *

On June 21, 2018, the State Department issued a further press statement regarding ceasefire violations reported in Syria. The statement is excerpted below and available at <https://www.state.gov/reported-violations-of-the-southwest-ceasefire/>.

* * * *

The United States remains deeply troubled by reports of increasing Syrian regime operations in southwest Syria within the boundaries of the de-escalation zone ... Syrian regime military and militia units, according to our reports, have violated the southwest de-escalation zone and initiated airstrikes, artillery, and rocket attacks.

The United States continues to warn both the Russian government and the Assad regime of the serious repercussions of these violations and demands that Russia restrain pro-regime forces from further actions within the southwest de-escalation zone. During their call this weekend, Secretary Pompeo stressed to Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov the critical nature of mutual adherence to this arrangement and the unacceptable nature of any unilateral activity by the Assad regime or Russia. The United States expects all parties to respect the ceasefire, protect civilian populations, and avoid broadening of the conflict. We remain committed to maintaining the stability of the southwest de-escalation zone and to the ceasefire underpinning it.

* * * *

On October 18, 2018, the State Department issued a press statement on the decision by Special Envoy for Syria Steffan de Mistura to finish his tenure. The statement is excerpted below and available at <https://www.state.gov/decision-by-staffan-de-mistura-to-finish-his-tenure-as-un-special-envoy-for-syria/>.

* * * *

In his four years and four months as UN Special Envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura has worked tirelessly to find a solution to the Syrian crisis, saved lives by working to deescalate the violence that has engulfed the country, and eased suffering by constantly pressing for unhindered delivery of vital medical and humanitarian aid to Syrians in need.

Special Envoy De Mistura has also eloquently stated that there is no military solution in Syria, and that the only way forward is a political process under the auspices of UN Security Council Resolution 2254. He has offered a vision of a Syria that is free from violence and oppression and a Syrian government that represents the will of the Syrian people. His leadership in pursuit of these goals has been instrumental in building international consensus for a political pathway out of this terrible conflict.

Now, as Special Envoy De Mistura enters the final weeks of his tenure, he and UN Secretary General Guterres have pledged that he will use all his influence and energy to finally convene the Syrian constitutional committee—an important step forward in the political process and a symbol that a solution is possible.

* * * *

On November 29, 2018, the State Department issued a statement on the lack of any breakthrough at the latest meeting of the Astana group on Syria. The statement is excerpted below and available at <https://www.state.gov/no-breakthrough-at-astana-meeting/>.

* * * *

The latest “Astana group” meeting on Syria did not yield an agreed list of members for the Syrian Constitutional Committee and thus failed to produce progress toward advancing the political process in this tragic conflict. For 10 months, the so-called Astana/Sochi initiative on the Syrian Constitutional Committee, created to advance the goals laid out within UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2254, has produced a stalemate. The establishment and convening, by the end of the year, of the Constitutional Committee in Geneva is vital to a lasting de-escalation and a political solution to the conflict. This goal has broad international support: at the Quadrilateral Summit in Istanbul, Russia joined the call to convene the committee by December.

Russia and Iran continue to use the process to mask the Assad regime’s refusal to engage in the political process as outlined under UNSCR 2254. We all should work to achieve the goals as laid out in UNSCR 2254 to include de-escalation and a reinvigorated political process, but strongly believe success is not possible without the international community holding Damascus fully accountable for the lack of progress in resolving the conflict.

The United States remains committed to the UNSCR 2254 to achieve peace in Syria and support the Syrian people. We will continue to strongly support the work of UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura and the United Nations to advance a Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political process that would create a permanent, peaceful and political end to the conflict. We will remain engaged with the UN and other parties to encourage all possible efforts to maintain the ceasefire in Idlib and reduce violence across Syria; unhindered humanitarian aid, and the advancement of the political track as called for in UNSCR 2254.

* * * *

3. Ukraine

On October 11, 2018, the State Department congratulated Ukraine's parliament and leaders on extending a law on special status for areas of Ukraine controlled by Russia, acting to implement the Minsk agreements. The U.S. statement is excerpted below and available at <https://www.state.gov/ukraine-passes-key-hurdle-in-implementation-of-minsk-peace-agreements/>.

* * * *

The United States congratulates Ukraine's [p]arliament and Ukrainian leadership on extending the law on special status for Russia-controlled areas of eastern Ukraine. Extending this law, which would have expired yesterday, demonstrates Ukraine's continued commitment to a peaceful resolution of the conflict and implementation of the Minsk agreements. Ukraine's brave step towards peace stands in sharp comparison to Russia's continued failure to fulfill its Minsk commitments.

We call on Russia to join Ukraine in pursuing peace. Russia and the forces it arms, trains, leads, and fights alongside have yet to follow through on repeated commitments to cease hostilities, withdraw foreign fighters, exchange detainees, or disband the illegal armed formations. Moscow should institute a full and comprehensive ceasefire and cancel the illegal sham elections it is organizing in the Russia-controlled parts of eastern Ukraine.

The United States continues to support the efforts of France and Germany in the Normandy Format to advance implementation of the Minsk agreements and we remain open to dialogue with Moscow on avenues for restoring Ukraine's territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

* * * *

4. India and Pakistan

On May 31, 2018, the State Department issued a press statement welcoming the commitment recently reaffirmed by India and Pakistan to fully implement the 2003 ceasefire along the Line of Control. The statement is available at <https://www.state.gov/india-and-pakistan-agree-to-uphold-ceasefire/>.

5. Ethiopia and Eritrea

The United States welcomed the July 9, 2018 peace agreement between Eritrea and Ethiopia in a July 10, 2018 press statement available at <https://www.state.gov/eritrea-and-ethiopia-end-war-and-adopt-joint-declaration-of-peace-and-friendship/>, which follows.

The United States welcomes the July 9 commitment to peace and security between the State of Eritrea and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, effectively ending 20 years of conflict. We commend Prime Minister Abiy of Ethiopia and President Isaias of Eritrea for courageously leading their citizens towards peace, prosperity, and political reform. The normalization of relations and the adoption of the Joint Declaration of Peace and Friendship between Eritrea and Ethiopia will provide their peoples with the opportunity to focus on shared aspirations for closer political, economic, and social ties.

The United States stands ready to support this process, and encourages all parties to continue working with transparency and confidence in the coming days. Peace between Ethiopia and Eritrea will further the cause of stability, security, and development in the Horn of Africa and Red Sea.

6. Nicaragua

On June 18, 2018, the State Department issued a press statement on ongoing violence in Nicaragua. The statement is available at <https://www.state.gov/ongoing-violence-in-nicaragua/> and says:

The United States condemns the ongoing government-sponsored violence and intimidation campaign in Nicaragua, including the June 16 arson attack against the home and business of a family in Managua, killing six, and the further intimidation of the family during the wake. Attacks and threats against peaceful protestors and the general population are unacceptable, and must cease.

We urge immediate and full implementation of the June 15 National Dialogue agreement on human rights. The United States is aware the Nicaraguan government has accepted another visit by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and recommends it begin immediately. We note the widespread call among Nicaraguans for early elections. The United States believes early elections represent a constructive way forward.

7. Sudan

The Troika (the United States, the United Kingdom, and Norway) issued a joint statement on June 19, 2018 condemning continued clashes in Jebel Marra, Darfur. The statement is excerpted below and available at <https://www.state.gov/sudan-the-troika-condemns-continued-clashes-in-jebel-marra-darfur/>.

* * * *

The Troika condemns the ongoing clashes between the Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid (SLA-AW) and Government of Sudan forces as well as inter-tribal violence in the Jebel Marra region of Darfur. The civilian population continues to bear the brunt of this unnecessary violence, which has led to the burning down of villages, causing high numbers of civilian injury and death, and the displacement of nearly 9,000 people.

It is unacceptable that the Government of Sudan has repeatedly prevented the African Union/United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) and humanitarian actors from accessing the areas of conflict and displaced populations. The Troika strongly urges the Government of Sudan to immediately provide unfettered access to both UNAMID and humanitarian actors. The SLA-AW leadership's refusal to engage with the peace process obstructs the achievement of sustainable peace in Darfur and unnecessarily prolongs civilian suffering. The Government's actions in military operations and its inaction in stopping the violence undermine efforts to achieve a peaceful solution to the conflict. There can be no military solution to the conflict in Darfur and the international community should consider imposing sanctions against those who continue to act as spoilers.

The Troika calls on all parties to the conflict to immediately cease all military engagement and hostilities, allow unfettered humanitarian access, and to meaningfully engage with the African Union High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) led peace process in order to reach a permanent ceasefire.

* * * *

8. South Sudan

On January 12, 2018, the joint statement of the Troika (the United States, the United Kingdom, and Norway) on South Sudan was issued as a State Department media note, available at <https://www.state.gov/the-troika-on-cessation-of-hostilities-violations-in-south-sudan/>. This joint statement, regarding violations of the December 21, 2017 Cessation of Hostilities agreement, follows.

* * * *

The members of the Troika (Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States) strongly condemn the continuing pattern of violations of the December 21, 2017 Cessation of Hostilities (CoH) agreement by parties to the South Sudan High Level Revitalization Forum (the Forum), and call on all parties to immediately and fully implement the CoH in letter and spirit and ensure humanitarian access throughout the country.

The Troika has seen strong evidence of violations of the CoH by Government of South Sudan forces in Unity State and by forces associated with opposition groups, including Sudan People's Liberation Movement-In Opposition (SPLM-IO), in Unity State and the Greater Upper Nile region, as witnessed by ceasefire monitors. We are seriously concerned by continuing reports of the movement of forces by all sides in violation of the CoH, including the movement this week of hundreds of Government troops into Jonglei state. The Troika also notes with grave

concern the strong evidence from multiple sources linking the attacks in Gudele, Jubek State, on January 4 to former SPLA Chief of Defense Paul Malong and forces under Lt. Colonel Cham Garang, an SPLA-IO commander. We remain committed to holding to account all those who obstruct the realization of lasting peace for the people of South Sudan, whether or not they are participating directly in the Forum.

The HLRF process must be conducted in the spirit of compromise by those South Sudanese leaders who are committed to working for peace. Parties must not be able to increase their influence through force of arms in advance of the second round of talks.

The Troika reaffirms its full support for the Intergovernmental Authority on Development's (IGAD) efforts to build peace in South Sudan and will continue to follow developments on the ground. We call on our IGAD partners to rapidly investigate all violations and to immediately hold those responsible to account. We will continue to work closely with international and regional partners to ensure full accountability with respect to the CoH and stand ready to impose consequences on those who violate the agreement, also in line with the African Union Peace and Security Council Communiqué of September 20, 2017.

* * * *

On February 16, 2018, the State Department issued as a media note a joint statement of the Troika concerning Phase 2 of the High Level Revitalization Forum. The statement follows and is available at <https://www.state.gov/troika-statement-on-phase-2-of-the-high-level-revitalization-forum-for-south-sudan/>.

* * * *

The members of the Troika ... welcome the parties' constructive efforts toward compromise for the benefit of the people of South Sudan at the High Level Revitalization Forum (HLRF) over the last two weeks in Addis Ababa. The Troika expresses its appreciation for and fully supports the continuing effort by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to restore peace through the HLRF, and commends the tireless efforts of the IGAD Special Envoy Ambassador Ismail Wais and the mediation team.

The Troika underscores the critical importance of the parties creating a conducive environment for peacemaking: fighting while talking is unacceptable and cannot be tolerated. The parties must make good on their promises to implement the Agreement on a Cessation of Hostilities (ACOH) signed in December 2017. We take note and support the intention by IGAD and the African Union to identify and impose consequences on those undermining peace as soon as possible and we stand ready to support them in their efforts. Implementation of the ACOH must also include the release of political prisoners and prisoners of war, the end to the use of child soldiers and sexual and gender-based violence as a weapon. The parties must also allow unfettered access for Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism (CTSAMM) monitors and for humanitarian assistance and aid workers responding to Africa's worst humanitarian crisis.

While useful dialogue has taken place over the past two weeks, there is much more for the parties to do if the HLRF is to make meaningful and sustainable progress towards peace. The Troika calls on all parties to reconvene as soon as possible, without preconditions, to address the important security and governance arrangements that are essential for peace. We urge all parties to take steps to maintain the momentum of the process and refrain from comments or actions that could make returning to dialogue more difficult. We urge the parties to agree that a negotiated arrangement for an inclusive transitional government that reflects South Sudan's diversity is needed. We encourage the parties to set as priorities the separation of powers, dispute resolution and reconciliation mechanisms, service delivery, and accountability. Arrangements must not advantage any political, armed, or ethnic group. We call on the parties to develop practical security arrangements that end violence and build confidence, and set out a realistic path to broader security sector reform. We urge the parties to support financial reforms that address corruption and build confidence in public institutions.

The Troika renews its firm view that elections in 2018 are not viable given the continuing conflict, lack of security, displacement of one third of the population, and severe food insecurity affecting half the population. It calls on all parties to reject any unilateral effort to extend power through the ballot box, the legislature, or military means. A negotiated path to elections also means the protection of fundamental political freedoms, and significant improvements in security and humanitarian conditions. The Troika continues to stand with the people of South Sudan and urges their leaders to move expeditiously to achieve the peace their people deserve.

* * * *

On August 10, 2018, the Troika issued a further statement on South Sudan peace talks. The statement is available as a State Department media note at <https://www.state.gov/troika-statement-on-south-sudan-peace-talks/> and follows.

* * * *

The members of the Troika (the United States, the United Kingdom, and Norway) support the engagement of the region in the recent Khartoum-based negotiations on outstanding governance and security issues. We acknowledge the role of Sudan in hosting these negotiations. Considerable challenges lie ahead, and we are concerned that the arrangements agreed to date are not realistic or sustainable. Given their past leadership failures, South Sudanese leaders will need to behave differently and demonstrate commitment to peace and good governance.

Above all, we support the people of South Sudan's aspirations to lead lives unburdened by fear, and to experience peace, pluralism, and prosperity. We remain steadfast that the best hope for sustainable peace is a process inclusive of ordinary men and women, civil society, religious leaders, ethnic minorities, and other excluded groups. We urge mediators to ensure the open and free participation of these groups and other participants in the negotiations, to ensure their interests are fully protected. Moreover, the process should culminate in free, fair, and credible elections, and allow for a peaceful transition in leadership in the most expeditious and responsible manner.

During the next stage of the talks, parties must bring in a wider range of stakeholders, and develop clear plans for the transition period, including how resources will be used in a transparent and accountable way for the benefit of all South Sudanese. Critical questions remain, such as how security will be provided in Juba during the transition period and how meaningful checks will be placed on executive power.

We call on the parties to develop clear and realistic governance and security timelines and plans for the transition period, and on the Intergovernmental Authority on Development member states and the AU to continue and intensify their involvement in the implementation phase of any agreement.

We note that there has been some reduction in fighting, the most serious confidence-building measure of all. Sustained peace is a necessary condition for the legitimacy of a transitional arrangement. In furtherance of this, we call on our regional partners to uphold the United Nations Security Council arms embargo and on their financial institutions to ensure that the proceeds from corrupt and war-making activities do not flow through their jurisdictions. We now expect to see a change in the situation on the ground, beginning with a further significant reduction in violence, and all parties taking measures to allow full humanitarian access.

* * * *

The Troika issued a further statement on September 12, 2018. The statement was delivered by UK Special Representative for Sudan and South Sudan Ambassador Chris Trott and is excerpted below and available at <https://ss.usembassy.gov/troika-statement-on-the-south-sudan-peace-talks/>.

* * * *

The members of the Troika (the United Kingdom, United States, and Norway) welcome the commitment of the region to come together to address common peace and security priorities for the benefit of its citizens. We must seize this broader regional momentum to secure peace for the people of South Sudan.

The Troika acknowledges the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan and recognises the role IGAD played in this process. We hope discussions will remain open to those who are not yet convinced of the sustainability of this agreement.

We remain concerned about the parties' level of commitment to this agreement, and to the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement signed in Addis Ababa in December. In Wau, for example, military offensives have been undertaken since the signing of the most recent ceasefire. The ceasefire monitoring teams were denied timely access to assess the impact of this most recent violence, but it is certain that it has resulted in civilian deaths. Humanitarian access continues to be blocked both physically and bureaucratically, with humanitarian workers expelled, detained and physically harmed. This year, as the talks have been progressing in Addis Ababa and Khartoum, 13 humanitarian workers have been killed in South Sudan.

The Troika is committed to peace in South Sudan. But in order to be convinced of the parties' commitment, we will need to see a significant change in their approach. This must include, but not be limited to: an end to violence and full humanitarian access; the release of political prisoners; and a real commitment to effective and accountable implementation, demonstrated by supporting robust security and enforcement mechanisms, checks on executive and majority power, and the transparent use of resources for the benefit of all South Sudanese. Without progress in these critical areas, we remain concerned the agreement will not deliver the peace that the people of South Sudan deserve.

To ensure success, regional partners will need to maintain their engagement and play a positive role in the agreement's implementation. Their involvement in monitoring progress and holding the parties to account is crucial. This means publicly highlighting any violations by the parties, and ensuring those responsible face consequences. We call on regional partners to support the rigorous implementation of the United Nations Security Council sanctions and arms embargo. Specifically, any movement of military forces, weapons, or related material into South Sudan must not violate that embargo.

I would like to close with a message for the people of South Sudan. The Troika's priority has always been to work for peace. We remain committed to accompany South Sudan on its path toward justice, liberty, and prosperity.

* * * *

On September 26, 2018, Under Secretary of State Hale convened a meeting on the South Sudan peace process on the margins of the 73rd UN General Assembly. See State Department media note, available at <https://www.state.gov/under-secretary-hales-meeting-on-next-steps-on-the-south-sudan-peace-process/>. As explained in the media note, Under Secretary Hale and African regional leaders and other international partners "discussed ongoing efforts to address the political, security, and humanitarian crises in South Sudan, including key actions needed to ensure successful implementation of the September 12 peace agreement."

The Troika delivered a joint statement at the IGAD Council of Ministers' meeting on South Sudan on November 16, 2018. The statement is excerpted below and available at <https://www.usau.usmission.gov/troika-intervention-at-the-igad-council-of-ministers-meeting-on-south-sudan/>.

* * * *

The members of the Troika (the United States, Norway, and the United Kingdom) welcome the progress that has been made in regard to parts of the revitalized peace agreement signed on September 12. We have seen positive steps. Some key transitional governance bodies have been formed, senior members of opposition parties have returned to Juba, and both government and opposition representatives are participating in the work of the National Pre-Transitional Committee and the National Constitutional Amendment Committee. Members of government and opposition forces have jointly visited previously contested territories. Overall, violence has decreased, and some prisoners of war and political detainees have been released.

This initial progress needs to be built on and consolidated, to increase trust and confidence among South Sudanese and with the international community. Inclusiveness in implementation of the agreement, specifically participation by civil society, women, and displaced populations, will help build peace. The critical pre-transitional bodies, especially the NPTC, need to be empowered to function effectively and drive forward implementation of the peace deal, with South Sudan's resources clearly used to fund the agreement.

We are deeply concerned that progress is being undermined, however, by continued fighting, which we are seeing in some areas. In Wau and Yei, recent violence has targeted civilians. Humanitarian workers and ceasefire monitors continue to be denied access in parts of the country. The ongoing violence prolongs the suffering of the South Sudanese people, and increases the risk that the current momentum will be lost, key deadlines missed, and implementation falls behind. We urge all parties to uphold their commitments and cooperate on addressing and preventing violations of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement and the new peace agreement.

IGAD and its member states have been crucial to the progress made so far. The region's continued engagement is essential to help this latest agreement deliver a lasting peace. The region must take the lead in encouraging the Government of South Sudan to demilitarize Juba and allow UNMISS complete freedom of movement to execute its mandate in the city. Proposals to augment security in South Sudan should be discussed with the wider international community, be part of an internationally authorized process, and be consistent with the UN arms embargo. We urge IGAD member states to support peace by rigorously implementing the UN Security Council arms embargo and South Sudan sanctions regime, and halting the export and transshipment of prohibited items. Finally, the region must hold the parties to account for ceasefire violations like the ones in Wau. Without this engagement from IGAD, the peace agreement will not hold.

JMEC and CTSAMVM also have a central role to play, and their reconstitution should be completed without delay with leadership that is independent of national interests and empowered to hold the parties to account. It is imperative that their reports, particularly CTSAMVM's violation reporting, are promptly made available and published in full.

South Sudan's people have suffered years of appalling violence, particularly women and children. They deserve a chance to live in peace, stability, and prosperity. The Troika are committed to a peaceful South Sudan, and will continue to encourage all South Sudanese and their partners in the region to take the steps needed to achieve this.

* * * *

9. Libya

On September 4, 2018, the governments of the United States, France, Italy, and the United Kingdom released a joint statement welcoming the ceasefire in Tripoli, Libya. The statement is available as a State Department media note at <https://www.state.gov/joint-statement-welcoming-the-ceasefire-in-tripoli-libya/>. The text appears below.

* * * *

The Governments of France, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States welcome the result of the mediation reached today by the United Nations Support Mission that aims to deescalate violence in and around Tripoli and ensure the protection of civilians. We reiterate our strong support for Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ghassan Salame as he works to realize an immediate and durable cessation of hostilities in the Libyan capital, which is a critical step to advancing the political process in accordance with the United Nations Action Plan.

As the Secretary-General noted on September 2, all parties should immediately cease hostilities and abide by the ceasefire agreement brokered by the United Nations. We call on all Libyan parties to refrain from any actions that could undermine today's ceasefire announcement, jeopardize the security of civilians, or set back Libyan efforts to advance the political process and move forward in the spirit of compromise.

We also reiterate support for the President of the Presidency Council, Fayeze al-Sarraj, and the Government of National Accord as they work in partnership with the United Nations to promote reconciliation and support a Libyan-led political process.

* * * *

On November 13, 2018, the United States welcomed the conclusions announced at the Palermo conference on Libya. The State Department press statement on the Palermo conference is excerpted below and available at <https://www.state.gov/palermo-conference-on-libya/>.

* * * *

The United States welcomes the conclusions announced by the Government of Italy following the November 12-13 conference on Libya in Palermo, which brought Libyan and international leaders together to advance our shared goal of helping Libya's institutions break their political deadlock and ensure a secure and prosperous future for all Libyans. We strongly support UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) Ghassan Salamé and the recalibrated UN Action Plan he presented to the Security Council on November 8, which calls for a Libyan-led National Conference to be held in the first weeks of 2019 and the subsequent electoral process to begin in the spring of 2019. We urge all Libyans to work constructively with SRSG Salamé toward the goals of an inclusive constitutional process and credible, peaceful, and well-prepared elections. The United States is committed to ensuring that all those who undermine Libya's peace, security, and stability will be held accountable.

The Palermo conference underscored that achieving such progress will require sustained attention to the economic and security aspects of the conflict. We are encouraged by the commitment of the Government of National Accord to accelerate implementation of comprehensive monetary and subsidy reforms, which Libya urgently needs to stabilize its economy. Equally critical is promoting greater transparency of Libya's economic institutions,

including the Central Bank of Libya. These reforms will support much-needed conversation among Libyans about enhancing fiscal transparency and promoting a more equitable distribution of the country's oil resources. The United States stands ready to support this economic dialogue, at Libya's request and in close coordination with the UN Support Mission for Libya (UNSMIL), the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund. We also commend SRSG Salamé's leadership in de-escalating violence in Tripoli and UNSMIL's ongoing partnership with the Government of National Accord to put in place more durable security arrangements for the Libyan capital. We welcome the important steps taken by Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj to begin establishing capable, national security forces under civilian control.

* * * *

10. Yemen

On September 2, 2018, the State Department issued a statement on the Saudi-led coalition's announcement that it would review the rules of engagement in Yemen. The statement, which is available at <https://www.state.gov/saudi-led-coalitions-announcement-on-reviewing-rules-of-engagement-in-yemen/>, follows:

The United States regards the Saudi-led Coalition's announcement that it will review their rules of engagement, hold those at fault accountable, and compensate victims following the Joint Incident Assessment Team's finding that last month's Sa'ada air strikes lacked justification as an important first step toward full transparency and accountability. We continue to call on all sides to abide by the Law of Armed Conflict, to mitigate harm to civilians and civilian infrastructure, and thoroughly investigate and ensure accountability for any violations. It is imperative that all parties work toward a comprehensive political solution to avoid further harm to the Yemeni people. We fully support UN Special Envoy for Yemen Martin Griffiths as he prepares to convene parties in Geneva. All sides must engage constructively and in good faith in order to work toward a secure, stable, and peaceful Yemen.

On October 30, 2018, the State Department issued a statement by Secretary Pompeo calling on all parties to work with UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths to end the conflict in Yemen. The statement is available at <https://www.state.gov/ending-the-conflict-in-yemen/>.

* * * *

The United States calls on all parties to support UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths in finding a peaceful solution to the conflict in Yemen based on the agreed references.

The time is now for the cessation of hostilities, including missile and UAV strikes from Houthi-controlled areas into the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Subsequently, Coalition air strikes must cease in all populated areas in Yemen.

Substantive consultations under the UN Special Envoy must commence this November in a third country to implement confidence-building measures to address the underlying issues of the conflict, the demilitarization of borders, and the concentration of all large weapons under international observation.

A cessation of hostilities and vigorous resumption of a political track will help ease the humanitarian crisis as well.

It is time to end this conflict, replace conflict with compromise, and allow the Yemeni people to heal through peace and reconstruction.

* * * *

The United States offered further support for UN Special Envoy Griffiths and efforts to end the conflict in Yemen in a November 21, 2018 State Department press release, available at <https://www.state.gov/moving-forward-in-yemen/>.

* * * *

The United States reiterates its call for all parties to support UN Special Envoy for Yemen Martin Griffiths by immediately ceasing hostilities and engaging in direct talks aimed at ending the conflict.

We welcome the UN Special Envoy's statement that the Houthis and the Republic of Yemen Government are committed to attending the consultations in Sweden, and we call on the parties to follow through on that commitment. All parties must not delay talks any longer, or insist on travel or transport conditions that call into question good faith intentions to look for a solution or to make necessary concessions. The time for direct talks and building mutual confidence is now.

We encourage all combatants to abide by their statements declaring a commitment to cease hostilities and call on those parties to not use any period of truce to reinforce military positions, implant mines, or in any way escalate the conflict.

The United States welcomes the Saudi-led Coalition's November 20 announcement of a \$500 million contribution to address the food security crisis. In addition to this, Hudaydah port must be turned over to a neutral party to accelerate the distribution of aid to address the acute humanitarian crisis, and to prevent the port from being used to smuggle weapons and contraband into the country or to finance the Houthi militia.

It is time to end this conflict, replace conflict with compromise, and allow the Yemeni people to heal through peace and reconstruction.

* * * *

On December 4, 2018, as consultations on the conflict in Yemen were about to commence in Sweden, the State Department issued a further statement on Yemen, which follows and is available at <https://www.state.gov/yemen-consultations-in-sweden/>.

As consultations are set to commence between the Republic of Yemen Government and the Houthis in Sweden, the United States calls on parties to engage fully and genuinely, and cease any ongoing hostilities. The people of Yemen have suffered far too long. The parties owe it to their fellow Yemenis to seize this opportunity. We strongly support UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths, who has undertaken tremendous effort to bring these consultations to fruition, and thank the Government of Sweden for hosting. We have no illusions that this process will be easy, but we welcome this necessary and vital first step. Now is the time for Yemenis to replace conflict with reconciliation and work together to realize a brighter future for Yemen. Peace, prosperity, and security can be on the horizon and those participating in the consultations have the chance to be part of a new chapter in Yemen's history.

On December 13, 2018, the State Department issued a statement by Secretary Pompeo on the conclusion of the consultations on Yemen in Sweden. His statement follows and is available at <https://www.state.gov/conclusion-of-yemen-consultations-in-sweden/>.

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.

C. CONFLICT AVOIDANCE AND ATROCITIES PREVENTION

1. Burma

On September 24, 2018, the State Department released a report “Documentation of Atrocities in Northern Rakhine State.” The report is available at <https://www.state.gov/reports-bureau-of-democracy-human-rights-and-labor/documentation-of-atrocities-in-northern-rakhine-state/>. The Executive Summary of the report follows.

* * * *

The Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR), with funding support from the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL), conducted a survey in spring 2018 of the firsthand experiences of 1,024 Rohingya refugees in Cox’s Bazar District, Bangladesh. The goal of the survey was to document atrocities committed against residents in Burma’s northern Rakhine State during the course of violence in the previous two years.

The survey used a representative sample of refugee camp populations to provide insights into the violence they witnessed. Any hearsay testimony was not recorded. Survey results reveal the pattern of events refugees experienced. There may be cases when multiple refugees reported witnessing the same event, so the percentages from this survey should not be extrapolated to come up with a definitive overall number of events. The National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) worked with INR to map and analyze the resulting data (see Map 1).

The results of the survey show that the vast majority of Rohingya refugees experienced or directly witnessed extreme violence and the destruction of their homes. They identified the Burmese military as a perpetrator in most cases.

- Most witnessed a killing, two-thirds witnessed an injury, and half witnessed sexual violence (see Figure 1).
- Rohingya identified the Burmese military as a perpetrator in 84% of the killings or injuries they witnessed.
- Three-quarters say they saw members of the army kill someone; the same proportion say they witnessed the army destroying huts or whole villages. Police, unidentified security forces, and armed civilians carried out the rest of the observed killings.
- One-fifth of all respondents witnessed a mass-casualty event of killings or injuries (either in their villages or as they fled) with more than 100 victims.

The two main phases of violence—the first in October 2016 and the second beginning in August 2017—followed attacks against Burmese security forces by the Rohingya insurgent group Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA). The vast majority of reported incidents against Rohingya took place from August to October 2017. The survey shows that the military, which used the ARSA attacks to justify its so-called counterinsurgency operations in northern Rakhine State, targeted civilians indiscriminately and often with extreme brutality.

- Forty-five percent of refugees witnessed a rape, and the majority of rapes witnessed were committed, in whole or in part, by the army. Overall, nearly 40% of refugees saw a rape committed by members of the Burmese security services—either police or military—including 18% who saw them commit a gang rape.

- Members of the security services, as well as non-Rohingya civilians in some cases, targeted children and pregnant women.
- Those who were left behind because they were elderly, sick, or otherwise infirm were frequently found dead when their relatives returned to check on them.

The survey reveals that the recent violence in northern Rakhine State was extreme, large-scale, widespread, and seemingly geared toward both terrorizing the population and driving out the Rohingya residents. The scope and scale of the military's operations indicate they were well-planned and coordinated. In some areas, perpetrators used tactics that resulted in mass casualties, for example, locking people in houses to burn them, fencing off entire villages before shooting into the crowd, or sinking boats full of hundreds of fleeing Rohingya.

* * * *

2. HRC on Prevention of Genocide and Other Atrocities

At the 37th session of the Human Rights Council, the United States participated in an interactive dialogue on the joint study of the special adviser on the prevention of genocide and the special rapporteur on truth, justice, reparation, and guarantees of non-recurrence. The statement by the U.S. delegation was delivered by David G. Mandel-Anthony on March 2, 2018 and is excerpted below and available at <https://geneva.usmission.gov/2018/03/02/u-s-strongly-supports-efforts-to-hold-accountable-those-responsible-for-atrocities/>.

* * * *

... The United States strongly supports credible transitional justice initiatives and has long supported efforts to hold accountable those responsible for atrocities, including genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious human rights violations and abuses. We believe that transitional justice can play a critical role in preventing the recurrence of violence and abuse. We are among the largest donors and supporters of post-conflict truth and justice initiatives in the world; we will continue our leading role.

In November, Secretary Tillerson concluded that the situation in Myanmar's northern Rakhine state constitutes ethnic cleansing against the Rohingya. The United States recognizes the importance of accountability in this context both to address past wrongs and prevent their recurrence. As such, we have repeatedly called for holding those responsible for atrocities to account. The government has denied atrocities occurred, despite credible information demonstrating the occurrence of massacres, sexual violence, and the existence of mass graves. The United States continues to call on the Government of Myanmar to cooperate with the UN Fact-Finding Mission and the Special Rapporteur. We have supported action on this at the UN Security Council and the General Assembly and will do so again at the HRC. We welcome the Government's stated commitment to implementing the recommendations of the Annan Commission, and we call upon the government to act to protect all its people.

We are also strongly committed to justice in the Central African Republic and South Sudan, as we believe that accountability and transitional justice contribute to atrocity prevention. In view of the findings contained in the latest report of the Commission on Human Rights in

South Sudan, we strongly urge the Government of South Sudan to sign the MOU on the establishment of the Hybrid Court immediately. In Latin America, the United States has consistently voiced support for Colombia's efforts to secure a just and lasting peace, including implementing a transitional justice strategy.

As our National Security Strategy affirms, we will not remain silent in the face of evil. We will work to hold accountable those responsible for genocide and other mass atrocities.

* * * *

On March 23, 2018, at the 37th session of the HRC, Jason Mack provided the U.S. explanation of vote in favor of a resolution on genocide. U.N. Doc. A/HRC/37/L.44. That statement is excerpted below and available at <https://geneva.usmission.gov/2018/03/23/eov-on-genocide/>.

* * * *

The United States would like to express our appreciation to Armenia for its efforts to reach consensus on this resolution, and support the text as drafted.

We wish to explain why the 2 paragraphs—PP 22 and OP 16—should be retained in the text before us.

We commend the sponsor for conducting a comprehensive bilateral negotiation process, including with the state that called this vote. We view these actions as hostile to the spirit of the resolution and contradictory to the important work of genocide prevention.

During the negotiation process, many countries emphasized the need to increase our capacity as a global community to prevent genocide — the reference to the joint analysis framework highlights the options available to the international community on early warning and prevention. The work of genocide prevention is too important for this reference to be politicized. We all need to be aware of the tools in our toolbox on such an important issue.

PP22 and OP16 take note of the new joint analysis framework and highlight its importance as one of the tools to assess the risk of genocide. The resolution also recommends greater collaboration among member states, regional organizations, and sub-regional organizations to increase their collaboration on prevention. The framework of analysis is a guideline, one that all states can use as appropriate; it is not imposed upon states. We should all welcome the addition of new options to increase our prevention efforts.

We stress that the motivation of this vote is simply to delete factual, correct references to a UN framework and a UN office. Such action diminishes the importance of this resolution.

Therefore, we strongly urge all members to vote in favor of retaining these 2 paragraphs and we will vote yes to retain them.

* * * *

3. Responsibility to Protect

On June 25, 2018, U.S. Representative to the UN for Economic and Social Affairs Kelley Currie delivered remarks at a UN General Assembly plenary session on the responsibility to protect. Ambassador Currie's remarks are excerpted below and available at <https://usun.usmission.gov/remarks-at-a-un-general-assembly-plenary-session-on-the-responsibility-to-protect/>.

* * * *

Thank you, Mr. President. Today, we are witnessing the record-breaking levels of human displacement, with unprecedented numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons forced to flee their homes. The fully manmade humanitarian and human rights crises, such as those, in Syria, Burma, and South Sudan, that are driving this mass displacement, highlight the urgent need for all Member States to adhere to international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and the need for coordinated and early international response to mass atrocities. The United States remains deeply committed to preventing, mitigating, and responding to atrocity crimes, and we urge the international community to do more to act in concert and respond before atrocities occur. We are pleased to be here today to reaffirm our support for the responsibility to protect civilians from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity, and to make a particular plea for more timely and decisive action at the Security Council on current and future humanitarian crises.

We are currently observing the tremendous human toll resulting from unchecked atrocities across the globe. On South Sudan, the Council has been paralyzed since it passed resolution 2206 in 2015. Meanwhile more than two million refugees have fled the fighting in the last two years. The UN has observed and reported on the widespread commission of mass atrocities and gross human rights violations. We have recently renew[ed] the sanctions established under Security Council resolution 2206, but we must do more. The United States has repeatedly called on the Council and the United Nations to support sanctions on those accountable for these atrocities and for a comprehensive arms embargo. Our commitment to the Responsibility to Protect should result in real action to address modern-day atrocities, such as in South Sudan, yet we have too often fallen short or failed to act when we can could and should.

We welcome the Secretary-General's report on early warning and early action, including the assertion that effective atrocity prevention means assisting countries to avert the outbreak of atrocity crimes. The United States believes that more should be done to improve our responses to early warning signals, including overcoming the uncertainties, hesitancies, and lack of political will which impede early action. It is worth the investment to prevent the high human cost of these crimes. In fact, we all know that the costs of prevention—in the form of improving human rights institutions, the fair administration of justice, and equitable, accountable governance—pale[] in comparison to the political, financial, and military costs typically required to respond to a crisis. We applaud the Secretary-General's efforts to empower and coordinate a broader set of actors, including civil society, parliaments, national human rights institutions, regional organizations and the UN system.

Further strengthening the principle of the responsibility to protect, and building knowledge of the range of preventative actions, can also help turn early warning into early action. To these ends, the United States supports scheduling regular, open debates in the Security Council, including on emerging threats and human rights issues that threaten to escalate into atrocities, and we support including the “Responsibility to Protect” as a standing item on the General Assembly agenda. We also commend the Secretary-General’s initiative to gather and share lessons learned on effective early warning and early action. We strongly encourage the Secretary General to appoint the next Special Advisor on the Responsibility to Protect as soon as possible to advance international commitments and tools for effective atrocity prevention within the UN framework.

The United States encourages member states to follow the Secretary’s call to create a national focal point for the responsibility to protect, conduct assessments consistent with the UN Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes, and take early action on the findings. It is vital that these focal points do more than simply carry a title. The U.S. continues to strengthen its preventative capacities through the Atrocity Prevention Board, which coordinates a “whole of government” approach to bolster our ability to forecast, prevent, and respond to mass atrocities. This board oversees global risk analysis, followed by deeper analysis of prioritized countries, identifying potential pathways to atrocities, and opportunities to prevent or mitigate them, including by expanding existing resiliencies. The board has coordinated a range of actions such as targeted sanctions, preventive diplomacy and programming, mediation, improving adherence to the rule of law, documenting atrocities, supporting peacekeepers, and evacuating populations under attack.

While the United States recognizes the sovereignty of all member states, we remind member states of the commitments they voluntarily entered into to protect their populations from genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and ethnic cleansing. We continue to work with partner countries to strengthen coordination and share best practices, including through the United Nations General Assembly, the Security Council, the Peacebuilding Commission, and the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect. We also recognize the critical role of nongovernmental organizations, the media, business and religious leaders, and local populations, including women, in efforts to prevent and respond to mass atrocities. The United States actively engages with these civic actors and organizations to enhance early warning and early action efforts, and reflect on lessons learned.

When prevention fails, promoting accountability for mass atrocity crimes is a priority for the United States. Bringing perpetrators to justice can deter those who otherwise might be emboldened to follow in their footsteps, and can help advance post-conflict reconciliation. The U.S. government is committed to holding those responsible for atrocities accountable by appropriately bringing them to justice in independent and impartial processes in accordance with fair trial guarantees. We also recognize the importance of programs to support survivors and promote reconciliation in the aftermath of atrocities, as a history of atrocities is one of the strongest predictors of future atrocities.

The U.S. government supports the Secretary-General’s effort to better coordinate the UN system to prevent atrocities. In particular, we strongly support the Secretary General’s recommendation that the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict work more closely with the Joint Office of the Special Advisors on the Prevention of Genocide and Responsibility to Protect, and we commend the excellent work of the SRSG, particularly in the Burma context. Women are often uniquely positioned within their communities to identify social

behaviors and patterns that are warning signs of violence against civilians. The United States strongly supports efforts to promote the meaningful participation of women in the prediction and prevention of outbreaks of mass atrocities. To this end, President Trump signed the Women, Peace, and Security Act in 2017, making the U.S. the first country to enact legislation incorporating UN Security Council Resolution 1325 into national law.

States that disregard or violate their primary responsibility to protect their own citizens represent one of the greatest threats to international peace and security we face today. Those who attempt to shield their crimes behind a veil of national sovereignty should find no comfort in this hall. As the preamble of the universal declaration—written in the aftermath of war and horrors—says, “disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind”—a statement that is sadly no less true today than when it was 70 years ago when that foundational document was created. We have yet to achieve the “highest aspirations” laid out in the universal declaration, but in fully implementing the Responsibility to Protect, we can remain true to those aspirations and our national and collective commitments to them.

* * * *

Cross References

Rohingya refugees, **Ch. 1.C.3**
International tribunals and other accountability mechanisms, **Ch. 3.C**
ICC and Libya, **Ch. 3.C.1.c.**
ICC and Sudan, **Ch. 3.C.1.d.**
Hybrid court for South Sudan, **Ch.3.C.3.b.**
International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (“IIIM”) for Syria, **Ch. 3.C.3.d**
Efforts of the Palestinian Authority to Accede to Treaties, **Ch. 4.B.4**
Sokolow v. PLO, **Ch. 5.A.4**
Al-Tamimi v. Adelson, **Ch. 5.B.2.a & 5.C.2**
HRC Special Session on Gaza, **Ch. 6.A.2.c**
U.S. statement at HRC on Agenda Item 7 (Israel), **Ch. 6.A.2.d**
Relocation of the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem (Palestine v. United States), **Ch. 7.B.3**
Venezuela, **Ch. 7.D.1.a**
Libya, **Ch. 9.A.6**
Jerusalem, **Ch. 9.B.5**
Libya cultural property, **Ch. 14.A.1**
Burma sanctions, **Ch. 16.A.11.b**
Libya sanctions, **Ch. 16.A.11.e**
Sanctions relating to the Middle East Peace Process, **Ch. 16.A.11.f**
Export controls on South Sudan, **Ch. 16.B.3**
Civilians in armed conflict, **Ch. 18.A.4.a**
Criminal accountability of UN officials and experts on missions, **Chapter 7.A.2.**
UN-African Union cooperation, **Chapter 7.A.8.**
Suspension of bilateral channel with Russia for Syria cessation of hostilities, **Chapter 9.A.4.**
Protecting Syrian cultural property, **Chapter 14.B.**
Syria-related sanctions, **Chapter 16.A.2.**
Sanctions, **Chapter 16.A.**
Civilians in armed conflict, **Chapter 18.A.3.a.**
Syria chemical weapons, **Chapter 19.D.2**