

# Press Releases: Joint Statement on Fighting Near Gharyan, Libya

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
April 4, 2019

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The text of the following statement on Libya was released by the Governments of France, Italy, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

*Begin Text:*

The governments of France, Italy, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the United States are deeply concerned by fighting near Gharyan, Libya and urge all parties to immediately de-escalate tensions, which are hindering prospects for UN political mediation. At this sensitive moment in Libya's transition, military posturing and threats of unilateral action only risk propelling Libya back toward chaos. We strongly believe that there is no military solution to the Libya conflict. Our governments oppose any military action in Libya and will hold accountable any Libyan faction that precipitates further civil conflict.

We stand united behind UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) Ghassan Salame as the UN seeks to break Libya's political deadlock, improve transitional governance, and chart a path toward credible and peaceful elections. All Libyan actors should work constructively with SRSG Salame as the UN finalizes plans for the national conference planned for April 14–16.

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# Press Releases: Maximum Pressure Campaign on the Regime in Iran

Fact Sheet  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
April 4, 2019

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## MAXIMUM ECONOMIC PRESSURE

- The U.S. sanctions have cut off Iran's access to billions of dollars in oil revenue and are driving its exports lower than ever before. Since last May, **1.5 million barrels** of Iranian crude have been taken off the market and purchases of Iranian crude will soon be at zero.
- Starting with the re-imposition of our sanctions on November 5, 2018, Iran's access to revenue from the sale of crude oil was immediately restricted. Overall, our sanctions have denied the regime direct access to as much as **\$10 billion** in oil revenue since May 2018.
- More than **20 countries** that were once regular oil customers of Iran have zeroed out their imports. **Three jurisdictions that were granted waivers in November are already at zero.**
- The Trump Administration has designated over **970 Iranian entities and individuals** in more than **26 rounds of sanctions** – more than any other Administration in U.S. history.
  - Just last week a vast network of front companies based in Iran, the U.A.E., and Turkey was sanctioned for procuring and transferring more than a billion dollars and euros to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.
  - We have designated Evin Prison, where the Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS) and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps maintain permanent wards to hold political prisoners, and subject prisoners to brutal tactics.
  - In response to ongoing censorship activities by the regime, we have designated the IRGC's Electronic Warfare and Cyber Defense Organization, Iran's Supreme Council for Cyberspace and the National Cyberspace Center.
  - We have also sanctioned more than **70 Iran-linked financial institutions** and their foreign and domestic subsidiaries. **SWIFT has disconnected every sanctioned Iranian bank** from its system and even disconnected the Central Bank of Iran.

- More than **100 corporations** have exited the Iranian market, taking with them billions of dollars in investment.
- The Iranian economy is in a tailspin because of the regime's poor policies, its continued commitment to terrorism, and our targeted pressure. **The rial has lost two-thirds of its value**, reports indicate Iran is in a recession, and **inflation has hit a record 40 percent**. Iran's total trade has declined by nearly 25 percent since March 2018.

## INCREASING DIPLOMATIC ENGAGEMENT

- **Europe has pushed back against Iranian terror activity.** After a foiled bomb plot in Paris and a thwarted assassination plan in Denmark last year, the European Union in January sanctioned Iran's Ministry of Intelligence and Security and two of its agents for their roles.
- Countries, including the **United Kingdom, Germany, France, Denmark, the Netherlands, Albania, and Serbia**, have acted on their own to address the threat of Iranian terrorism, whether by recalling Ambassadors, expelling Iranian diplomats, denying landing rights to Mahan Air, or eliminating visa-free travel.
  - **Germany** recently announced its decision to deny Mahan Air landing rights.
  - **Panama** issued a Presidential Decree to pull registration and de-flag Iranian vessels following the United States' exposure of an oil-for-terror network.
  - **Albania** expelled Iran's Ambassador to Tirana and another Iranian diplomat for involvement in thwarted terrorist plots.
- The United States, along with the U.K., France, and Germany, continue to hold Iran accountable for defying its international obligations. Our countries expressed strong concern to the UN Secretary General following **Iran's launch of a medium range ballistic missile** in December and its attempted **satellite launches** in January and February. These launches and others defy UN Security Council Resolution 2231.
- The EU Foreign Affairs Council's conclusions in February underscored its concern regarding Iran's ballistic missile program, support of terrorism in Europe, human rights conditions in Iran, and the regime's ongoing role in regional conflicts.

## RESTORING DETERRENCE

- We have exposed the lethal aid that Iran is sending to militants in Yemen, Bahrain, and Afghanistan; including ballistic missiles, attack UAVs, and explosive boats. Representatives of over **70 countries toured the Iran Materiel Display**, seeing clear and tangible evidence that Iran is sending weapons to its militant partners, which were used to attack international shipping and civilian infrastructure in the Gulf.
- We are continuing to disrupt the Qods Force's illicit shipments of oil, which benefit terrorist groups like Hizballah as well as the Assad regime. More than **75 tankers** involved in illicit shipping schemes have been denied the flags they need to sail.
- The United States continues to build the partner capacities of several regional nations to defend themselves against the threats posed by Iran.

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## **Press Releases: Secretary Pompeo's Meeting With France's Foreign Minister Le Drian**

Readout  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
April 4, 2019

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The below is attributable to Deputy Spokesperson Robert Palladino:

Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo met today with French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian on the margins of the NATO Foreign Ministerial. They discussed the situation in Syria, including concerns about the Northeast of the country, foreign terrorist fighters, and the humanitarian situation. They also discussed U.S.-EU trade negotiations. Additionally, Secretary Pompeo urged France not to approve a digital services tax, which would negatively impact large U.S. technology firms and the French citizens who use them.

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# Press Releases: Remarks at the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Foreign Ministers' Session 1

Remarks  
Michael R. Pompeo

Secretary of State

Washington, DC  
April 4, 2019

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**SECRETARY GENERAL STOLTENBERG:** Good morning. Seventy years ago today, NATO's founding treaty was signed in this great city, and I would start by thanking Secretary Pompeo for hosting us all today to mark the 70th anniversary of our great alliance. And by that, I actually give the floor directly to you, Mike, to give some public opening remarks. Again, welcome to all of you.

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** Thank you. Thank you, Secretary General Stoltenberg. It's a great pleasure working with you during my now almost one year as Secretary of State. And I'm delighted to welcome each of you here today, as well, to this historic place at this historic time. I'm proud to have the opportunity to

join with you to celebrate seven decades.

I have personal experience with this organization. As a young armor officer a couple decades back, I patrolled the border between then-East Germany and West Germany. I know the nature of the regimes that want to undermine what it is we're here to talk about today.

I want, too, to give a special welcome to our colleague, Nikola Dimitrov from North Macedonia. I had a chance to speak with you last night. This is your first NATO foreign ministerial as we prepare for your country to become NATO's 30th ally, and I'm pleased to say last week that we formally submitted the documents for North Macedonia's accession to NATO to the United States Senate.

This is a memorable occasion for each of us. Seventy years ago, 12 nations banded together in a historic experiment in security and democracy. We signed what was called the Washington Treaty, establishing NATO.

As I mentioned last night at the reception, President Truman said that we hoped to create a shield against aggression. It's worked. That unique shield we have carried these 70 years is made strong because of our belief in deterrence, not aggression. It is made strong because of our democratic underpinnings. It is made strong through our collective defense commitment as enshrined in Article 5, to which we all recommit today.

And we have rightly sought peace through strength here in NATO. We must continue to do so, especially in this new era of great power competition from Russia, from China, and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

But there's a second anniversary of significance to the West that we celebrate this year too: the crumbling of the Iron Curtain. To borrow a phrase from Abraham Lincoln, 1989 marked a new birth of freedom.

That anniversary is intimately connected to NATO. For 40 years, the NATO alliance was a bulwark against communist expansion in Europe. We were ready to invoke Article 5 at any moment if the Soviets poured through the Fulda Gap, the way that we did after 9/11.

Our military superiority deterred them from acting on their designs of dominating Europe, and in the meantime, President Reagan's military buildup drove the evil empire into bankruptcy.

A few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to meet with a group of young people in Slovakia. Virtually all of them were too young to remember the history that I just described, but they were certain – they knew it and they did not want to return to that history.

That's why we have work to do here. It's why we must continue to strengthen our alliance. And the good news is we're in a good position – a position of strength today. Our structure is designed to empower each ally, not to subjugate it. We maintain an outstanding degree of unity.

I saw this firsthand, as you all did, when we demonstrated the unanimous

denunciation of Russia's INF Treaty violation and with unanimous allied support for America's decision to suspend our INF obligations and declare our intent to withdraw.

This organization continues to add new members, and we welcome the aspiration of other non-members.

No military alliance in the world can remotely do what we do. No alliance can remotely match the power of the nations represented here today.

We should all be proud. These are great accomplishments, but we must adapt our alliance to confront emerging threats too, whether that's Russian aggression, uncontrolled migration, cyber attacks, threats to energy security, Chinese strategic competition – including technology in 5G – and many other issues that jeopardize our people's ideals and our collective security.

These are real challenges, to be sure, and now is not the time to repeat tired excuses that our citizens don't support increased defense spending or security spending. Each nation has a duty to make the case to our people. We, as leaders, have a duty to make the case to our citizens about why this work, why these resources are important to keep not only our own countries but our alliance strong. This work to convince our citizens of the importance, the relevance, the intrinsic centrality of this institution falls to each of us and the other leaders of our countries. It's a key step in confronting these threats head on.

I'll close with this: The founders of NATO perceived with absolute and total clarity that the threat, the Soviet menace was real, and that communism posed a true threat. They were not timid in responding to it.

They took a risk in creating this alliance and it paid a massive dividend: decades of peace and prosperity for the West on a scale unrivaled in world history.

Today, we are the beneficiaries of that work. We celebrate their accomplishment with great pride. But the true way to honor the genius of their compact is to make it ever stronger, and to recommit to our principles of deterrence, democracy, and collective defense.

I look forward to the conversations today so that we can do just that.

It is indeed my pleasure to invite – welcome you all here to Washington, and it is my privilege to work with each of you, my NATO counterparts. Thank you.

**SECRETARY GENERAL STOLTENBERG:** Thank you so much, Secretary Pompeo, Mike, for those opening remarks. And also, once again, thank you for hosting us all here in Washington. This concludes the public part of this meeting, so then I will kindly ask the media to leave the room before we continue with our working session.

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## **Press Releases: The United States and Partners Hold Event on Human Rights Violations and Abuses in Nicaragua**

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On April 4, the United States, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Georgia held an event in Geneva, Switzerland, to expose the ongoing violations and abuses of human rights in Nicaragua that began in April 2018 with the Ortega-Murillo regime's violent crackdown on peaceful protesters.

U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Roger Carstens of the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor delivered opening remarks to underscore the severity of the human rights crisis occurring in Nicaragua. A panel of Nicaraguan civil society leaders, including independent journalists and a human rights activist, provided firsthand accounts of the Ortega-Murillo regime's alarming and continuing pattern of arbitrary arrest, harassment, and threats against anyone perceived as an opponent. Advocates for political prisoners reported that many of those arbitrarily or unlawfully detained remain in detention and recounted continued violence and restriction of civil liberties for both those detained and their family members.

Activists called for the regime to immediately release all political prisoners, to allow the return of international monitors, including the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and to engage in genuine dialogue with the opposition alliance, Alianza Civica.

Please contact [DRL-Press@state.gov](mailto:DRL-Press@state.gov), visit <https://www.state.gov/j/drl.htm>, or follow us @StateDRL.



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