

# **Press Releases: Venezuela: Illegitimate Parallel Institutions**

Press Statement  
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
October 19, 2017

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The United States condemns the Venezuelan government's latest anti-democratic action: requiring newly elected governors to submit to the illegitimate Constituent Assembly to be sworn into office. The use of this illegitimate, parallel institution to take over the country's constitutional authorities is alarming. This maneuver, on the heels of the October 15, fraudulent elections, is another example of the Maduro regime's authoritarianism and disregard for the will of the Venezuelan people. We support a complete election audit by credible, internationally recognized entities, and the establishment of an independent National Electoral Council.

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# **Press Releases: Cool Cats: Celebrating Snow Leopard Conservation**

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
October 19, 2017

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Acting Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs Judith Garber will showcase U.S. government efforts to conserve snow leopards at an event at the U.S. Department of State on October 19. The event will celebrate the successful completion of a U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and World Wildlife Fund project on Conservation and Adaptation in Asia's High Mountain Landscapes and Communities, and will highlight the international cooperation and conservation efforts of 12 snow leopard range countries.

Sometimes referred to as the "Ghosts of the Mountains," snow leopards are found in the mountains of Afghanistan, Bhutan, China, India, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Nepal, Mongolia, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. This iconic big cat is the top predator in its habitat and heavily impacts the ecosystem in which it lives. Snow leopard populations are being threatened by habitat loss, human-wildlife conflict and wildlife trafficking. According to current estimates, there are only between 4,000 and 8,000 left in the wild. In September 2017, IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature, down-listed snow leopards from "endangered" to "vulnerable to extinction," but their success in the wild remains tenuous. International Snow Leopard Day is October 23.

Representatives from the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, USAID, the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Embassy of Mongolia, the Snow Leopard Trust, and the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystems Protection Program will also speak at the celebration, joined by representatives of all twelve range countries.

The United States is committed to working with international governments to protect snow leopards. USAID and the World Wildlife Fund's Conservation and Adaptation in Asia's High Mountain Landscapes and Communities project has successfully promoted conservation of snow leopards and their habitat; improved water security; and fostered sustainable natural resource management and development in snow leopard range areas.

For more information, contact Tory Peabody ([PeabodyVW@state.gov](mailto:PeabodyVW@state.gov)) and follow the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs on Twitter @StateDeptOES and #snowleopards.

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## **Press Releases: Secretary of State Tillerson Travel to Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Pakistan, India, and Switzerland**

Press Statement  
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
October 19, 2017

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U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson will travel to Riyadh, Doha, Islamabad, New Delhi, and Geneva October 20-27.

In Riyadh, Secretary Tillerson will take part in the inaugural Coordination Council meeting between the governments of Saudi Arabia and Iraq. The Secretary will also meet with various Saudi leaders to discuss the conflict in Yemen, the ongoing Gulf dispute, Iran, and a number of other important regional and bilateral issues.

Secretary Tillerson will then travel to Doha, where he will meet with Qatari leaders and U.S. military officials to discuss joint counterterrorism efforts, the ongoing Gulf dispute, and other regional and bilateral issues, including Iran and Iraq.

Secretary Tillerson will then make his inaugural visit to South Asia as Secretary of State, reaffirming the Administration's comprehensive strategy toward the region.

In Islamabad, the Secretary will meet with senior Pakistani leaders to discuss our continued strong bilateral cooperation, Pakistan's critical role in the success of our South Asia strategy, and the expanding economic ties between our two countries. The Secretary will build on the positive conversations he and the Vice President have had with Prime Minister Abbasi.

In New Delhi, Secretary Tillerson will meet with senior Indian leaders to discuss further strengthening our strategic partnership and collaboration on security and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region. The Secretary's visit to India will advance the ambitious agenda laid out by President Trump and Prime Minister Modi during the Prime Minister's visit to the White House in June.

In Geneva, the Secretary will meet with the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, International Organization for Migration, and the International Committee of the Red Cross to discuss a number of the current global humanitarian crises.

Follow Secretary Tillerson's travel via @StateDept on Twitter and go to the Department's Flickr account for the latest trip photos. Stay connected at <https://blogs.state.gov/engage>, and keep track of all of the Secretary's travels at <https://www.state.gov/secretary/2017travel/index.htm>.

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## **[Press Releases: U.S. and Israeli Officials Continue Economic Cooperation and Agree to Further Deepen Relations](#)**

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
October 18, 2017

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On October 16, U.S. and Israeli officials convened for the 32nd session of the U.S. – Israel Joint Economic Development Group (JEDG), the annual

economic policy dialogue between the two countries. Both sides acknowledged significant progress in the bilateral economic relationship over the past three decades and pledged to continue expanding and deepening policy coordination and cooperation across a broad range of sectors.

This year's dialogue included approximately 70 participants, with over a dozen senior U.S. and Israeli economic policy officials who exchanged views on a wide range of topics including national and global macroeconomic conditions, housing affordability, deregulation and streamlining bureaucracy, blended finance, and leveraging innovation to address global poverty.

During the dialogue, a first of its kind discussion was held between Israel's Ministry of Finance and the Department of Housing and Urban Development on policy initiatives to increase housing supplies, affordable long term rental policies, and urban revitalization. The parties agreed to launch negotiations toward a Memorandum of Understanding aimed at increasing the availability of affordable housing.

The two countries also agreed to create a Joint Task Force to exchange good regulatory practices for improved business and investment environments in both countries.

Participation in this year's JEDG included Israeli Finance Ministry Director General Shai Babad (Israel Chair), Dr. Karnit Flug, Governor of the Bank of Israel, and the Israeli Ambassador to the U.S., Ron Dermer, as well as officials from the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Construction and Housing, the Israel Innovation Authority, the Israeli Embassy in Washington, "Dira Lehaskir" (AFR – "Apartment for Rent"), and the Israel Land Authority.

The U.S. delegation included Under Secretary of the Treasury for International Affairs David Malpass, Acting Assistant Secretary for Economic and Business Affairs Brian McFeeters (U.S. Co-Chairs), and officials from the Departments of State, Treasury, Commerce, and Housing and Urban Development, as well as the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv, Office of Management and Budget, USAID, Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) and the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC).

Treasury Under Secretary for International Affairs David Malpass underscored his appreciation for the JEDG and the opportunity it provides "to expand cooperation and help accelerate the growth in both our economies." In his remarks, Director General Babad emphasized the significance of the bilateral JEDG forum, its sustained relevance, and the importance of robust follow up. He further added that "new collaboration opportunities on lowering the burden of bureaucracy, housing, joint investment initiatives, and R&D cooperation opportunities, are a strategic step forward in deepening the strategic partnership."

The U.S.-Israel Joint Economic Development Group, which has met since 1985, is the premier platform for U.S.-Israel bilateral economic dialogue.

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## **Press Releases: Secretary Tillerson To Deliver Remarks on U.S.-India Partnership at CSIS**

Notice to the Press  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
October 17, 2017

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U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson will deliver remarks on “Defining Our Relationship with India for the Next Century” at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) on Wednesday, October 18, at 10 a.m. His remarks will be followed by a question-and-answer session moderated by President and CEO of CSIS John J. Hamre.

*The event is open to credentialed members of the press. All interested press should RSVP no later than 5 p.m. today to CSIS by emailing Andrew Schwartz at [ASchwartz@csis.org](mailto:ASchwartz@csis.org). CSIS will provide information on preset times and media credentials upon receipt of an RSVP.*

*For further information from the Department of State, please contact the Office of Press Relations at (202) 647-2492.*

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