

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 17	691
International Conflict Resolution and Avoidance	691
A. MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS	691
B. PEACEKEEPING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION	692
1. Peacekeeping Reform	692
2. Syria	694
3. Mali	703
4. Democratic Republic of the Congo.....	705
5. South Sudan	706
6. Colombia.....	711
7. Accountability of UN Officials and Experts on Missions	712
C. CONFLICT AVOIDANCE AND ATROCITIES PREVENTION	713
1. Burma.....	713
2. ISIS and Atrocities	722
Cross References	724

CHAPTER 17

International Conflict Resolution and Avoidance

A. MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS

The Middle East “Quartet”—represented by the United States Secretary of State, the Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, the UN Secretary General, and the EU High Commissioner—met on July 22, 2017 and issued a joint press statement, available at <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/07/272809.htm>. The July 22, 2017 statement follows.

* * * *

The Envoys of the Middle East Quartet from the Russian Federation, the United States, the European Union and the United Nations are deeply concerned by the escalating tensions and violent clashes taking place in and around the Old City of Jerusalem.

They strongly condemn acts of terror, express their regret for all loss of innocent life caused by the violence, and hope for a speedy recovery to the wounded.

Noting the particular sensitivities surrounding the holy sites in Jerusalem, and the need to ensure security, the Quartet Envoys call on all to demonstrate maximum restraint, refrain from provocative actions and work towards de-escalating the situation.

The Envoys welcome the assurances by the Prime Minister of Israel that the status quo at the holy sites in Jerusalem will be upheld and respected.

They encourage Israel and Jordan to work together to uphold the status quo, noting the special role of the Hashemite Kingdom as recognized in its peace treaty with Israel.

The Quartet Envoys reiterate that violence deepens mistrust and is fundamentally incompatible with achieving a peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

* * * *

The Quartet envoys issued another joint statement on September 28, 2017, which appears below and at <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/09/274494.htm>.

* * * *

The Envoys of the Middle East Quartet from the Russian Federation, the United States, the European Union, and the United Nations welcome efforts, including those of Egypt, to create the conditions for the Palestinian Authority to assume its responsibilities in Gaza.

They urge the parties to take concrete steps to reunite Gaza and the West Bank under the legitimate Palestinian Authority. This will facilitate lifting the closures of the crossings, while addressing Israel's legitimate security concerns, and unlock international support for Gaza's growth, stability, and prosperity, which is critical for efforts to reach lasting peace. The Quartet envoys stand ready to engage with Israel, the Palestinian Authority, and the region in support of this process.

The Envoys emphasize that the grave humanitarian situation in Gaza, most notably the crippling electricity crisis and its impact on health, social, and economic well-being of the population, must be addressed. The Quartet encourages the international community to act accordingly.

* * * *

See Chapter 9 for a discussion of the U.S. decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Israel and relocate the United State Embassy to Israel to Jerusalem.

B. PEACEKEEPING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

1. Peacekeeping Reform

Ambassador Nikki Haley, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, addressed a UN Security Council thematic briefing on UN peacekeeping operations on April 6, 2017. Ambassador Haley's remarks are excerpted below and available at <https://usun.state.gov/remarks/7753>.

* * * *

I'd like to thank the Secretary-General for taking the time to come and talk to us about peacekeeping, and more importantly for his efforts and willingness to look at peacekeeping reform in a way that we can make it more effective for those that need it.

... [T]here is a collective effort to reform peacekeeping so that it does do more for people on the ground in a way that's not only just efficient, but in a way that's effective. ...

If you ask the average person what the UN does, they'll most likely say peacekeeping. The blue helmet is the most recognizable symbol of how the UN extends its presence and shows its value in the world. With over 100,000 total personnel and a budget close to \$8 billion, peacekeeping is the UN's most powerful tool to promote international peace and security.

We recognize, in particular, the courage of those men and women who risk their lives serving in peacekeeping missions. And we pay tribute to the over 3,500 peacekeepers who have lost their lives to keep others safe. By pooling troops and resources from many countries, peacekeeping helps share the burden of promoting global security.

When peacekeeping works well, we see countries that have been able to end internal conflicts, reestablish democratic political processes, and develop their own capacities to protect their people.

That being said, I think we can all agree that peacekeeping is far from perfect. Many of the Council's past discussions on reform have focused on operations and efficiency issues. And that is all extremely important. Those efforts need to continue.

But when I think about UN peacekeeping, I go back to what I learned as a young accountant. Go back to the basics, ensure there are measurables, and accountability. We need to work smarter. We need to show results. We need to find value. And not just financial value, we need to focus on what the original intent was. Are we actually on track in accomplishing that intent, and are we meeting the needs of the people?

Because we cannot continue these massive missions forever, we need to focus on the people that we are supposed to be lifting up—the peacekeepers who lack the support or the direction they need, and the taxpayers who pay the bills.

The simple fact is that in many cases, UN peacekeeping is just not working.

In Darfur, a 17,000-strong force designed for yesterday's challenges is not built for the needs of today. In South Sudan, where UN staff helped save hundreds of thousands of civilians, these vulnerable people have no hope of returning to a normal life. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the government uses the UN to neutralize only the armed groups that it wants to, leaving others untouched.

Outside of Africa, we have our mission in Kosovo, which, if we're honest with ourselves, has no real reason for being. The risk is creating an artificial, subsidized peace that discourages real, homegrown resolutions to these crises.

That is why we need this kind of honest, strategic review. We invite Council members to join us in evaluating each of our peacekeeping missions as their mandates are renewed. Our goal is to identify those missions that lack the underlying political conditions for a resolution—which numerous studies have concluded, is central to mission success. To help guide us, we have developed a set of principles we think missions should be held to.

We have already touched on the first principle, which is that missions must support political solutions.

The mission in South Sudan, for example, involves a government entangled in a civil war. At this time, there is no credible political path to peace. The government lacks incentive to end the conflict and has made the job more difficult for our peacekeepers. We can't manage our

way out of this problem. While it may be easier to accept and prolong the status quo, we're not doing ourselves, or the people on the ground, any favors. The Council must commit to putting its political pressure to bear on non-cooperative governments.

The second principle is also fundamental: We need host country cooperation. This is not to say that the Council should shy away from countries where it is not welcome or forego its Charter-mandated right to intervene when needed. But we need to acknowledge that, time and again, missions have failed to help those on the ground when host governments choose to obstruct them.

In Darfur, the government sought to restrict our peacekeepers from day one. It delayed visas, prevented freedom of movement and delayed customs clearance for food and equipment. The mission has suffered, which means the people on the ground have suffered.

Third, peacekeeping mandates must be realistic and achievable. Mandates should be targeted to the challenges facing the country and given the resources and the capabilities to do the job. At the same time, we must avoid mission creep.

It is common practice for missions to gradually snowball over time as they pick up more and more tasks and staff. What we end up with is a monster mission with unclear priorities and reporting lines.

In Lebanon, for instance, the mission does critical work to maintain stability along the Blue Line. But beyond these core monitoring tasks, the mission does everything from publishing magazines to providing a navy.

Fourth, we must have an exit strategy. We should agree early on what success looks like, and how to achieve it, and how to set the country or region on the path to independence from the mission. These strategies should be considered at the earliest stages of mission planning and should be central to the UN's regular reporting.

Finally, we must be willing to adjust mandates, both when situations improve, and when they fail to improve. Lifting up the people of these regions must be our objective. When this is achieved, institutional inertia cannot be allowed to prolong operations. And when circumstances fail to progress, we must be willing to draw down or restructure the mission and look at other ways to bring about stability.

We have already begun to apply these principles to MONUSCO. The mission is working in a country where it is increasingly clear that the government is preying on its own people. Recent reporting revealed that the state was responsible for human rights violations, including the killing of 480 civilians. And yet we ask our peacekeepers to support this same government. This is why the changes we made to MONUSCO's mandate last week were so critical. From now on, we will focus on the protection of civilians and support for democratic transition of power. We will develop an exit strategy, and we will demand real accountability from troop contributing countries.

* * * *

2. Syria

On July 7, 2017, the State Department provided a special briefing with a senior State Department official on the latest ceasefire in Syria. The ceasefire was arranged by delegations from the United States, Jordan, and Russia and was set to begin on July 9.

The transcript of the briefing, available at <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/07/272433.htm>, is excerpted below.

* * * *

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL: ... So this ceasefire agreement was reached today in Amman, Jordan. It's part of our ongoing discussions that we, the U.S., have had with Russia and with Jordan over the past few weeks and months about de-escalating the violence in southern Syria. ... I should say this is an important step, but it is a first step in what we envision to be a more complex and robust ceasefire arrangement and de-escalation arrangement in southwest Syria, certainly more complex than ones that we have tried in the past.

...[A]s Secretary Tillerson noted today in Hamburg, there's a lot of discussions ahead of us still, including about some very important elements, including how to monitor the ceasefire, the rules that would govern the southwest de-escalation area, ... the presence of monitors. All of this will be the subject of ongoing talks.

So we see this ceasefire that was announced today as an interim step. The idea is it should create a better environment to discuss a broader and more comprehensive southwest de-escalation area in greater detail. We felt that a ... near-term ceasefire was important because the violence in the southwest, although historically, over the course of the conflict, ... it has been less than other parts of Syria, the violence has steadily increased in the south since February, with both the Syrian regime and opposition defenses threatening to derail any potential for progress there.

So as we began these talks with Russia and Jordan on the southwest, we began pursuing an initiative to lock in what had been a relatively quiet south to stop the violence there, to avoid an escalation of violence, and to see that tamping down of violence as an interim step to create a better environment for a broader and more detailed arrangement.

Now, this has been weeks if not months of discussions, and I expect there's many weeks of discussions ahead of us. It's a multi-step process and there's a lot of elements to it. One of the important elements that we concluded last week was that we were able to come to agreement—the U.S., Russia, and Jordan—on a map of the line of conflict in the southwest. So that is essentially the line of contact between regime forces and opposition forces, and we came to agreement on that map, and once that map was agreed, there was no reason at that point for any of the violence to continue, and given the imperative of stopping the violence as soon as possible, it was followed with this initiative that was announced today.

Now, the agreement ...[is] essentially an undertaking to use our influence, the Jordanians, their influence, the Russians to use their influence with all of the sides of the conflict to stop the fighting, to essentially freeze the conflict. It ... sort of previews additional steps that we think we're going to have to take to strengthen and solidify that ceasefire, and those steps would include potential deployment of monitoring forces to the area, and as Secretary Tillerson noted, that's something that we're close to an understanding on but we're not in a position to announce in detail on that yet; and also formation of an effective monitoring cell, an arrangement by which the parties could participate and monitor the details of the ceasefire and violations.

So it's our expectation that we'll continue the discussions with all the parties, certainly with the Russians and the Jordanians, in the weeks ahead about a more detailed arrangement. And in the meantime, we're hopeful that this agreement will get the violence largely under control.

Now, I want to add a little bit more, which is that in the past, we have pursued efforts towards a nationwide ceasefire, and those have been extraordinarily difficult in large part because the environment, circumstances in different parts of Syria are so profoundly different.

So as we began these discussions with the Russians and the Jordanians some months ago, we made a conscious decision to focus on one part of the conflict initially, and that was the southwest. For a variety of reasons, it seemed like a more manageable part of ... a very, very complicated battle space inside of Syria. That doesn't preclude a desire on our part to look at other parts of Syria in the coming weeks and months, and certainly it's a positive signal. I think, as Secretary Tillerson made ... in Hamburg today, which is it's a positive signal about the capacity of the United States and Russia to work in a positive way on something practical where we do have some measure of overlapping perspectives about the course of events.

So it's a very complicated battle space. We are starting with fairly modest ambitions to focus on this one part of Syria, to begin the focus on the southwest of Syria with an effort to stop the violence there and to gradually, as our discussions proceed, to solidify an arrangement that can, number one, end the principal driver of misery for Syrians in that part of the country—the ongoing violence, to set the stage for a more auspicious environment for what we ultimately hope is a productive political process that can—that could lead to a more substantial and permanent resolution of the underlying conflict.

* * * *

On the question of Astana, Astana's a separate process. This effort that we've announced today and the discussions that we've had with the Russians and the Jordanians more generally has not been a part of the Astana process. The U.S. attends those Astana meetings as an observer. We're not a participant. The southwest area, as we have discussed it and conceptualized it with Russia and Jordan, is a separate process. So a separate process of delineating the maps and a separate set of negotiations about the details of the ceasefire and eventually the details of the broader de-escalation arrangements.

Astana, since it has started, ... the U.S. has been an observer. We've said publicly that to the extent that it contributes to de-escalation of violence or reduction of violence nationwide and ultimately saving Syrians' lives, we're supportive of that effort. We obviously have concerns about Astana, not least of which is the role of Iran as a guarantor of that process, and that will continue. Our concerns about Iran's role in Astana, our concerns about Iran more generally inside of Syria will continue to inform our approach to all of these discussions going forward.

* * * *

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL: The basis of the whole understanding is obviously that each side, each party to it uses its influence with those parties on the ground with which we have relationships. So we and Jordan, in particular, have good relationships with the Southern Front, with the principal armed factions in southwest Syria, and we maintain fairly constant contact with those parties and definitely pursued this in large measure because we had a sense that they themselves were supportive of a ceasefire. I think the armed factions and the

civilians and the opposition in general throughout most of Syria is dreadfully tired of the violence and is looking for an opportunity where a credible ceasefire—an enduring ceasefire—could be implemented.

So you raise a good point; there's been ceasefires in the past. At the end of the day, this is Syria. It's a very complicated battle space and there are a lot of spoilers on the ground, and we're effectively dependent upon outside parties with influence to ensure the compliance of those with whom they have influence. In the case of the Russians, obviously, that's principally the regime forces; in the case of the U.S., Jordan, it's the forces of the opposition. But again, there are spoilers on the ground. There is the regime, which we hope under Russian pressure will comply. There are jihadis from al-Qaida and from Daesh even in southwest Syria, although smaller in number, that may well have a vested interest in spoiling the ceasefire.

So we're moving ahead both because I think we're morally bound where there's an opportunity to bring about a ceasefire to save people's lives and to de-escalate the violence, but we're trying to do it in a way where we come up with a more detailed de-escalation arrangement, including monitoring arrangements that are more robust and more credible and can lead to a more durable ceasefire.

* * * *

Here we have a situation where one of the toughest pieces of these discussions is the thing that we accomplished last week when we agreed on the line of contact between regime and opposition forces. That's not something we had really been able to do in the past. And once that had been done, once we had agreement between us, Jordan, and Russia about where the line of contact was, effectively—and we had a sense from the parties that both sides of the conflict wanted the violence to end, at that point there was no reason for it to continue.

You had a growing level of violence in that part of Syria, north of Daraa in particular, and yet the contact line didn't shift demonstrably. So it became pointless to continue the violence at that point because all it meant was death and destruction but no gains, no demonstrable gains by either side. So at that point there was a certain logic in implementing the ceasefire immediately, and then as quickly—and it's obviously incumbent on us to move as quickly as possible—to try to get in place arrangements that can ensure that it can be durable.

* * * *

On November 11, 2017, the Presidents of the United States and the Russian Federation issued a joint statement on Syria. The joint statement follows, and is available at <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/11/275459.htm>

* * * *

President Trump and President Putin today, meeting on the margins of the APEC conference in Da Nang, Vietnam, confirmed their determination to defeat ISIS in Syria. They expressed their satisfaction with successful U.S.-Russia enhanced de-confliction efforts between U.S. and Russian military professionals that have dramatically accelerated ISIS's losses on the battlefield in recent months.

The Presidents agreed to maintain open military channels of communication between military professionals to help ensure the safety of both U.S. and Russian forces and de-confliction of partnered forces engaged in the fight against ISIS. They confirmed these efforts will be continued until the final defeat of ISIS is achieved.

The Presidents agreed that there is no military solution to the conflict in Syria. They confirmed that the ultimate political solution to the conflict must be forged through the Geneva process pursuant to UNSCR 2254. They also took note of President Asad's recent commitment to the Geneva process and constitutional reform and elections as called for under UNSCR 2254.

The two Presidents affirmed that these steps must include full implementation of UNSCR 2254, including constitutional reform and free and fair elections under UN supervision, held to the highest international standards of transparency, with all Syrians, including members of the diaspora, eligible to participate. The Presidents affirmed their commitment to Syria's sovereignty, unity, independence, territorial integrity, and non-sectarian character, as defined in UNSCR 2254, and urged all Syrian parties to participate actively in the Geneva political process and to support efforts to ensure its success.

Finally President Trump and President Putin confirmed the importance of de-escalation areas as an interim step to reduce violence in Syria, enforce ceasefire agreements, facilitate unhindered humanitarian access, and set the conditions for the ultimate political solution to the conflict. They reviewed progress on the ceasefire in southwest Syria that was finalized the last time the two Presidents met in Hamburg, Germany on July 7, 2017.

The two presidents, today, welcomed the Memorandum of Principles concluded in Amman, Jordan, on November 8, 2017, between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Russian Federation, and the United States of America. This Memorandum reinforces the success of the ceasefire initiative, to include the reduction, and ultimate elimination, of foreign forces and foreign fighters from the area to ensure a more sustainable peace. Monitoring this ceasefire arrangement will continue to take place through the Amman Monitoring Center, with participation by expert teams from the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Russian Federation, and the United States.

The two Presidents discussed the ongoing need to reduce human suffering in Syria and called on all UN member states to increase their contributions to address these humanitarian needs over the coming months.

In addition, President Trump noted that he had a good meeting with President Putin. He further noted that the successful implementation of the agreements announced today will save thousands of lives.

* * * *

On November 11, 2017, senior administration officials provided another special briefing on Syria, this one regarding the joint statement by the President of the United States and the President of the Russian Federation, excerpted above. The briefing transcript is available at <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/11/275463.htm> and excerpts follow.

* * * *

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL ONE: Great. ... So let me provide some background, ... on the joint statement on Syria that issued today following the discussion between President Trump and President Putin on the margins of the APEC conference.

And this statement really builds on months of fairly intense discussions with the Russians and a lot of behind-the-scenes diplomacy led by Secretary Tillerson with the support of our military teams. And another round of those discussions took place last week in Amman and made some progress on some of the areas underlying the joint statement that issued today. And Secretary Tillerson and Foreign Minister Lavrov were able to close some gaps that remained over the course of the discussion on the margins of APEC.

I would describe these discussions with the Russians as quite intense, difficult, but also professional and ultimately constructive. And we've been able in recent months to work through some extremely difficult issues on Syria, which remains one of the most complex foreign policy challenges we confront.

So let me break down the statement with some background. ...[S]hortly after taking office Secretary Tillerson set forth a vision for a new U.S. approach on Syria really grounded in three key elements. First, we must and we will prioritize the defeat and the enduring defeat of ISIS...

... Secretary Mattis, during a coalition meeting in Brussels earlier this week, ...noted that 95 percent now of the territory once held by ISIS is now freed, and our partners are continuing to secure more territory each day.

Second, ... we must work to consolidate these military gains through stabilization assistance and critically de-escalate the civil war in Syria. The underlying civil war threatens American interests by driving extremism, increasing Iranian influence, undermine the security of Syria's neighbors including Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, and Turkey, and increasing refugee flows.

In April, the Secretary discussed a vision for de-escalation zones during a Moscow visit with President Putin, and that overall vision has really defined subsequent international diplomacy on Syria. It resulted in a reduction of violence throughout the country and unprecedented pressure on ISIS and beginning to set the conditions now for a meaningful political process.

...[T]hird ..., we must facilitate UN-led efforts to effect a political resolution to the conflict. ...[I]t remains our view that a new and stable Syria ... and a more stable region will ultimately require new leadership in Damascus and the departure of President Assad from the scene. This must occur, however, as part of a political process that allows the entirety of the Syrian people, including the millions displaced by this horrific conflict, to determine their future free from threat, intimidation, and all foreign interference, and ultimately through UN-supervised and organized parliamentary and presidential elections.

...[P]hase one is really the defeat of ISIS. It's hard to see Syria stabilizing when ISIS retains a so-called caliphate in what used to be about a third of the country. The second phase, and working in parallel, is to establish de-escalation zones and bring down the levels of violence in the country, with the third phase then leading to the political process to ultimately end the overall civil war.

So the joint statement approved today by President Trump and President Putin codifies areas of agreement in each of these three areas. It also does not sugarcoat differences that remain, and we still have work to do as we emerge from the primary focus on ISIS to the next phase of

the campaign, locking in de-escalation areas to set conditions for a meaningful political process through Geneva to take hold.

The statement also reflects our view, as the President discussed earlier today, that despite our many differences with Russia, our two countries are capable of working together on difficult problems where interests converge and our doing so is profoundly in our national security interest. Perhaps nowhere is that more true than in Syria. The reality on the ground in Syria and those with influence is something we must take account of when developing our own approaches. We have made clear we will not work with the Assad regime, we will not obviously work with the Iranians who share fundamentally divergent interests from ours, therefore we must find opportunities to work with Russia where we can, seek to narrow differences where possible, mindful of the gaps that will inevitably remain.

So turning to the details of the statement, I'll discuss each of the three areas I just outlined: military deconfliction to accelerate pressure on ISIS, strengthening the southwest ceasefire and de-escalation zones, and agreeing on key principles of the Geneva-based political process.

So the first area— ...deconfliction and the counter-ISIS campaign. As the campaign against ISIS has progressed, coalition-backed and Russian-backed forces have increasingly converged on the battlefield, necessitating a greater degree of operational deconfliction to prevent accidents and unintended escalations of force. Over the past 10 months we've worked to strengthen professional military channels of communication with Russia at the tactical and operational levels. This is to ensure that we can protect our people and our partner forces and focus maximum focus where it belongs, on the defeat of ISIS.

While not without challenges, these arrangements have served its purpose to date, thanks to the leadership of Secretary Mattis, General Dunford, General Votel, and our commanders in theater—Lieutenant General Steve Townsend [until] around September and now Lieutenant General Paul Funk, who recently assumed command. And they're doing a great job, a remarkable job, and we remain closely latched up between military and diplomatic channels as the campaign has dramatically accelerated over the past year.

So today, importantly, President Trump and President Putin expressed their satisfaction with these arrangements and confirmed that they would continue until ... the final defeat of ISIS ... is achieved. The joint statement reflects our shared commitment and agreement from the highest levels that military discussions and deconfliction channels has remained professional, served to avoid misunderstandings, and maximized the pressure on ISIS.

And this pressure on ISIS cannot be overstated. For the first time, the end of the physical caliphate, the so-called ISIS caliphate from where terror attacks were planned and launched around the world, is clearly in sight. While this will not end the threat of the ISIS, it is a significant milestone in the campaign and the result of the accelerants put in place at the direction of the President and Secretary Mattis earlier this year.

The statement also affirmed understandings that these deconfliction arrangements as well as de-escalation areas are interim measures to create conditions under which terrorists can be defeated, military gains consolidated, our partner forces can be secure, and the political process can advance pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 2254....

Both U.S. and Russia finally, as the statement states, are firmly committed to the territorial integrity of Syria, a principle the presidents affirmed today in the joint statement. De-escalation zones, for example, and deconfliction arrangements are designed to reduce violence

and create conditions for Syrians to return to their homes and a political process to take hold. They are not aimed at partitioning Syria or dividing Syria into spheres of influence.

The second area of the statement is the de-escalation of the civil war and de-escalation zones, particularly the southwest. The presidents welcomed and endorsed, importantly, the U.S.-Russia-Jordan Memorandum of Principles, what we call the MOP, for de-escalation in southwest Syria. And this document was initialed on Wednesday night, November 8th, in Amman, Jordan. This understanding builds on and expands the July 7th ceasefire arrangement finalized during the last meeting between President Trump and President Putin in Hamburg, Germany, in July.

So the memorandum builds on the ceasefire arrangement really in three important areas. Let me just break them down.

First, the memorandum initialed in Amman earlier this week gives greater definition to the rules and mechanisms to monitor and strengthen the ceasefire and related efforts like humanitarian assistance. And while not perfect, the ceasefire that was put in place in July has largely held. Violence in this area has been significantly reduced, and thousands of Syrian families have returned to their homes. The presidents also recognized the work of U.S., Jordanian, and Russian military and diplomatic professionals and what we call the Amman Monitoring Center, which maintains contact with the many actors on the ground to prevent violations of the ceasefire and address them when they occur.

Second, the memorandum initialed in Amman and endorsed by the presidents today reflects the trilateral commitment that existing governance and administrative arrangements in opposition-held areas in the southwest will be maintained during this transitional phase. In other words, the opposition is not surrendering territory to the regime, deferring those questions of longer-term political arrangements to the political process under UN Security Council Resolution 2254. So this is an important principle that the memorandum initialed in Amman memorializes and the presidents confirmed.

Third and perhaps most important, the MOP ... enshrines the commitment of the U.S., Russia, and Jordan to eliminate the presence of non-Syrian foreign forces. That includes Iranian forces and Iranian-backed militias like Lebanese Hizbollah as well as foreign jihadis working with Jabhat al-Nusrah and other extremist groups from the southwest area. These ... extremists groups and these foreign-backed militias ... have used the Syrian conflict over the last five years to increase their presence in this part of Syria, which has undermined the ceasefire and poses a threat to Jordan and Israel. So we think this principle is quite important and it is enshrined in the agreement reached this week.

So on this last point specifically, the Russians have agreed to work with the Syrian regime to remove Iranian-backed forces a defined distance from opposition-held territory as well as the borders of the Golan in Jordan. For our part, we have agreed to work with Jordan and the opposition to reduce and ultimately eliminate the presence of foreign jihadis such as those fighting with Jabhat al-Nusrah from opposition-controlled territory. The bottom-line principle is that all foreign terrorists and militia fighters must leave these areas and ultimately leave Syria altogether.

The third part of the statement is focused on the political solution, the long-term solution to the conflict. So finally, the statement reflects agreement that there is no military solution to the Syrian conflict; the conflict can only be resolved long-term through peaceful political negotiations, which, as the statement says, must, must be grounded in Geneva and the Geneva-based political process. So the presidents reaffirmed their commitment to the blueprint for a political transition outlined in UN Security Council Resolution 2254, and that means negotiation

under UN auspices in Geneva to draft a new constitution and hold UN-supervised elections to the highest international standards with the Syrian diaspora. That means the millions of Syrians who have been displaced in this terrible civil war will be eligible to vote, as the statement states very clearly.

The statement also expresses Assad's recent commitments...—the Geneva process, constitutional reform, and elections—and importantly makes clear that those commitments must be grounded in Security Council Resolution 2254.

The statement affirms that the political process, including constitutional reform and elections, therefore, must occur under the detailed blueprint outlined in the Security Council resolution through UN-led negotiations in Geneva and culminate in UN-supervised elections.

... We have started to see signs that the Russians and the regime wanted to draw the political process away from Geneva to a format that might be easier for the regime to manipulate. Today makes clear and the statement makes clear that 2254 and Geneva remains the exclusive platform for the political process, which, as the statement reaffirms, is the only way, long term, to end the Syrian civil war.

So the goal of the Geneva process under the auspices of Staffan de Mistura is to move as quickly as possible towards a new constitution and especially UN-supervised parliamentary and presidential elections. And at the end of this political process, as I stated at the opening, Syria and the broader region cannot be stable nor can there be any significant reconstruction assistance to regime-held areas, importantly, so long as Assad remains in power.

* * * *

On November 26, 2017, the State Department issued a press statement on the Riyadh conference of the Syrian opposition. The statement appears below and at <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/11/275886.htm>.

* * * *

The United States notes the successful conclusion of the Riyadh II conference of the Syrian opposition and its work to bring together a diverse array of groups to form a unified delegation that can enter into substantive negotiations in the upcoming round of UN sponsored talks in Geneva.

The United States commends the role of Saudi Arabia, the organizer of the Syrian Opposition Conference in Riyadh. We congratulate the new Negotiating Committee and its General Coordinator Nasr Hariri, as they prepare to embark on the discussions that can ultimately lead to a political solution to the conflict.

The process that can bring this about must include full implementation of UNSCR 2254, including constitutional reform and free and fair elections under UN supervision, held to the highest international standards of transparency, with all Syrians, including members of the diaspora, eligible to participate.

The Geneva process, as it gains traction towards constitutional reform and UN-supervised elections, should include the broadest spectrum of Syrian citizens, including all groups with representation and influence on the ground who express commitment to a new Syria as outlined

in UNSCR 2254. The formation of the unified delegation for this round of UN-led Geneva talks is a positive step in that direction. We hope that all parties to the talks in Geneva will display the seriousness and flexibility to find a solution that can bring an end to this conflict and to the suffering of the Syrian people. We call in particular upon the Syrian regime now to enter into substantive negotiations in Geneva on the basis of UNSCR 2254.

* * * *

On December 15, 2017, the State Department issued a press statement on the recent round of talks on Syria in Geneva. The statement follows and is available at <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/12/276634.htm>.

* * * *

We commend United Nations Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura and his team for their efforts in the latest round of Syria talks in Geneva. We also note the constructive participation of the Syrian opposition delegation, which stands in contrast to the obstructionism and procrastination of the Syrian regime delegation. We support de Mistura's call for the regime's supporters to use their leverage to urge the regime to participate fully in tangible negotiations with the opposition in Geneva. The United States urges all parties to work seriously toward a political resolution to this conflict or face continued isolation and instability indefinitely in Syria. All parties interested in resolving the conflict must commit to Geneva as the only venue for the Syrian political process and work to ensure all Syrian participants are ready to engage constructively and substantively on implementing UNSCR 2254 as the blueprint for a political resolution. The Syrian people deserve an end to this conflict.

* * * *

3. Mali

On July 31, 2017, the State Department issued a press statement on the situation in Mali. That statement follows and is available at <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/07/272954.htm>.

The United States condemns recurring violations of the ceasefire that have occurred in Mali between signatory armed groups to the 2015 Algiers Peace Accord. We urge the parties to end hostilities immediately and to strictly comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law and to respect human rights, particularly with respect to civilians and prisoners. We are greatly disturbed at reports of reprisal killings of civilians and the discovery of unmarked gravesites in the areas of conflict. We welcome the inquiries led by the UN

peacekeeping mission, the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). If the allegations prove true, the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

We applaud efforts to bring the parties together to agree to a cessation of hostilities, and we deplore the parties' failure to do so. We call on all parties to redouble their efforts to abide by the ceasefire and fully implement the Algiers Peace Accord. The United States stands with the people of Mali as they work to build a country that is peaceful, prosperous, and united. The United States also supports the efforts of the Group of Five Sahel states (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger) in creating a Joint Force and undertaking other actions to address threats that destabilize Mali and other parts of the sub-region and make lasting peace that much more elusive.

On September 20, 2017, U.S. Deputy Representative to the United Nations Michele Sison delivered remarks at a ministerial meeting on the implementation of the Mali Peace Agreement. Ambassador Sison's remarks are excerpted below and available at <https://usun.state.gov/remarks/7989>.

* * * *

We all desire for peace to take root in Mali. But no level of international engagement can secure peace for Mali alone. The signatory parties to the peace agreement, especially the Malian government, must drive the effort to bring peace. Indeed, the only sure path to stability is a full commitment to implementation, especially the return of stable, legitimate, and inclusive governance to the center and north.

The recent fighting in July by signatory armed groups in the Kidal and Menaka regions signaled a further breakdown in political will to implement the agreement. We applaud that they have agreed to a thirty-day ceasefire in early September but implore them to take their ongoing dialogue seriously and honor and implement the peace agreement, all of which requires a durable cessation of hostilities.

In adopting Resolution 2374, the Security Council made clear there are consequences for those who obstruct efforts to create the peace that the people of Mali deserve.

This resolution serves as a powerful message and warning to parties on all sides of the conflict that they may be sanctioned for undermining the peace process, and strengthens the hands of those who work constructively towards a sustainable peace in Mali.

MINUSMA plays an equally important role in creating an enabling environment for peace in Mali. We thank all the MINUSMA troop and police contributing countries for their dedication to international peace and stability and the sacrifices they have made. Indeed, far too many peacekeepers have lost their lives in service to their duties. We are grateful for the ultimate sacrifices they have made for the Malian people.

This is why, as member states, we must energize our efforts to ensure that MINUSMA has the troops and equipment it needs to accomplish its mission. We urge contributing countries to honor pledges to get the mission closer to its force ceiling.

We recognize French leadership in addressing the threats in the Sahel through Operation Barkhane. We are also very proud of the logistics support that the U.S. military provides to this Operation in close collaboration with our French allies.

We encourage the Government of Mali to promote stability by enhancing reform of its security forces, addressing allegations of impunity for human rights violations, as well as increasing northern participation and building these forces' counter-terrorism capability.

That terrorist threat continues to exacerbate insecurity in Mali and more frequently crosses into neighboring countries, something of great concern to us all. We understand the interest of Sahelian leaders in devising a solution to address this transnational threat in the region. The United States stands with Mali and other African and international partners to counter the growing terrorist threats in the Sahel—through the G5 Sahel Joint Force and other mechanisms.

We are committed to supporting the African-led and -owned G5 Joint Force through bilateral security assistance. But we do not support UN funding, logistics, or authorization for the force. We will continue to seek to identify new bilateral opportunities to provide specific support and encourage all nations to do the same. We have already provided approximately \$840 million in assistance to G5 member states since 2012.

As we have said before, the Malian signatories are the ultimate arbiters of their own future. A more durable peace is only in reach for those who extend a hand to it. We are here to support those with the courage to do so.

* * * *

4. Democratic Republic of the Congo

As discussed in *Digest 2016* at 755, the United States welcomed the December 31, 2016 signing of a political compromise agreement by the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo (“DRC”) and opposition party leaders. On March 28, 2017, the State Department issued a press statement on the lack of progress on the political agreement in the DRC. That statement follows and is available at <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/03/269230.htm>.

The United States is disappointed by lack of progress in implementation of the December 31 Saint-Sylvestre Political Agreement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We are concerned by the inability of both the Government of the DRC and the leaders of the opposition Rassemblement coalition to make the compromises necessary to enact pre-agreed provisions of the agreement, including the appointment of a Prime Minister.

The formation of a new government, as prescribed by the agreement, would pave the way for elections and the DRC's first peaceful, democratic transfer of power through the expressed will of the Congolese people. The U.S. commends the tireless efforts of the DRC's Council of Catholic Bishops (CENCO) in mediating this initiative, strongly supports a continuing role for CENCO in the process, and seconds CENCO's public appeal for both sides to redouble efforts to overcome points of disagreement. Failure to move ahead with the accord clearly

thwarts the will of the Congolese people and jeopardizes the progress achieved thus far.

The United States urges government and opposition leaders to refrain from any statements or actions that could incite violence or unrest.

5. South Sudan

On February 17, 2017, 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/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/02/267700.htm>. The statement, below, supports the African Union High Level Implementation Panel (“AUHIP”) peace process.

* * * *

The Troika (Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States) expresses its continued support for the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) peace process, led by former South African President Thabo Mbeki. In support of the AUHIP-brokered Roadmap Agreement signed by both the Government of Sudan and the opposition, the Troika urges the signatories to honor the Agreement by concluding comprehensive cessations of hostilities and engaging in an inclusive political dialogue. The Government of Sudan must now create an environment that is conducive to freedom of expression and political participation by both armed and unarmed opposition in Sudan.

The Troika is also encouraged by the Government of Sudan’s decision to accept the United States’ proposal to support humanitarian assistance to South Kordofan and Blue Nile states (the “Two Areas”). The U.S. proposal is intended to facilitate humanitarian assistance to affected populations in the Two Areas, in line with AUHIP efforts for broader negotiated humanitarian access. The Troika urges the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North to swiftly accept this proposal and facilitate the delivery of life-saving assistance to those in need in the Two Areas.

The ongoing unilateral ceasefires are a significant step toward peace throughout Sudan. However, in order to realize sustainable peace, all parties must engage in a political process. The Troika also encourages continued engagement by the armed movements from Darfur with the AUHIP peace process. We call on the Sudan Liberation Movement—Abdul Wahid Al Nur to cease hostilities and immediately engage with the AUHIP peace process. The Troika also encourages the Government of Sudan to make progress on addressing the root causes of the conflict.

* * * *

On March 30, 2017, the State Department issued as a media note a further statement of the Troika on South Sudan. The statement follows and is available at <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/03/269328.htm>.

* * * *

The members of the Troika (Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States) reiterate their strong support for the combined efforts of the African Union (AU), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and United Nations to end the conflict in South Sudan, and join in their recent calls on all armed parties, including the Government of South Sudan, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Opposition, and other armed groups, to commit to a ceasefire. The Troika welcomes the recent commitment by President Kiir to IGAD leaders to announce a unilateral ceasefire by government forces, and it calls upon him to ensure that his order is carried out immediately and in full effect.

The Troika underlines that the dire humanitarian crisis in South Sudan is the direct result of the conflict and demands that all parties cease violence against humanitarian workers and obstruction of humanitarian assistance. Military offensives and the obstruction of lifesaving assistance must stop immediately in order to end the suffering and severe food shortages inflicted upon millions across South Sudan.

The Troika reiterates that there is no military solution to this conflict and that a durable end to the conflict will require a political process involving all the principal parties. An inclusive national dialogue, deemed credible by the South Sudanese people, could provide a means to redress root causes of conflict and build a true national consensus. As President Kiir committed in announcing the planned national dialogue, it should supplement, and not replace, the core elements of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan.

The Troika endorses the ongoing efforts of AU High Representative Alpha Konar and UN Special Envoy Nicholas Haysom to encourage all parties to end fighting and engage in peaceful dialogue. It also fully supports Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission Chairperson Festus Mogae's work towards a truly inclusive and effective process to implement the Agreement. In addition, the Troika endorses the work of the UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan, and the deployment of its Regional Protection Force. Lastly, the Troika notes the importance of breaking the cycle of impunity, and encourages further progress by the AU toward the rapid establishment of the Hybrid Court for South Sudan.

* * * *

The Troika issued another joint statement on April 6, 2017 regarding the opening of a humanitarian corridor from Sudan to South Sudan. The April 6 statement is excerpted below and available at <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/04/269520.htm> .

* * * *

The members of the Troika (Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States) welcome the Government of Sudan's opening of the border crossing into Bentiu, in South Sudan, for the delivery of humanitarian food assistance to areas gravely affected by the conflict and suffering from famine and severe food insecurity. This border crossing will allow for a second access route for emergency food assistance, along with the already open Kosti-Renk river corridor. The

Troika also recognizes the Government of Sudan's efforts to facilitate the flow of food assistance through Port Sudan.

The Troika notes Sudan has accepted over 365,000 South Sudanese refugees, including more than 60,000 South Sudanese who have entered Sudan in the first three months of 2017, and encourages the government to ensure continued humanitarian access to these refugee communities. The Troika also welcomes the Sudanese government's decision to donate food from their own food reserves to people in need in South Sudan.

The Troika calls on the Government of South Sudan to coordinate with the World Food Program and partners providing vital assistance. The Troika urges the government and all armed groups to allow full and safe humanitarian access to reach communities in need, and to ensure that food and other commodities are not diverted from the intended beneficiaries.

The Troika recommends the opening of additional land and water routes between Sudan and South Sudan so that communities in both countries can benefit from open trade and the efficient and swift movement of humanitarian goods and personnel.

* * * *

On July 9, 2017, the State Department issued a press statement on the South Sudan conflict on the 6th anniversary of South Sudan's independence. The statement follows, and is available at <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/07/272441.htm>.

* * * *

The birth of South Sudan in 2011 was marked by hope for a peaceful and prosperous future. The American people, like many around the world, celebrated as the South Sudanese forged a free and independent nation following years of strife. Six years later, on the occasion of South Sudan's independence, the promise of 2011 has been supplanted in 2017 by a continuing civil war and devastating humanitarian crisis affecting millions.

The conflict that broke out in December 2013 set South Sudan on a precarious course, causing immense suffering, creating divisions and holding the country back. We deeply regret that the second chance made possible by the formation of the Transitional Government of National Unity in April 2016 was squandered. Following the collapse of the permanent ceasefire in July 2016, the armed conflict expanded across the country and the parties to the conflict remain unwilling to return to the negotiating table. The consequences have been dire: two million people displaced inside South Sudan, nearly two million people displaced as refugees outside of South Sudan, and six million people facing life-threatening hunger.

The United States remains deeply committed to a stable and inclusive South Sudan, and stresses once again that there is no military solution to this conflict. On this day meant to celebrate South Sudan's creation, we call upon South Sudan's leaders and all parties to end this self-destructive violence, to return to political dialogue, and to help South Sudan realize its full potential.

We extend our best wishes to the people of the Republic of South Sudan on the sixth anniversary of the nation's independence. The United States will stand with the people of South Sudan and with all leaders who are working for peace, stability, and justice.

* * * *

On July 20, 2017, the Troika issued another joint statement, this time with the EU, on South Sudan, which follows and is also available at <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/07/272747.htm>.

* * * *

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

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

The proliferation of violence, displacement, and food insecurity renders any discussion of elections in the foreseeable future as an unnecessary diversion from the primary goals of achieving peace and reconciliation. South Sudan's leaders, neighbors, and regional and international partners must first focus on achieving peace in order to create the conditions needed to hold credible elections. To achieve these urgent goals, we look forward to the prompt revitalization of an inclusive and credible peace process by IGAD; such progress would be required in order for the Troika and EU to commit further resources to institutions designed to implement the agreement.

* * * *

On December 13, 2017, the Troika issued another joint statement calling on all parties to participate in the High Level Revitalization Forum ("HLRF") for peace in South Sudan. The statement follows and is available at <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/12/276582.htm>.

* * * *

On Monday, December 18, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) will convene the High-Level Revitalization Forum (HLRF) for the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (the Agreement). The members of the Troika (Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States) have made clear that the HLRF is a unique and critical opportunity to make progress towards peace. The humanitarian, economic, security, human rights, and political situation continues to deteriorate with devastating consequences for the people of South Sudan. Over half the population now lacks enough food to feed themselves and a third of the population has fled their homes, causing the largest refugee crisis in Africa. This situation is intolerable to the region and the international community. It cannot continue.

The region and the international community have repeatedly called for all parties to the conflict to participate in the HLRF constructively and in a spirit of compromise and inclusion. The members of the Troika fully expect the Government of South Sudan to adhere to its repeated public and private commitments to participate in the HLRF in good faith, and with the immediate goal of stopping the fighting. Although it is a member of IGAD, the Government is also a party to the conflict. To achieve a sustainable peace, no party to the conflict can have undue influence or a veto on the process, including the Government. The opposition also bears responsibility for coming to the table without preconditions. All parties must engage sincerely and make concessions in the national interest; otherwise, the conflict and suffering will continue.

The Troika fully supports IGAD's continuing effort to build peace and, in particular, the tireless work undertaken by IGAD Special Envoy Ismail Wais to bring the parties together. The Troika views the HLRF as the essential, inclusive forum to advance peace; other efforts and fora must support the HLRF, or risk diverting attention and focus and delaying progress. IGAD's ability to solve this crisis depends on unity of purpose amongst its members, and we urge the IGAD countries to speak with one voice. As the Troika has previously stated, the HLRF and its outcome must be genuinely inclusive and reflect the political reality of South Sudan today. The Troika reiterates its intent to stand with IGAD in its efforts to make progress toward peace and effective implementation of the Agreement, and its readiness to take action against those who obstruct the process.

* * * *

On December 21, 2017, the Troika issued a joint statement welcoming the agreement on a cessation of hostilities, protection of civilians, and humanitarian access in the conflict in South Sudan. The State Department media note containing the joint statement is available at <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/12/276737.htm> and excerpted below.

* * * *

On Thursday, December 21, the parties to the conflict in South Sudan signed the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, Protection of Civilians, and Humanitarian Access in Addis Ababa. The members of the Troika (Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States) congratulate the parties on their willingness to compromise for the benefit of the people of South Sudan and hope

that they immediately take action to make good on that agreement. The Troika fully supports the continuing effort by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to build peace through the High Level Revitalization Forum (HLRF).

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

* * * *

6. Colombia

As discussed in *Digest 2016* at 745-52, the UN Security Council established an observer mission to assist with implementation of the Colombia peace agreement. On September 14, 2017, Ambassador Sison provided the U.S. explanation of vote following the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2377 on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia. Ambassador Sison's statement is excerpted below and available at <https://usun.state.gov/remarks/7973>.

* * * *

The United States also warmly welcomes the continued support of the Security Council to Colombia. The Government of Colombia has made critical progress in implementing the final peace accord with the FARC. As a result of the parties' commitment and the support of the United Nations, the FARC has peacefully laid down their arms. The last containers with all of those weapons are now in the hands of the United Nations, and the government has already begun the process of reintegrating the former combatants into society.

Colombia has shown the world that commitment to political process and a shared future—along with strong, unified support from the Council and the international community—can bring success in peacebuilding. Colombia is an example for the region and for the world.

But now Colombia faces the challenge of consolidating that peace. The threat to that peace is serious, and it comes in the form of lack of infrastructure, basic services, and rule of law in conflict-affected areas formerly occupied by the FARC, creating a haven for criminal activities, drugs, and violence. Yet we remain focused on building on the gains made and creating the conditions for peace to prosper.

In particular, today's resolution advances the readiness of the second political mission in helping to address these challenges. We stand ready to partner with Colombia and support the Security Council in the hard work ahead. Additionally, we welcome the announcement of the

Government of Colombia and the National Liberation Army, the ELN, of a temporary bilateral ceasefire. The United States joins other members of the Council in expressing our interest in considering how this temporary bilateral ceasefire could be supported by the work of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia. We look forward to hearing the Secretary-General's recommendations on the way forward in the coming days.

With our vote today, the United States underscores that we stand with Colombia—as a steadfast partner and as a friend. The United States has stood with Colombia through times of great challenge, and we continue to stand with you in this moment of hope and opportunity.

* * * *

7. Accountability of UN Officials and Experts on Missions

U.S. Counselor to the UN Emily Pierce delivered remarks at a Sixth Committee meeting on October 6, 2017 on criminal accountability of UN officials and experts on missions. Ms. Pierce's remarks are excerpted below and available at <https://usun.state.gov/remarks/8026>.

* * * *

The critical issue of criminal accountability for UN officials and experts on mission goes to the heart of the credibility of the United Nations in carrying out its essential work around the world, as well as to the public's confidence in its ability to protect and serve. The United States reiterates its firmly held belief that UN officials and experts on mission should be held accountable for the crimes they commit.

The history of this agenda item is well known in this chamber. Years ago, in the wake of shocking allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeepers, the General Assembly issued a call for a zero tolerance policy and began a discussion of criminal accountability. In his first 9-plus months in office, the Secretary-General has demonstrated strong leadership in addressing the scourge of sexual exploitation and abuse within the Organization, prioritizing the dignity of victims and promoting transparency, accountability, and prevention efforts. We appreciate the Secretary-General's February 2017 report, which outlined a new approach to accomplishing these protection endeavors, as well as the efforts of Member States, the Security Council and the General Assembly to maintain prioritization of this issue. We look forward to continuing to engage with the all facets of the UN on implementing reforms.

While this agenda item originated in those allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse committed by peacekeeping troops, our work necessarily takes a broader view both in scope of criminal activity and across the whole of the United Nations. It is noteworthy that of the 20 referrals made to the UN in 2017, as outlined in Annex I of the Secretary-General's report A/72/205, only two of them related to allegations of crimes involving sexual exploitation and abuse. Similarly, of the 27 referrals made in 2016 identified in the same annex, only two of those involved allegations of crimes involving sexual exploitation and abuse. We must not lose sight of the need to promote accountability for all crimes committed by UN officials and experts on mission, including financial and other crimes, like fraud, corruption, and theft.

The United States thanks the Secretariat, in particular the Office of Legal Affairs, for its three reports on this important topic. We appreciate in particular the demonstrated efforts OLA has made to implement the General Assembly's request for more follow up with Member States to which referrals of criminal allegations have been made when no response has been received. In several recent cases identified in Annex 1 to A/72/205, such additional efforts appear to have made a difference, prompting states to respond. In addition, we consider Annex II, which contains information on notifications received from states with respect to investigations or prosecutions of crimes allegedly committed by UN officials or experts on mission, a positive step towards enhanced transparency on the scope of the issues that this Committee is studying.

The Secretary-General's report A/72/121, compiling information from across the UN system relating to policies and procedures regarding credible allegations that reveal that a crime may have been committed by UN officials or experts on mission, paints a complex picture that even a well-trained lawyer may find challenging to navigate, let alone the person in a remote village who is trying to report and follow up on allegations of fraud or corruption. We look forward to discussing with delegations possibilities for enhancing the clarity and coherence of these policies and procedures across the United Nations to promote efficiency and reduce redundancies, if any.

In his latest report on special measures for sexual exploitation and abuse, the Secretary-General again encouraged Member States to discuss creation of an international convention to address any jurisdictional gaps that might prevent Member States from seeking criminal accountability for actions by their nationals while serving the UN. The United States remains open to consideration by this Committee of whether a convention could play a useful role inclosing legal gaps, particularly jurisdictional gaps that may prevent accountability for serious crimes by UN officials and experts on mission. In this regard, we recognize the continued efforts of the Secretariat in compiling the jurisdictional information submitted by Member States. We believe this information should aid this Committee in its consideration of an international convention, although we note that more information is still needed from Member States in order to have a well-informed discussion, in particular about the domestic laws of those Member States who have said they face legal challenges to holding their nationals to account for criminal acts committed while serving with the UN abroad.

As we look toward the further consideration by this Committee of the report of the Group of Legal Experts next year in the 73rd session, it is important that this Committee have a full picture of obstacles in the domestic legal landscape so that we may more deeply consider the possible impact and form of a potentially legally-binding instrument. Having a better understanding of the scope and nature of the issue would also help the Committee to examine other approaches or solutions that may be more effective in addressing obstacles to accountability in UN missions.

* * * *

C. CONFLICT AVOIDANCE AND ATROCITIES PREVENTION

1. Burma

On October 24, 2017, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State W. Patrick Murphy, Special Representative and Policy Coordinator for Burma, held a special briefing. The transcript

of the briefing is available at <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/10/275069.htm> and excerpted below.

* * * *

MR MURPHY: ... Burma has preoccupied us quite significantly since August 25th when armed attacks took place on security forces, and the ensuing humanitarian crisis is of epic proportions. Many of the challenges in Burma have preoccupied us for decades, but this current crisis has been quite devastating. I had a very good morning joined by colleagues from our refugee bureau and USAID with the members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, as we did a couple of weeks ago with their counterparts on the House side of Congress.

Let me give you a few top lines of our discussion today, where we are with regards to our actions addressing the crisis, and then take your questions. Burma's long struggle defied authoritarian rule to transition to a democratic society. The terrible Rakhine State crisis has exacerbated longstanding suffering of Rohingya and other populations, and threatens this peaceful transition as do other challenges the elected civilian authority inherited just 16 months ago. Our efforts seek to end the violence, support the displaced and their return home, and address the conditions that sparked this colossal population movement. We also want accountability for atrocities.

As we announced here last night, we have identified new and ongoing actions to hold responsible those who have committed violence, including the following measures, and let me share them with you: suspending travel waivers for military leaders; assessing existing authorities to consider options to target individuals responsible for atrocities; finding that all units and officers involved in operations in northern Rakhine State are ineligible for U.S. assistance programs; rescinding invitations for Burmese security leaders to travel to U.S.-sponsored programs; maintaining a longstanding arms embargo; consulting on accountability options at the United Nations, the Human Rights Council, and other venues; and pressing for access for the UN Fact-Finding Mission—a mission that we helped support the establishment of.

There is also a need to address long-term causes of instability in Rakhine State. We support Burma in implementing the recommendations of the Kofi Annan Rakhine Advisory Commission to take on underdevelopment, lack of services, access to justice, and a citizenship process for all people in Rakhine State.

At the same time, Burma's overall success is very important for the peoples of Burma, for the region, indeed, for U.S. national interests. We will continue to work with the democratically-elected civilian leadership, Burma's diverse populations and other stakeholders inside the country, and the region on this crisis and other daunting challenges in the post-military era of that country.

Today, as I said, we testified before the Senate and several weeks ago before the House. There have been many questions there about how best to describe the appalling treatment of Rohingya. I want to be very clear: We are not shying away from the use of any appropriate terminology. We have a deliberative process to examine facts and a policy to support the pursuit of additional information to make such determinations, thus our support, for example, for the UN Fact-Finding Mission.

In the meantime, as Secretary of State Tillerson said, the violence has been characterized by many as ethnic cleansing. Our Ambassador to the United Nations Haley has said that ...actions appear to be a brutal, sustained campaign to cleanse the country of an ethnic minority.

There is no question in our minds that atrocities have been committed, and we will work with the international community and Burmese stakeholders to pursue all means available to hold accountable those responsible for these acts.

* * * *

MR MURPHY: ... Our effort now is to stop the violence and to pursue accountability, so the terminology is really not a factor for us. We know that violence has been committed and acts associated with atrocities have been undertaken, and we are pursuing and encouraging voices in the international community and inside Burma to provide the information necessary to come about with the measures leading to accountability. We view that, I think, as our most important priority.

* * * *

Also on October 24, 2017, Ambassador Sison delivered remarks at a UN side-event on atrocities against Rohingya. Ambassador Sison's statement is excerpted below and available at <https://usun.state.gov/remarks/8042>.

* * * *

As we are all too well aware, thousands of individuals continue to cross the border from Burma into Bangladesh, as the Under-Secretary-General has just noted. And there are now more than 603,000 individuals who have fled since August 25, the majority of them self-identifying as Rohingya. ... [W]e need to remember that when we discuss the atrocities which have occurred in northern Rakhine State in Burma, we remember that we are talking about real people. Real human beings. Men, women, and children. Real people who deserve to have their dignity and their worth recognized as we all agreed to 72 years ago. Real people who have gone through unimaginable traumas from which it will be difficult for them to recover. Witnessing the killing of children, witnessing or being subjected to rape, torture—their struggle has been, and continues to be, very, very real. It is for those people—and in recognition of their suffering—that we are here today.

We welcome the statements of the Government of Burma in recent weeks, and we sincerely hope those words will transform into real action. It is time to stop all violence in the country and to restore the rule of law, encourage unity and tolerance amongst the country's various ethnic and religious groups, and to work with the international community, including the UN, to find a real resolution to the current crisis.

We again, and unequivocally, condemn all acts of violence in Burma. But no violent act relieves the Burmese security forces of their duty—their duty to restore the rule of law and to ensure the safety and security of all individuals in Burma without discrimination. It is clear that the Burmese security forces continue to fail in this duty in Rakhine State, where there is a

continued lack of law and order. There must be accountability for abuses and atrocities, both for those who committed them and those who ordered them.

Yesterday, the U.S. State Department identified new and ongoing actions to pursue accountability for those who have committed violence and abuses, including, among other measures, suspending travel waivers for military leaders; assessing authorities under the JADE Act to consider economic options available to target individuals associated with atrocities; finding that all units and officers involved in operations in northern Rakhine State are, pursuant to the Leahy Law, ineligible for U.S. assistance programs; rescinding invitations for Burmese security leaders to attend U.S.-sponsored events; maintaining an embargo on military sales; consulting with partners on accountability options at the UN, the Human Rights Council, and at other venues; pressing the Government of Burma to allow access to the UN Fact-Finding Mission; and exploring accountability mechanisms under U.S. law, including Global Magnitsky targeted sanctions.

The Government of Burma should allow immediate, unfettered access for UN agencies and other humanitarian groups to provide aid and assistance to all affected populations in Rakhine State. Allowing full access, as I mentioned, for the UN Fact Finding Mission to all parts of the country to do its important work and allowing the international media unrestricted access to report facts from the ground—this is all vital.

We have publicly recognized—and will continue to recognize—the generosity of Bangladesh as hosts to such a large number of refugees. And we encourage the government of Bangladesh to allow a more extensive role for UNHCR in the country that draws upon UNHCR’s unique mandate and expertise in refugee protection. And we also note the efforts of the government of Indonesia to promote access and encourage de-escalation of violence in Burma.

We welcome State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi’s commitment that refugees will be able to return home. We encourage the Government of Burma to work closely with UNHCR and other appropriate UN agencies throughout the process. So the Government of Burma must also ensure that conditions on the ground allow for the safe, dignified, and voluntary return of all those who have fled the violence in their country or who are internally displaced. While we welcome increased cooperation between Bangladesh and Burma, we encourage both sides to work with the international community to agree to an appropriate and workable mechanism to govern those returns.

Finally, while our immediate efforts must focus on this humanitarian and human rights crisis, failure to address the long-term causes of instability in Rakhine—deep-rooted discrimination and economic deprivation—will only result in a replay of this tragedy, we fear, in the future. It is thus crucial that we support Burma in implementing the recommendations of the Rakhine Advisory Commission, led by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, to address underdevelopment, shortcomings in services, access to justice, and a citizenship process for all people in Rakhine State.

* * * *

On November 22, 2017, Secretary Tillerson issued a statement on efforts to address the crisis in Burma’s Rakhine State. That statement includes the conclusion that the situation in northern Rakhine state constitutes ethnic cleansing against Rohingya. The statement is excerpted below and available in full at <https://www.state.gov/secretary/20172018tillerson/remarks/2017/11/275848.htm>.

* * * *

I visited Naypyitaw, Burma on November 15, where I met separately with State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing. I reaffirmed the United States' strong commitment to Burma's successful democratic transition as the elected government strives to implement reforms, bring peace and reconciliation to the nation, and resolve a devastating crisis in Rakhine State. Our first priority is to relieve the intolerable suffering faced by so many. In response to the dire situation, I announced last week an additional \$47 million in humanitarian assistance for those affected by the Rakhine State crisis, bringing the total amount spent in response to this crisis to more than \$87 million since August of this year.

Burma's response to this crisis is vital to determining the success of its transition to a more democratic society. As I said in Naypyitaw, the key test of any democracy is how it treats its most vulnerable and marginalized populations, such as ... Rohingya and other minority populations. Burma's government and security forces must respect the human rights of all persons within its borders, and hold accountable those who fail to do so.

I reiterate the United States' condemnation of August 25 attacks on security forces by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA). Yet no provocation can justify the horrendous atrocities that have ensued. These abuses by some among the Burmese military, security forces, and local vigilantes have caused tremendous suffering and forced hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children to flee their homes in Burma to seek refuge in Bangladesh. After a careful and thorough analysis of available facts, it is clear that the situation in northern Rakhine state constitutes ethnic cleansing against Rohingya.

Those responsible for these atrocities must be held accountable. The United States continues to support a credible, independent investigation to further determine all facts on the ground to aid in these processes of accountability. We have supported constructive action on the Rakhine crisis at the UN Security Council and in the UN General Assembly's Third Committee. The United States will also pursue accountability through U.S. law, including possible targeted sanctions.

We support the Burmese government's commitment to create the conditions necessary for all refugees and internally displaced people to return to their homes safely and voluntarily, and welcome recent exchanges between the governments of Burma and Bangladesh on repatriation. Support by Burma's military for these government efforts is crucial. This is a difficult and complex situation. Many stakeholders must work together to ensure progress.

* * * *

Also on November 22, 2017, senior State Department officials provided a special briefing on the situation in Burma. The briefing is transcribed at <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/11/275855.htm> and excerpted below.

* * * *

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL ONE: ... I wanted to start off here this morning by drawing your attention to the Secretary's statement which was just released this morning regarding his recent trip to Burma and our continued efforts with the international community to address the crisis there in Rakhine State. As you no doubt have already seen, the Secretary notes in his statement his recent visit to Naypyidaw, the capital of Myanmar, on November 15th, where we met separately with both State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and the commander in chief of the armed forces, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.

The Secretary reaffirmed the United States' strong commitment to Burma's successful democratic transition as the elected government strives to implement reforms there and bring peace and reconciliation to the country, and also to resolve the devastating crisis in Rakhine State. Of course, our first priority is to relieve the intolerable suffering faced by so many, and in response to that situation, the Secretary, while he was in Burma, announced additional humanitarian assistance of \$47 million for those affected by the crisis, bringing our total to \$87 million spent since August of this year.

Burma's response to the crisis, the Secretary has noted, is vital to determining the success of its transition to a more democratic society, and that the key test of any democracy is how it treats its most vulnerable and marginalized populations, such as ...Rohingya and other minority populations. Burma's government and security forces must respect the human rights of all persons within its borders and hold accountable those who fail to do so.

The Secretary reiterated his condemnation of ...the attacks on security forces on August 25th by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army, or ARSA, but he noted that no provocation can justify the horrendous atrocities that ensued. The abuses by some among the Burmese military, security forces, and local vigilantes caused tremendous suffering and forced hundreds of thousands, as we know, of men, women, and children to flee their homes in Burma to seek refuge in Bangladesh.

After a careful and thorough analysis of the available facts, the Secretary has noted that it is clear that the situation in northern Rakhine State constitutes ethnic cleansing against Rohingya. He has also noted that those responsible for these atrocities must be held accountable, and that the United States continues to support a credible, independent investigation to further determine all of the facts on the ground to aid the process of accountability. We have supported constructive action on the Rakhine State crisis at the UN Security Council and in the UN General Assembly's Third Committee, and will also pursue accountability through U.S. law, including possible targeted sanctions.

Of course, the Secretary has been clear and consistent in noting our support for the Burmese Government's commitment to create conditions necessary for all the refugees and internally displaced persons to return to their homes safely and voluntarily, and we welcome the recent exchanges between the governments of Burma and Bangladesh on the ability to repatriate these individuals voluntarily.

We note that support by ... Burma's military for the government efforts in this regard is crucial, and that this is a difficult and complex situation that many stakeholders have to work together to address.

And I'll just note further from the Secretary's statement that the efforts by the United States on this crisis have focused first on ending the violence; second on ensuring a path for repatriation for those displaced; third, expanding access for humanitarian assistance and the

media in Rakhine State; seeking accountability for reported atrocities; and supporting longer-term solutions for the root causes of tensions and conflict in Rakhine State.

And I'll just note here that this is a very complex and long-running tragedy that's not the first time that we've faced these kinds of crises with Rohingya in Rakhine State and with other ethnic groups in Rakhine State, although it is certainly the most dramatic and numerous number of refugees that we've seen.

I think, on the repatriation of refugees, we understand that both Burma and Bangladesh are close to reaching an agreement on a process for voluntary repatriations of displaced persons, and we have been noting positive comments from officials of the civilian government in Burma in this regard recently. We also note that support for these processes by Burma's military will be crucial, and that we're committed to working with Burma and others in the region to help the government and its people work through this crisis.

And now I'd like to turn it over to [Senior State Department Official Two] for his additional comments.

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL TWO: Thank you. I'd like to stress just a few points. First of all, the determination and the description included in the press release was done after very careful and thorough analysis at the request of the Secretary. We believe it's a very accurate description of the situation. It underscores the gravity and the urgency of the situation. We continue to urge all the parties to end the cycle of violence and to restore the rule of law, and we want to emphasize the need for remediation, returns, and accountability. Thank you.

* * * *

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL TWO: Yes. The term "ethnic cleansing" is not defined in the context of either international law or domestic law. However, it is a descriptive term, and it carries with it, again, the sense of urgency. So it does not require any new obligations, but it does emphasize our concern about the situation and the importance of remediation, and to reverse the ethnic cleansing and make sure people can go home voluntarily and live their lives in dignity.

* * * *

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL ONE: ... One thing that we anticipate is that the sort of determination that this ethnic cleansing has occurred will increase pressure on the parties to try to reach an accommodation about repatriation of people who are displaced, and also pressure on the military in Burma and the civilian government to work quickly to respond to events on the ground.

As far as actions by the U.S. Government, I think the determination, it doesn't in any way take away from our continued efforts to pursue outside objective and sort of rigorous investigation of the facts on the ground to find out what happened and to get more information about what's actually happened on the ground, and also to look at accountability for abuses and atrocities that have been perpetrated on the ground, including looking at the possibility of targeted sanctions for those responsible, if we should be able to reach those conclusions. So I think all of our efforts that were ongoing before this determination are continuing, but the fact of the determination, as [Senior State Department Official Two] mentioned, has highlighted and reinvigorated the attention and the urgency on the issue.

* * * *

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL ONE: ... So I think on the issue of sanctions the story of Burma is a long-running and complicated story. And basically, the civilian government has been in power there in this power-sharing arrangement that's uniquely set out in the Burmese constitution for about 18 months. The U.S. Government is very much interested in supporting the civilian government's transition. We believe that the advent of a successful transition to a civilian government will be beneficial to all of the ethnic groups that are involved in long-running conflicts throughout the country, including in Rakhine State, but also in Kachin State and Shan State. There are a lot of displaced persons around Burma. There is the longest-running civil war in modern history going – continuing there, in effect, and the government is engaging in a peace process to try to bring together the various of the 135 different ethnic groups in that country to try to resolve some of these long-running conflicts that are causing a lot of suffering throughout the country.

I think the issue of the broad-based sanctions which the Secretary spoke to I think quite eloquently in his press conference in Naypyidaw, when we were in Burma, ...the broad-based economic sanctions, at the time they were levied, were aimed at bringing pressure on the military junta in Burma to bring about this transition of power which has now occurred. And the key to continuing the success of that transition is to allow the economy to develop, to get a peace process going that can put some of these conflicts behind, in the rearview mirror, and to try to allow the country to move forward ... on peaceful development.

So I think the idea of again levying broad-based economic sanctions is not something that we think is going to be very productive either for getting at accountability or for the broader set of purposes that the U.S. is trying to achieve in Myanmar. So on the issues of other legal processes, I'll defer to [Senior State Department Official Two] on those.

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL TWO: ... unlike the term "ethnic cleansing," the terms "crimes against humanity" and "genocide" are specific crimes under international law and there is very serious legal consequences, and in the end it's really a court that has to decide that, as we've just seen with the verdict against Mladic in Bosnia. So we would need to do a much more—much deeper analysis, much more extensive legal analysis. This determination in no way prejudices any further analysis we're doing, and we will continue to evaluate the situation and analyze the situation. But at this time, there's no determination of crimes against humanity or genocide.

* * * *

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL ONE: ... one thing that it's important to remember is that this current crisis was touched off by attacks that were perpetrated on August 25th by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army against more than 20 military posts inside of Myanmar, and that the reaction to that, to those attacks by that extremist terrorist group was what touched off the exodus of people from Myanmar. So I don't think people have stood by. I think there's been a lot of efforts by many governments and many organizations to try to stem the outflow, to help people who are suffering, to work with the Government of Myanmar to try to figure out how to respond to this crisis.

The discussions that we had in Burma reinforced the point as well that the attacks by this Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army on August 25th actually occurred on the exact same day that

the report and recommendations from the Kofi Annan commission – which was an international advisory body that was brought in by the Burma Government to try to make recommendations about how to resolve – over the longer term – all of the ethnic tensions, in particular also in Rakhine State, and there are a number of ethnic groups there that have been traditionally repressed and treated badly and have grievances. So I think one of the things that we want to focus on is try to relieve the current crisis, but also make sure that we, in doing so, leave the government in a position for it to be able to get back to the recommendations that were in the Kofi Annan report, which the U.S. Government fully supports.

I think in the meantime, the focus ... has to be on getting humanitarian aid and assistance to the people who are suffering in – both within Burma, because there are a number of displaced people there, but also especially those in Bangladesh in these camps; support the Burma and Bangladeshi governments on their negotiations and processes they're developing to get people to be able to go back, make sure that we can make sure they can return in a secure environment; and then pursue the investigation and the accountability tracks that the Secretary has spoken about so often.

... We already have a number of sanctions in place against the Burmese military with regard to visa sanctions coming from the 2008 JADE Act, so we have a number of sanctions in place already. And we have limits on our engagement stemming from those sanctions' limits on our engagement with the Burmese military, but I think we're looking at additional sanctions targeting individuals responsible for specific acts of violence, which would go beyond the current JADE Act sanctions, and we're looking at those currently.

* * * *

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL ONE: ... we certainly feel that the civilian government in Burma has responsibility for working to try to resolve this crisis. Certainly, there's been a lot of discussions with the civilian government about this issue. We were recently in Asia with President Trump at the East Asia Summit and the U.S.-ASEAN Summit, where Aung San Suu Kyi was present, and engaged in conversations with her there as well as did all of the other leaders that were gathered. Most recently there's been a meeting of the foreign ministers of Asia and Europe that was held in Naypyidaw, in Burma, just this week, and again, all of the leaders – foreign ministers of the Asian and European countries were meeting there and had the chance to engage the civilian government – the officials and Aung San Suu Kyi herself – on the crisis.

So I think she's been very much engaged, and her government's been very much engaged in trying to find solutions, working on ways of allowing for humanitarian access without fomenting additional violence and unrest, also working with the Government of Bangladesh to pursue this agreement on repatriation, and I think – I mentioned the unique situation with the power-sharing arrangement there in Burma. I mean, there are a lot of things that the civilian government just frankly doesn't control under the current constitution, and she is going to have to work with the military on those areas such as borders, security, access to certain parts of the country that are in conflict. Those areas are all controlled by the military.

So it's not a situation that is completely under her authority, but certainly, we are counting on her to show leadership and also to work through the civilian government with the military to address the crisis. And I think she has been speaking out. Certainly, the whole effort behind the Kofi Annan commission came from the civilian government and was pushed by them, although it wasn't universally popular inside the country. So I think she has been doing as much

as she could to try to, before the crisis, address sort of longer-term problems in Burma through the peace process and the Annan recommendations, but also since the crisis to do what she can to promote a resolution.

I think we need to continue to support her in that and keep pushing the civilian government in Burma and the military, frankly, to do more.

* * * *

2. ISIS and Atrocities

On September 21, 2017, U.S. Permanent Representative to the UN Nikki Haley provided the U.S. explanation of vote following adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2379 on accountability for ISIS atrocities. That statement is excerpted below and available at <https://usun.state.gov/remarks/7988>.

* * * *

The idea of seeking justice for victims of genocide, crimes against humanity, and other atrocity crimes had its beginning in the years following World War II. Nothing could replace the lives lost or make families whole again. But by holding perpetrators to account for their crimes, a measure of justice was provided to the victims and the loved ones they left behind.

By acting here today, we, too, cannot restore the lives, the dignity, and the innocence of the victims of crimes committed by the Islamic State. But by taking this important step towards holding ISIS accountable for its many unspeakable crimes, we can achieve justice. And that, in time, will hopefully begin a process of healing.

It may have taken a long time to get here, but today's resolution is a landmark. It is a major first step towards addressing the death, suffering, and injury of the victims of crimes committed by ISIS in Iraq—crimes that include genocide. These victims have been Yazidis, Christians, Shia and Sunni Muslims, and many, many more.

In the long history of human beings committing atrocities against their fellow human beings, the crimes of ISIS stand out—especially the brutality they inflicted on girls and women. Thousands of Yazidi women and girls have been kidnapped by ISIS and then bought and sold like animals. I have met with some of these women. The victims of rape and sexual slavery are understandably reluctant to speak out publicly. But thanks to what we do here today, the world will still hear about their suffering.

The investigative team created by this resolution is part of a comprehensive approach to holding ISIS accountable for its atrocities against the Iraqi people. Working with the Iraqi and other partners, it will expose ISIS' depravity, and provide an indispensable record of the scope and scale of its criminality. With victory over ISIS in Iraq on the horizon, this record will play an important role as Iraqis attempt to reconcile this painful period of their national life. This team will help to identify victims and perpetrators. It will help bring perpetrators to face the justice they so richly deserve, giving victims their day in court. And in doing so, we hope and pray that the Iraqi people can begin the process of returning to peaceful, normal, everyday lives.

The United States was honored to work alongside our Iraqi and British partners over the course of the past year to make this resolution a reality. We thank them for their dedication of seeing this through.

And while this resolution is about the transnational ISIS threat, we support accountability for all violations of international humanitarian law and human rights violations and abuses.

Above all, we thank the Iraqi government and Prime Minister Abadi for taking this important first step towards demonstrating that justice is never beyond reach, that no victim is voiceless, and that no perpetrator is above the law.

* * * *

As discussed in Chapter 6, Secretary Tillerson included, in his August 15, 2017 remarks at the release of the annual report on international religious freedom, the following regarding atrocities by ISIS. See Chapter 6 for the full statement.

To remove any ambiguity from previous statements or reports by the State Department, the crime of genocide requires three elements: specific acts with specific intent to destroy in whole or in part specific people, members of national, ethnic, racial, or religious groups. Specific act, specific intent, specific people.

Application of the law to the facts at hand leads to the conclusion ISIS is clearly responsible for genocide against Yezidis, Christians, and Shia Muslims in areas it controls or has controlled.

ISIS is also responsible for crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing directed at these same groups, and in some cases against Sunni Muslims, Kurds, and other minorities.

Cross References

International tribunals, **Ch. 3.C.**

Al-Tamimi v. United States, **Ch. 5.A.1, 5.C.1**

Sokolow, **Ch. 5.A.3.**

Women, Peace, and Security, **Ch. 6.B.2.**

Children in Armed Conflict, **Ch. 6.C.2.**

Ukraine, **Ch. 9.B.2.**

Jerusalem, **Ch. 9.B.8.**

Sanctions relating to restoration of peace and security, **Ch. 16.A.9.**

Burma sanctions, **Ch. 16.A.9.b.**

Sokolow, **Chapter 5.A.2.**

Human Rights Council statement on Israel, **Chapter 6.A.3.a.**

Human Rights Council actions on Syria, South Sudan, Burundi, **Chapter 6.A.3.**

Women, peace, and security, **Chapter 6.B.2.b.**

Water, peace, and security, **Chapter 6.B.2.b.**

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.1.**