



Government Offices of Sweden

# Joint statement from the International Coordination and Response Group for the victims of Flight PS752

The International Coordination and Response Group for the victims of Flight PS752 today issued the following joint statement:

"October 4, 2022, marks 1,000 days since the unlawful downing of Ukraine International Airlines Flight 752 (PS752) by Iran that resulted in the deaths of 176 innocent civilians.

We, Ministers representing Canada, Sweden, Ukraine and the United Kingdom, stand with the grieving families on this solemn occasion and honour the memories of the victims killed on board Flight PS752. We renew our demand that Iran fulfills its international legal obligations and ensures transparency and justice for its actions.

As we continue to advance our efforts to hold Iran accountable in accordance with international law, the Coordination Group is thankful for the contribution of four highly recognized legal experts: Professor Payam Akhavan, Professor Harold Hongju Koh, Ms. Jessica Wells and Sir Michael Wood.

They have brought their extensive expertise to our legal teams, who continue their diligent work in response to Iran's unlawful and egregious downing of Flight PS752.

We continue to stand in solidarity with the families and loved ones of the victims of the downing of Flight PS752."

Published 03 October 2022



Government Offices of Sweden

# Statement from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Stockholm

## Statement from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Stockholm.

Messages and images that we have reason to believe are manipulated have been circulating on social media, asserting that Sweden supports PKK. Relevant measures have been taken.

This is a deliberate and malicious influence campaign with the clear aim of obstructing Sweden's accession to NATO.

Sweden has clearly denounced the PKK, which is a terrorist organisation, and Sweden condemns terrorism in all its forms.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde has never expressed any support for the PKK, and strongly rejects the manipulated video and the PKK.

Published 17 June 2022



Government Offices of Sweden

# Joint statement of Foreign Ministers on increased restrictions on the human rights of Afghan women and girls

Statement by the Foreign Ministers of Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States:

Afghan women and girls make enormous contributions to their country. Achieving peace, stability and economic development requires their equal participation in shaping Afghanistan's future.

We remain deeply concerned by the continued restrictions on girls' access to education in Afghanistan, and call on the Taliban to respect the right to education and adhere to their commitments to reopen schools for all female students.

We are deeply disappointed about escalating restrictions imposed by the Taliban that impact on the human rights of Afghan women.

The Taliban's directive that women and girls must cover themselves in public and leave home only in cases of necessity, and with a man, restricts their universal and inalienable human rights. We deplore that family members could be punished to enforce compliance with these restrictions.

Afghan women should be free to choose how they express themselves in accordance with their faith and have the right to move freely in society.

The international community cannot consider these recent directives as isolated decisions. The Taliban have taken other actions that limit the human rights of women and girls.

These include their rights to education, work and freedom of movement,

opinion and expression through restrictions on unaccompanied travel, participation in the workforce, and ability to express themselves openly.

These decisions contradict repeated Taliban assurances to respect and protect the human rights of all Afghans.

All Afghans should be able to enjoy their fundamental human rights. These rights are indivisible and inalienable, expressed in international human rights law, and endorsed by all members of the United Nations.

We call on the Taliban to reconsider decisions which constrain the right of women and girls to make their own choices, gain an education, work, and participate equally in society.

We will continue to judge the Taliban on their actions, not their words.

Published 13 May 2022



Government Offices of Sweden

# Joint Statement of Female Foreign Ministers on the occasion of the re-opening of schools in Afghanistan

Statement by the Foreign Ministers of Albania, Andorra, Australia, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Estonia, Germany, Iceland, Kosovo, Malawi, Mongolia, New Zealand, Sweden, Tonga and the United Kingdom.

Every spring, the re-opening of schools in Afghanistan comes along with great hopes and expectations of millions of students: to meet classmates and friends again, to resume learning and training, and to take another step forward in life.

As women and as foreign ministers, we are deeply disappointed and concerned that girls in Afghanistan are being denied access to secondary schools this spring. The Taliban's decision to suspend secondary classes until further notice is particularly disturbing as we repeatedly heard their commitments to open all schools for all children.

We urge the Taliban to live up to their commitments to the Afghan people and to adhere to the international conventions that Afghanistan has subscribed to. We call upon the Taliban to reverse their recent decision and to grant equal access to all levels of education, in all provinces of the country. Practical difficulties in implementing a non-discriminatory educational policy must be overcome.

We will watch closely whether the Taliban deliver on their assurances. We will measure them by their actions, not by their words. The scope and extent of our countries' engagement in Afghanistan beyond humanitarian assistance will be tied to their achievements in this regard.

Access to education is a human right to which every woman and every girl is entitled. Individually, girls' education and women's empowerment lead to a better life, help to alleviate economic challenges for their families, and are the basis for exercising social rights and political representation.

Collectively, girls and women contribute with their education to the country's development and welfare, to peace, security and social justice. No country can afford to not take advantage of the potential and talent of its entire people.

The undeniable rights and opportunities achieved for - and by - girls and women in Afghanistan in recent decades must be preserved and expanded. Let their hopes and expectations flourish, as truly equal members of Afghan society.

Published 25 March 2022



# Declaration on the participation by the Russian Federation and Belarus in the work of the Council of the Baltic Sea States

3 March 2022. Declaration by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland and Sweden and the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the participation by the Russian Federation and Belarus in the work of the Council of the Baltic Sea States.

The Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) was established in 1992 in order to serve as overall regional forum for cooperation and coordination among the Baltic Sea States. The founding decision – the Copenhagen Declaration - emphasized cooperation on the basis of the UN Charter as well as the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris and other OSCE documents. Subsequent political decisions have confirmed the aims of peace, cohesion and democracy, most recently expressed in the Vilnius II Declaration of 1 June 2021 - A Vision for the Baltic Sea Region by 2030.

These fundamental principles and aims have now been dramatically violated by the unprovoked and illegal military attack and aggression committed by the Russian Federation against sovereign and democratic Ukraine.

We, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the High Representative strongly condemn Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine. Nothing can justify Russia's illegal use of force. We must now draw the necessary conclusions. We see no possibility to continue our cooperation as envisaged with the Russian Federation within the framework of the CBSS. In the current circumstances Russia should not enjoy the benefits of, and participation in,

any CBSS-led cooperation. We will ensure the suspension of Russia from the proceedings, work and projects of the CBSS and its working bodies until cooperation under the fundamental principles of international law has become possible again.

At the same time we suspend the participation in activities of the Republic of Belarus as a CBSS observer state. We condemn Belarus' involvement in Russia's aggression against Ukraine. By allowing Russia to use its territory for aggression against Ukraine, Belarus itself is responsible for an act of aggression.

We acknowledge the important contribution of the CBSS to regional cohesion and cooperation. The Norwegian CBSS Presidency in close coordination with the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials will ensure the proper adjustment of the operation of the organisation in these changed circumstances.

Our decision takes immediate effect and shall be duly communicated to all stakeholders and strategic partners of the CBSS.

[Download: Declaration on the participation by the Russian Federation and Belarus in the work of the Council of the Baltic Sea States, 3 March 2022](#)

Published 04 March 2022





Government Offices of Sweden

# Joint statement from the International Coordination and Response Group for the victims of Flight PS752

The International Coordination and Response Group for the victims of Flight PS752 today issued the following joint statement:

“Almost two years ago, in the early morning of January 8, 2020, the Iranian military fired two surface-to-air missiles and destroyed Ukraine International Airlines Flight 752 near Tehran.

“We, Ministers representing Canada, Sweden, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom, honour the memory of the 176 innocent passengers and crew who lost their lives that day. We will never forget this senseless loss of life and stand in solidarity with the victims’ families. They deserve transparency, justice and accountability for this reprehensible tragedy.

“As a group of states that have been specially affected by Iran’s breaches of international law, we have united our efforts to ensure that the interests of the victims and their families are served, and that there is respect for the rule of law. With this common purpose, we have consistently called upon Iran to engage in good-faith negotiations to fulfill its international legal obligations to make full reparations for the downing of Flight PS752.

“Most recently, the Coordination Group asked Iran to commit to engaging in negotiations with the Group by January 5, 2022. Unfortunately, on December 27, 2021, we received an unequivocal response from Iran that it does not see a need to negotiate with the Group. After initially agreeing to engage with the Group during our first round of negotiations held on July 30, 2020, Iran is now categorically rejecting any further negotiations with the Group related to our collective demand for reparations. As reparations are

owed to the affected states, this matter must be discussed collectively, so that all victims are treated fairly and equally.

“It is clear that Iran continues to avoid its international legal responsibilities, including by refusing to negotiate further with the Coordination Group and make full reparations for its actions. We will not stand for this affront to the memories of the 176 innocent victims.

“Despite our best efforts over the past two years and multiple attempts to resolve this matter through negotiations, the Coordination Group has determined that further attempts to negotiate with Iran on reparations for the destruction of Flight PS752 at this time are futile. The Coordination Group will now focus on subsequent actions to take to resolve this matter in accordance with international law.

“We remain united in our commitment to hold Iran accountable for the actions and omissions of its civil and military officials that led to the illegal downing of Flight PS752 by ensuring that Iran makes full reparations for its breaches of international law.”

Published 06 January 2022



Government Offices of Sweden

# Joint statement from the International Coordination and Response Group for the victims of Flight PS752

The International Coordination and Response Group for the victims of Flight PS752 met on 16 December and issued the following joint statement

“The International Coordination and Response Group representing Canada, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Ukraine, met virtually to discuss the Islamic Republic of Iran’s response to our offer to discuss reparations for the downing of Ukraine International Airlines Flight 752 (PS752) and which steps need to be taken to ensure accountability and justice.

We have delivered a further request inviting Iran to discuss the matters that pertain to our claim and demands for reparations for the downing of PS752 during the week of January 17, 2022.

However, due to the apparent reluctance of the Islamic Republic of Iran to address this matter in a constructive and timely manner, our response to Iran indicates that they have until January 5, 2022 to confirm whether they are willing to engage in negotiations with the Coordination Group, after which we will have to assume that further attempts to negotiate reparations with Iran are futile. The Coordination Group will have to seriously consider other actions to resolve this matter within the framework of international law.

It has been nearly two years since the downing of Flight PS752, and yet the Islamic Republic of Iran has shown no interest in adhering to its international legal obligations. The Coordination Group’s patience is wearing thin. The Group stands in solidarity with the victims’ loved ones and remains united in its objective to hold the Islamic Republic of Iran accountable for the acts and omissions by civilian and military officials that led to the deaths of 176

innocent people.”

Published 17 December 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

# 5th Ministerial Meeting of the Stockholm Initiative for Nuclear Disarmament

**Stockholm, 14 December 2021.**

Today – co-chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden Ann Linde and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany Annalena Baerbock – Ministers from Argentina, Canada, Ethiopia, Finland, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland gathered for the fifth Ministerial Meeting of the Stockholm Initiative for Nuclear Disarmament.

Collectively, the Ministers reflected on the Stockholm Initiative’s work since its inception in 2019 and reaffirmed their unwavering commitment to a results-oriented 10th Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), to be held January 4-28, 2022:

“The upcoming NPT Review Conference – two years after the Treaty’s 50th anniversary – is a moment to demonstrate political leadership, honour commitments and achievements made under the Treaty, and set ourselves on a decisive path towards a world free of nuclear weapons, in the interest of preserving humanity. We remain united in our resolve to achieve the elimination of nuclear weapons in an irreversible, verifiable, and transparent manner, and to reduce the risks they pose in the interim.

The upcoming NPT Review Conference is a pivotal opportunity for all states to show high-level commitment to nuclear disarmament. The Stockholm Initiative for Nuclear Disarmament has presented a feasible way forward in this regard. We offer our full support to the President-designate of the Review Conference, Ambassador Gustavo Zlauvinen, in guiding delegations to secure the continued success of the Treaty.

Our message at the Review Conference will be clear: Nuclear weapon States must advance nuclear disarmament, in accordance with Article VI of the

Treaty. They can do so by taking forward the practical and meaningful steps reflected in the Stockholm Initiative's Stepping Stones and Nuclear Risk Reduction Package, supported by an increasing number of NPT States Parties, and by presenting a forward-looking plan for making further progress on nuclear disarmament.

In addition to member countries of the Stockholm Initiative, we welcome the additional 20 NPT States Parties that have formally aligned themselves with the Initiative's documents. We encourage all States Parties to draw upon the language and feasible ideas contained in these documents, notably in the drafting of any outcome to the Review Conference.”

Ministers welcomed the the extension of the U.S.-Russia New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) in January 2021 as well as the June 2021 presidential statement announcing a U.S.-Russia Strategic Stability Dialogue, which included a reaffirmation by that “a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.”. These are positive developments that respond to two of the stepping stones for nuclear disarmament of the Stockholm Initiative. Ministers noted the Summit Meeting between the U.S. and China held on November 16, 2021.

Despite some progress, there is considerable work that remains to be done. Ministers acknowledged that further steps remain to be taken by the five NPT-recognized nuclear weapon states reduce their nuclear arsenals, bearing a special responsibility to do so under the Treaty. Also evident is the clear unwillingness to disarm among other nuclear possessing states.

Rebuilding trust and confidence among the nuclear weapon states will help end the longstanding stasis in global nuclear disarmament.

Ministers urged all nuclear weapon states to take clear and decisive steps to lay the groundwork for next-generation arms control arrangements, to reduce or further reduce nuclear arsenals, to show leadership in putting a definite end to nuclear weapon test explosions, commencing negotiations on a treaty prohibiting fissile material production, as well as to support efforts to develop multilateral nuclear disarmament verification capacities.

The Stockholm Initiative developed the Stepping Stones for Advancing Nuclear Disarmament and a Nuclear Risk Reduction Package with the express purpose of rebuilding trust and confidence and promoting progress through practical measures, such as transparency on nuclear arsenals, reducing role of nuclear weapons in security and defense policy, and

increased dialogue. Ministers identified nuclear risk reduction as an area of particular urgency. They discussed concrete measures to curtail risks and avoid escalation, in order to advance the overarching goal of nuclear disarmament.

Ministers took note of the outcome of the P5 Principals Meeting in Paris and encouraged the nuclear weapon states to make full use of, and further develop, the P5 format to yield more concrete results at the upcoming Review Conference and in the next NPT cycle.

Ministers reiterated their call in the “Stepping Stones for Advancing Nuclear Disarmament” to engage with the young generation, including through dialogue platforms, mentoring, internships, fellowships, scholarships, model events and youth group activities. They also reiterated their call to encourage visits to and interaction with communities affected by nuclear weapons, including Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and former nuclear test sites such as Semipalatinsk and in the Pacific. They remained resolved to integrate a diverse gender perspective and promote the full and effective participation of women in nuclear disarmament decision-making.

Ministers also committed to exploring new, innovative ways to advance nuclear disarmament and address associated challenges. They resolved to make full use of the remaining weeks in the lead up to as well as during the upcoming Review Conference, including by advocating for the Stockholm Initiative’s Stepping Stones and Nuclear Risk Reduction Package.

Ministers underlined the need for continued engagement on Article VI of the Treaty beyond the Review Conference in January 2022, to ensure full implementation of commitments and to promote further progress on global nuclear disarmament.

In conclusion, Ministers underscored that they are equally committed to further cooperation across the broad spectrum of nuclear opportunities and challenges – including peaceful nuclear uses as well as addressing proliferation challenges.

Published 14 December 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

# Joint statement from the International Coordination and Response Group for the victims of Flight PS752

The International Coordination and Response Group for the victims of Flight PS752 today issued the following joint statement

"We, Ministers representing Canada, Sweden, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom, express our deep disappointment that the Islamic Republic of Iran has not accepted our multiple requests to meet on November 22, 2021 to negotiate on the matter of reparations for the downing of Flight PS752.

We remind the Islamic Republic of Iran that it must fulfil its international legal responsibility to make full reparations to the Group of Countries and thus reiterate our call to negotiate in good faith and to do so before the end of this year.

We will continue to stand in solidarity with the families and loved ones of the PS752 victims in their profound loss and suffering. They can be assured that the Coordination Group will remain united in its objective to hold the Islamic Republic of Iran accountable for this tragedy.

Should Iran continue to avoid negotiating with the group, the Coordination Group will have no choice but to seriously consider other actions and measures to resolve this matter within the framework of international law."

Published 24 November 2021





Government Offices of Sweden

# OSCE Chairperson-in-Office welcomes confidence-building steps between Armenia and Azerbaijan

VIENNA/STOCKHOLM, 13 June 2021.

The return of 15 Armenian detainees to Armenia today, and Armenia's handover to Azerbaijan of information that will facilitate important demining work, are welcome confidence building measures, said OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde. "These important steps bring the sides closer to dialogue, closer to stability, and closer to a comprehensive settlement."

"I appreciate the valuable role played by the Georgian and US governments, as well as the excellent cooperation between the President of the European Council and the Swedish OSCE Chairpersonship, ahead of the agreement. The developments are a vital step also for regional cooperation in the South Caucasus", Minister Linde noted.

Noting that core issues remain, Linde urged Armenia and Azerbaijan to build upon these positive steps by releasing all remaining detainees, and resuming high-level negotiations under the auspices of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs and with the assistance of my personal representative, Ambassador Kasprzyk, in order to find a comprehensive political settlement to all outstanding issues.

Published 13 June 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

# Joint statement from the International Coordination and Response Group for the victims of Flight PS752

The International Coordination and Response Group for the victims of Flight PS752 today issued the following joint statement:

“We, Ministers representing Canada, Sweden, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom, today (June 3 2021) delivered a notice of our claim against the Islamic Republic of Iran, in relation to the downing of Ukraine International Airlines Flight 752 (PS752).

The Republic’s actions and omissions amount to breaches of international law. Our claim states that our respective countries, nationals and residents on board flight PS752 were seriously and irreversibly harmed by the tragedy and Iran must fulfill its legal responsibility to make full reparations to the group of states.

We have made a series of demands that include, but is not limited to, an acknowledgement of wrongdoing and a full accounting of events that led to the downing, a public apology, the return of missing and stolen belongings of the victims, assurances of non-repetition in the most concrete terms, transparency in the criminal prosecutions in accordance with the rule of law, and equitable compensation for material and moral damages suffered by the victims and their families regardless of nationality and in an amount consistent with its obligations under international law.

We now call on Iran to work with us to set a date to formally begin negotiations on reparations.

As always, we stand in solidarity with the loved ones of the victims of

PS752, who continue to grieve their profound loss.”

Published 03 June 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

# Joint Statement from the International Coordination and Response Group for the victims of Flight PS752

The International Coordination and Response Group for the victims of Flight PS752 today issued the following joint statement:

“We, Ministers representing Afghanistan, Canada, Sweden, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom, have taken note of the release of the Islamic Republic of Iran’s final safety investigation report into the downing of Ukraine International Airlines Flight 752 (PS752).

The Coordination Group countries will now carefully review this report and its findings. We stand in solidarity with the families and loved ones of the victims, who continue to grieve their profound loss.

As we have done since the beginning, the Coordination Group will continue to seek accountability and transparency from the Islamic Republic of Iran for this tragedy and justice for the victims.”

Published 17 March 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

# The Foreign Ministers of Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark mark the International Women's Day 2021

For decades, Nordic countries have prospered due to the equal participation and inclusion of women and girls in all areas of societal life. For us, ensuring the enjoyment of human rights of all women and girls, in all their diversity, and ending gender-based discrimination in all of its forms, is the right and the smart thing to do because gender equality benefits everyone.

Globally, we have seen remarkable improvements for the health and rights of women and girls over the past decades. But the global pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities, with disproportional impact on the health, participation, wellbeing and socio-economic status of women and girls worldwide – and has also increased gender-based violence. Now, global leaders must commit to placing women at the center of recovery plans, ensuring their participation in decision making processes, and redouble efforts to secure the health, rights and needs of all women and girls.

Additionally, we will continue to counter the growing pressure on human rights of women and girls and attacks on the notion of gender equality both globally, in multilateral fora and within Europe. We are particularly concerned about actions to undermine or roll back sexual and reproductive health and rights, including the access to safe and legal abortions, comprehensive sexuality education and modern contraceptives.

We also remain committed to strengthening the agenda for Women, Peace and Security, which celebrated its 20th anniversary last year. Women peacebuilders and women human rights defenders play key roles in ensuring

sustainable peace. They must be empowered and protected.

For International Women's Day 2021, the Nordic Ministers for Foreign Affairs strongly recommit to the fundamental values and principles of gender equality. We condemn any attacks on the rights of women and girls and take this opportunity to reiterate that they must be defended and safeguarded at all times.

Published 08 March 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

# Statement from International Coordination and Response Group for the victims of Flight PS752 marking one year since the tragic downing of Flight PS752

January 8, 2021 - Ottawa, Ontario - Global Affairs  
Canada

One year ago, in the early morning of January 8, 2020, Ukraine International Airlines Flight 752 was downed by two Iranian military surface-to-air missiles near Tehran.

Today we honour the memory of those who perished and offer our sincere condolences to all who mourn the victims of the PS752 tragedy. We share the grief of the families, relatives and friends who lost loved ones.

We urgently call on Iran to provide a complete and thorough explanation of the events and decisions that led to this appalling plane crash.

Our countries will hold Iran to account to deliver justice and make sure Iran makes full reparations to the families of the victims and affected countries.

**Signed on January 8, 2021**

Mohammed Haneef Atmar, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic  
Republic of Afghanistan

François-Philippe Champagne, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada

Ann Linde, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden

Dmytro Kuleba, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine

James Cleverly, Minister for Middle East and North Africa of the United Kingdom

Kabul/Kyiv/London/Ottawa/Stockholm

Published 08 January 2021





Government Offices of Sweden

# National Statement of H.E. Ann Linde Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, at the 27th OSCE Ministerial Council in Tirana, 3 December 2020

Check against delivery.

Excellencies, dear colleagues,

I want to thank our Albanian hosts, and my friend Edi Rama, who have guided the organization through this challenging year. Thanks to your efforts, and those of your professional team, the OSCE was among the first organizations in the global system to resume activities in the beginning of the pandemic. Thanks also to all dedicated women and men in the various OSCE field operations that every day continue to contribute to our security.

I also want to offer my heartfelt condolences to all who have lost family members, friends and loved ones during the pandemic.

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Excellencies,

This year we celebrate the 45th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act and the 30th anniversary of the Charter of Paris, the foundations for the European security order. When looking back at the Charter of Paris, one can feel the sense of hope that existed when it was adopted. After the decades-long Cold War, a new era for security in Europe was dawning, built on respect for international law, human rights and democracy rather than a balance between rival global powers and their so called “spheres of interest”.

A year after Paris, at the Moscow meeting in 1991, we, as participating

states, emphasized that human rights, democracy and the rule of law are of international concern and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the State concerned.

By holding each other accountable we make sure that our commitments remain relevant. By honouring our commitments, we make sure that our region is safe. The turbulent events after the presidential election in Belarus are a reminder of the importance to uphold these principles.

The OSCE's autonomous institutions play an important role in ensuring accountability. They support us all in the implementation of our commitments. I look forward to the appointment of the three new heads of institutions and the new Secretary General. I particularly welcome that gender balance will be achieved in the appointments. For Sweden, gender equality is a core priority. It goes just as well for appointments to high positions as for the inclusion of women in all parts of society. The economic empowerment of women is a key aspect of viable societies, just as the inclusion of women in peace talks is a prerequisite for sustainable peace.

With the institutions fully operational we are better equipped to handle the many challenges that our organization and our region are facing.

Of all these challenges, the conflicts that remain unresolved in our region are the most acute. The ceasefire in eastern Ukraine is of course welcome, but it remains fragile and the conflict in and around Ukraine is still far from being resolved, both as regards the eastern parts of the country and the Crimean Peninsula.

The escalation in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the tragic human losses this conflict has caused show the risks inherent in the unresolved conflicts. With the ceasefire agreement in place, we hope that negotiations under the auspices of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs can result in a sustainable political solution that prevents further suffering. These tragic events should also serve as a reminder why the protracted conflicts in Georgia and Moldova need our continued attention and political commitment.

The OSCE has a unique value as an organization for conflict prevention and confidence and security building measures. Although not without challenges, the Open Skies Treaty and the Vienna document still serve as models for other regions when searching for tools to lower tensions and create more transparency. It is our duty to make sure that they remain implemented and relevant.

When Sweden takes on the role as Chair of the OSCE next year, our primary focus will be on the fundamental tasks of the OSCE:

- To defend the European security order as expressed in the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris.
- To uphold the OSCE comprehensive concept of security, with a special focus on human rights, democracy and gender equality, including the Women, Peace and Security agenda.
- And to contribute to resolving the conflicts in our region.

I look forward to working together with all of you in trying to achieve these goals.

Thank you very much!

Published 11 December 2020



Government Offices of Sweden

# Statement by Sweden's Foreign Minister Ann Linde at the opening session of the 2020 OSCE Mediterranean Conference

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear colleagues, First of all, I want to direct myself to all our colleagues and friends in Vienna, after last night's terrorist attacks. I hope you are all well and safely at home. Our thoughts are with the victims and their families. We must all stand united against attacks on our open society.

Excellencies,

I want to thank all of you who have joined us today. We are living through one of the most difficult times in recent history. I want to offer my heartfelt condolences to all who have lost family members, friends and loved ones during these past months.

Next year, Sweden will take on the role as Chair of the OSCE. Our primary focus will be to go back to basics. Emphasis will be on the fundamental tasks of the OSCE: to defend the European security order and to uphold the OSCE comprehensive concept of security. The comprehensive concept of security stipulates that political and economic security, human rights, democracy, and gender equality are interrelated. It highlights how economic, social and environmental issues are linked to security.

These priorities have also influenced our work as chair of the valuable Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation Group this year, and I am glad that we are gathering today to discuss what we together can do to strengthen our common security. The pandemic has shown the absolute necessity of international cooperation and solidarity and this partnership is a valuable platform for strengthening our regional dialogue as well as our cooperation

on security.

This is not the time for protectionism and isolation. Solidarity and cooperation will be crucial for all of us in this situation, but especially so for countries affected by conflict, inequality, poverty and humanitarian crises, which face even tougher consequences. I look forward to our discussion this morning and to hear your views on how we can promote security in the OSCE Mediterranean region through sustainable development and economic growth. I especially want us to draw on the lessons we have learnt about how this can be done during the COVID-19 pandemic.

During our time as Chair of the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation Group this year we have focused on security topics of concern to us all: Information technology and the fight against human trafficking; Women, peace, and security, and; Youth engagement and participation to counter violent extremism and radicalization that may develop into acts of terrorism. I believe these discussions have shown that we have a lot to learn from each other, and that we share many of the same challenges.

I also look forward to the expert discussions later on today on how we can ensure women's economic empowerment and promote environmental cooperation during the COVID-19 pandemic, as these topics are linked to promoting our common security, inclusive economic growth and sustainable development.

Regarding women's economic empowerment, Sweden is working hard to ensure that the global response to COVID-19 includes a rights and gender perspective, in the short, medium and long term. This is crucial in order to 'build back better' and to leave no one behind. There are numerous reports of increased gender-based violence and domestic violence when people are in quarantine, or just generally spend more time at home. Women dominate the health and caregiving sector globally, but they are paid less, their jobs are often less secure, and they have less access to social protection systems. Women's economic empowerment, in terms of labour market participation, participation in trade and access to financial services as well as ownership rights, will be crucial if we are to build back better and achieve sustainable development.

When it comes to environmental cooperation, we already see how climate change affects millions of women, men and children around the globe. This is particularly the case for the Mediterranean region, which is among the

most affected and vulnerable in the world. Environmental contamination, water shortage and lack of “future proof” energy supply affect the lives of the hundreds of millions living around the Mediterranean. We need to pay more attention to the link between climate change and security, and demand better and more integrated analyses from the field. We need to make conflict prevention climate aware, and efforts to combat climate change conflict sensitive. Our recovery strategies should be used as an opportunity to take on important reforms towards fulfilling the Agenda 2030 and the sustainable development goals, as well as the goals of the Paris agreement. We need to ensure that the recovery is based on green transition. Lack of action towards climate neutrality will bring about consequences and costs that by far exceed the transition costs.

We also need a democratic approach towards recovery. This includes ensuring good governance, strengthening civil society and the respect for human rights, including freedom of expression and information – online and off line – and everyone’s freedom of religion or belief. It also includes reducing inequalities and gender inequalities. We must not leave the most vulnerable behind as we tackle this crisis. No one of us can succeed these efforts on their own.

International cooperation and dialogue are needed. Sweden aims to support inclusive dialogue via The Swedish Dialogue Institute for the Middle East and North Africa, which serves as a platform for contacts and dialogue between on the one hand Sweden and the countries of Europe and on the other hand the countries of the Middle East and North Africa. Also, the promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination through interreligious and intercultural dialogues is key to preventing conflicts and increase tolerance and understanding across cultures and between regions.

Excellencies,

The COVID-19 pandemic is a historic catastrophe and our response to it has included unprecedented measures. When we strive to build back better, international cooperation will be key. I am glad that we are gathering here today to discuss how we together can promote security and sustainable development. I look forward to our discussion.

Thank you.

Published 24 November 2020



Government Offices of Sweden

# Minister's Declaration by the Foreign Ministers of the Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden

Minister's Declaration at the occasion of the Conference "2020 Capturing Technology - Rethinking Arms Control".

We, the Foreign Ministers of the Czech Republic, the Republic of Finland, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Kingdom of Sweden, convened today at the occasion of the conference "2020. Capturing Technology. Rethinking Arms Control" to promote new and effective approaches to arms control that can contribute to international security and stability in the 21st century.

We are concerned by the unravelling of international arms control arrangements which have over the past decades been cornerstones of international and European security. We are mindful of the speed of technological developments in key areas such as artificial intelligence, biotech, cyber, missile technology and quantum computing, that add new dimensions and complexities to world security and future conflict scenarios.

While we recognize the great potential for human progress and economic growth inherent in the application of new technologies, as well as potential benefits for the verification of arms control arrangements, we are also aware of the mounting risks for international peace and stability created by the potential misuse of new technologies. We note with concern the growing risk of a destabilizing arms race between major military powers, which is exacerbated by the new military capabilities based on new technologies. In the framework of the Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy, we affirm that the European Union, acting as a community of values and as a security community for all EU citizens, must lay the

foundations for peace and stability for future generations.

The European Union must equally defend its own founding values – human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights – as well as multilateralism and the rules based international order.

To these ends, the undersigned Foreign Ministers will work together to strengthen the role of the EU in promoting arms control for a new technological age by

- renewing commitment to the goal of an effective global arms control architecture firmly anchored in international law, including human rights law and international humanitarian law, and multilateral decision-making,
- enhancing our common understanding of the existing and potential risks as well as the benefits of the military use of new technologies,
- advancing the development of effective arms control solutions that aim to mitigate the possible risks of the military use of new technologies while also utilising their potential to enhance the effectiveness of existing arms control arrangements, inter alia by providing more effective tools for verification,
- reconfirming the responsibility of states to ensure that all development, deployment and use of new weapon systems is in line with international humanitarian law,
- proposing a strategic EU process on the responsible military use of new technologies including artificial intelligence and on guidance to defence related innovation,
- developing effective global multi-stakeholder formats involving academia and industry to ensure the principles of responsible innovation are respected by research, development and commerce and building on the work of the European Union’s Global Tech Panel,
- considering improved measures preventing proliferation of sensitive new technologies to illegitimate non-state actors such as terrorists,
- harnessing the full potential of European diplomacy in taking forward multilateral arms control discussions focusing on the military use of new technologies,
- supporting independent research including by the European Non Proliferation Consortium analyzing the risks and opportunities of the military use of new technologies for international security and stability and developing new and effective arms control solutions.





Government Offices of Sweden

# Joint Statement from the International Coordination and Response Group for the victims of Flight PS752

October 27, 2020

The International Coordination and Response Group for the victims of Flight PS752 held a virtual meeting today (October 27, 2020).

Ministers representing Afghanistan, Canada, Sweden, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom discussed progress made on the investigations, and securing accountability and justice for the victims of the downing.

The Coordination Group recommitted to remaining united and to working together to achieve our objectives of transparency, justice, accountability and reparations in order to help families get the answers they deserve and find closure.

The Coordination Group continues its call on Iran to conduct an independent and comprehensive investigation into the causes and contributing factors that led to the downing in accordance with the standards and recommended practices set out under to Annex 13 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation.

The Coordination Group will continue to seek accountability for those responsible by encouraging a full and transparent criminal investigation and to call for impartial judicial proceedings in order to obtain justice for the victims of this tragedy.

Published 28 October 2020



Government Offices of Sweden

# Chairs' Summary Third Ministerial Strategic Dialogue on UNRWA

15 October 2020

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Ministers H.E Ayman Safadi of Jordan and H.E Ann Linde of Sweden hosted the third Ministerial Strategic Dialogue today, via telecommunication, to discuss joint efforts to support the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Participants included Egypt, France, Germany, Japan, Kuwait, Norway, the United Kingdom, the European External Action Service and the European Commission. UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini attended the meeting.

The participants underscored the importance of UNRWA as a critical component for humanitarian relief, regional development, stability and security, and underlined that UNRWA must continue to operate in fulfilment of its UN mandate until a durable and just solution to the Palestine refugee issue is found in accordance with international law and relevant UN resolutions, including UN General Assembly resolution 194, and within the context of a comprehensive solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict on the basis of the two-state solution.

Commissioner-General Lazzarini briefed the participants on the many challenges UNRWA is facing in a region of political and economic turmoil, compounded by the COVID-19 crisis. He also outlined the severe financial situation of the agency and the need to achieve a more forwardlooking and predictable funding.

The participants emphasized the importance of UNRWA's programmes in providing essential services to over 5.6 million Palestinian refugees in its five areas of operations, in line with UN values and contributing to the Agenda 2030, in accordance with UNRWA's mandate.

The Strategic Dialogue members reiterated their full support for UNRWA's mandate as demonstrated at its renewal at the United Nations General

Assembly in December 2019 and stressed the need to translate that political support into financial support, to allow UNRWA to continue delivering its vital services to Palestinian refugees efficiently and without interruption.

Participants called for continued support to UNRWA's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including through ensuring that the Agency's flash appeals are fully funded. Participants also expressed appreciation for the capacity of UNRWA and its staff to adapt to the difficult circumstances, including the COVID-19 pandemic. Considering the Agency's dire financial situation, the participants urged both current and new donors to do their utmost to close the funding gap for the remainder of 2020, in order to ensure that UNRWA is able to maintain its educational, health, relief and vital development services to refugees and to advocate for their rights and protection in accordance with its mandate. The participants agreed to work jointly to close the funding gap, including through outreach to other donors.

The participants stressed the need to move from short-term financial crisis-management to a more strategic, sustainable and predictable financial support, notably through multiyear financial commitments and core financing from a more diversified and expanded donor base. In order to sustain the work towards a more forward-looking and sustainable approach, the participants agreed to convene a larger international event beginning 2021.

Published 15 October 2020



Government Offices of Sweden

# Joint statement by the Foreign Ministers of Sweden and Denmark

We are deeply concerned by the contents of the documentary called *The Mole*, which concerns a number of activities related to the DPRK.

In response to these concerns, we have decided to task our missions to the UN with bringing the documentary to the attention of the UN Sanctions Committee. We will also raise the issue in the EU.

We take the content of the documentary very seriously as it raises a number of deeply problematic questions and concerns.

The sanctions adopted by the UN Security Council against the DPRK in response to the DPRK's nuclear and ballistic missile programs and activities must be respected and upheld.

We want to be very clear - it is the duty of the DPRK and all other states to implement and adhere to the sanctions levelled against the DPRK.

The recurring reports, including from the Panel of Experts of the UN Sanctions Committee on the DPRK, of extensive violations of sanctions on the DPRK is a matter of serious concern.

We are analysing the information in the documentary and what possible further steps it may entail. We will not prejudge further steps that the competent national authorities may wish to take on this issue.

Published 12 October 2020



# Joint Statement by the Foreign Ministers of Estonia, Finland and Sweden

Estonia, Finland and Sweden have agreed that in case of a new significant information on the catastrophe of the M/S Estonia that has not been reported before, Estonia, Finland and Sweden will jointly assess the new information. A Discovery Network documentary about the M/S Estonia disaster in 1994 includes new underwater video images from the wreck site showing damage on the starboard side of the wreck. Estonia, Finland and Sweden have agreed that verification of the new information presented in the documentary will be made in accordance and full respect of the Agreement between the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Finland and the Kingdom of Sweden regarding the M/S Estonia signed in 1995. The fundamental idea with this agreement is to protect the M/S Estonia, as a final place of rest for victims of the disaster, from any disturbing activities. Our countries will cooperate closely in this matter and Estonia as Flag State will lead this process. Estonia, Finland and Sweden emphasize that we rely on final conclusions of JAIC (Joint Accident Investigation Commission) Final Report of 1997.



Government Offices of Sweden

# Friends in Defence of Democracy

Today, foreign ministers and their representatives from Georgia, Liberia, Mongolia, Portugal, Sweden, Tunisia and Uruguay have come together in the margins of the UN General Assembly to mark the beginning of a new partnership, the Friends in Defence of Democracy.

We share a common concern for the challenges facing democracy, human rights and the rule of law around the world. These worrisome trends have been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

We, the Friends in Defence of Democracy, will collaborate with a view to manifesting our commitment to democracy and to stepping up our efforts to protect democracy, its principles, processes, institutions and defenders.

25 September 2020

Published 25 September 2020



Government Offices of Sweden

# Joint Statement by the Nordic Foreign Ministers (N5) from Bornholm

On 17 September, the Foreign Ministers of Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark met on the Danish island of Bornholm, in the Baltic Sea. The ministers' discussions focused on international security and foreign policy issues.

The ministers condemn in the strongest possible terms the poisoning of Russian opposition leader Alexey Navalny and call upon Russia to conduct an impartial and transparent investigation including experts from the OPCW. The Ministers express their deep concern over the use of a banned nerve agent on the territory of one of our neighbouring countries. Russia must immediately disclose any relevant information on how a chemical weapons attack could be conducted on its territory. Any attack with a chemical weapon is a clear breach of international law, undermining existing norms against the use of weapons of mass destruction. The international community needs to see those responsible held accountable. Further, attacks on members of the opposition are an unacceptable breach of democratic principles, human rights and international law. We regret this grave blow against democracy and political plurality in Russia.

The ministers also reiterated their support and solidarity with the people of Belarus who demand respect for fundamental freedoms and free and fair elections. The Belarusian authorities' brutal repression and disproportionate use of force against its own citizens must end. Referring to previous statements, the ministers call on the Belarusian authorities to immediately release all unlawfully detained, to launch a genuine national dialogue and to engage meaningfully with the OSCE. The foreign ministers underline the importance of swift imposition of sanctions by the EU and likeminded states on those responsible for electoral fraud and oppression of civilians.

The ministers also discussed Mr. Björn Bjarnasons report on Nordic Foreign and Security Policy, which opens an important new chapter in Nordic cooperation on foreign and security policy. Welcoming the report, the foreign ministers have agreed to look into recommendations within all three chapters of the report: climate, hybrid/cyber and multilateralism, with a view to taking them forward.

Finally, the ministers agreed on the need for further Nordic efforts related to conflict prevention and Women, Peace & Security (WPS). 20 years after the UN Security Council adopted the first resolution on WPS, underlining the importance of increasing women's full and equal participation in conflict prevention and sustainable peacebuilding, the agenda needs increased commitment globally to ensure its implementation. At the same time, conflicts are becoming more complex. The Nordic ministers reiterate that peace can only be achieved if women are at front and centre in peace processes, and they each commit to stronger Nordic cooperation as well as stronger integration of WPS in conflict prevention efforts.

Published 22 September 2020





# Joint Communiqué on the Conflict in Yemen

On September 17, Foreign Minister Ann Linde co-hosted, together with the Foreign Ministers of Germany, Kuwait and the UK, a virtual high-level meeting on the situation in Yemen, in connection to the United Nations' 75th General Assembly. The meeting was attended by UN Secretary-General António Guterres and a Group of countries particularly engaged in supporting UN efforts in Yemen. The Group comprises the five permanent members of the UN Security Council (China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, United States), Sweden, Germany, Kuwait and the European Union. The meeting followed-up the Group's high-level meeting in New York last year, which was also co-hosted by Sweden.

At the meeting, the Group voiced their deep concern over the continued hostilities in Yemen and the deteriorating humanitarian crisis. It gave strong support to the UN efforts and urged the parties to engage with the UN Special Envoy to reach a national ceasefire. They also emphasized the urgent need for more funding to the UN humanitarian response. The Group agreed on the following Joint Communiqué.

Joint Communiqué by Germany, Kuwait, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States, China, France, Russia and the European Union on the conflict in Yemen:

1. The Foreign Ministers of Germany, Kuwait, Sweden, and the United Kingdom co-hosted a meeting on Thursday 17 September 2020, in connection with the 75th United Nations General Assembly, with Ministers and representatives of United States, China, France, Russia, and the High

Representative of the European Union, to discuss the urgent need for political progress in Yemen.

2. Following briefings by the UN Secretary-General and his Special Envoy for Yemen, the Group discussed the urgent need for military de-escalation and political progress in Yemen, underlining their full support for the Special Envoy, Mr Martin Griffiths, including his efforts to facilitate agreement between the Yemeni parties on the Joint Declaration comprised of a nationwide ceasefire, humanitarian and economic measures and the resumption of a comprehensive, inclusive political process. The Group reaffirmed the international community's firm commitment to uphold Yemen's sovereignty, unity, independence, and territorial integrity. They reiterated that only an inclusive political solution can end the conflict in Yemen.

3. The Group stressed the need for the parties, through the political process, to swiftly conclude a comprehensive transitional agreement in order to end the conflict, usher in a transitional period where power is shared among diverse political and social components, and at the end of this period, ensure a peaceful transition of power to a new, inclusive government on the basis of credible national elections. The Group underlined the need for an inclusive political process, including the full participation of women and youth. The Group called on the Government of the Republic of Yemen and the Houthis to engage with the Special Envoy constructively and continuously, without preconditions, in order to swiftly reach agreement on the UN peace proposals. The Group also called on the neighbours of Yemen to use their influence to this effect in support of UN efforts.

4. The Group stressed the urgent need for de-escalation across Yemen and a nationwide ceasefire, as well as a full implementation of resolution 2532. In this regard, they welcomed the Secretary-General's call on 25 March for an immediate cessation of hostilities in Yemen as well as the unilateral ceasefire announced by the Coalition to Support Legitimacy in Yemen on 8 April, and expressed regret that the Yemeni parties did not seize the opportunity to achieve a nationwide ceasefire. The Group voiced its great concern about the continuing Houthi offensive on Marib, putting residents and displaced persons there at grave risk, which threatens to derail the UN peace process. The Group emphasised its concern about continuing violence in the Yemen conflict, including the continuation of Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia, which pose a serious threat to regional security. The Group expressed its concern about reports of continued civilian casualties. The Group called on all parties to fulfil their obligations under international humanitarian law, including the

protection of civilians, notably humanitarian workers and health personnel, as well as civilian infrastructures.

5. The Group reiterated its commitment to the Yemeni peace process and the relevant Security Council Resolutions, including UN Security Council Resolution 2216, the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism, and the National Dialogue Conference outcomes. It reiterated the importance of full compliance by Members States with the arms embargo imposed by UN Security Council resolutions concerning Yemen. The Group welcomed the announcement on 28 July of acceleration of the Riyadh Agreement, mediated by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and welcomed the efforts of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in this regard, and called on the Yemeni Government and Southern Transitional Council to fully implement those steps urgently. If implemented these agreements would bolster UN efforts to achieve a comprehensive solution.

6. The Group welcomed the commencement of the latest round of prisoner exchange negotiations in Geneva and called on the parties to urgently implement their stated commitments in this regard. The Group reaffirmed its full support for UNMHA and called on the Yemeni parties to respect the ceasefire in Hodeidah and to engage constructively on the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement, including the UNVIM mandate, and which remains an important part of the Yemen peace process. In this regard, the Group further called on the Yemeni parties, to engage constructively with UN proposals to ensure the adequate and unhindered flow of fuel, humanitarian goods, and food into Yemen through Hodeidah port and to establish a mechanism for directing port revenues to civil servant salary payments, based on the 2014 payroll database. The Group expressed concern over the humanitarian consequences of fuel shortages in northern Yemen. The Group emphasized the importance of ensuring that the civilian population can regularly access adequate supplies of fuel and other essential goods. The Group also reaffirmed its support to the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen.

7. Following the white note issued on food security risks by the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs on 4 September (with reference to UN Security Council Resolution 2417), the Group noted that economic and humanitarian indicators show rising food insecurity, and that famine is a realistic prospect in Yemen this year in the event of prolonged food import disruption or hindrances to distribution, exacerbated by the outbreak of Covid-19. In this regard, the Group expressed deep concern that the UN Humanitarian Response Plan has received only 30 per cent of the funding it

needs this year. The Group expressed appreciation to the UK, US, Sweden, Kuwait, and the EU, for committing additional funding since the 2 June Pledging Conference to the UN Humanitarian Response Plan totalling over \$350m. In order to prevent famine, the Group called on all donors to disburse existing pledges immediately and to consider making further contributions. The Group also discussed the central role of economic collapse in intensifying the risk of famine and urged Yemen's partners to consider all possible measures to strengthen the economy, including regular foreign-exchange injections into the Central Bank and steps to encourage robust flows of critical commercial imports through all of Yemen's ports. In this context, the Group reiterated the need to address the main drivers of the current humanitarian crisis, and referred to the ongoing coordinating efforts by the EU, the UN, and the World Bank in this regard.

8. The Group recognised that obstruction and interference with humanitarian assistance operations remains extremely challenging, particularly in northern Yemen. While the Group took note of initial steps taken by the Houthis, greater progress overall is needed to enable humanitarian organisations to continue delivering life-saving assistance to millions of vulnerable people throughout Yemen. The Group called on the Yemeni parties to facilitate full, safe, and unhindered humanitarian access to all the people in need. The Group urged potential donors who have made significant contributions in the past, to step-up humanitarian assistance to the UN-led response.

9. The Group further recognised the grave threat posed by the Safer oil tanker, whose dire condition risks an environmental, economic and humanitarian catastrophe to Yemen and the region, and called on the Houthis to urgently facilitate unconditional and safe access for UN experts to conduct an assessment and repair mission.

10. The Group looked to the Security Council to review progress at the next session, and agreed to reconvene at senior official level within six months. The Group welcomed the German offer to host such a meeting in Berlin.

Published 17 September 2020



Government Offices of Sweden

# Joint statement from Nordic-Baltic (NB8) Foreign Ministers' annual meeting

08.-09.09.2020 Tallinn, Estonia. Statement by Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden.

The Foreign Ministers of the Nordic-Baltic 8 - Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden - condemn in the strongest possible terms the usage of a chemical nerve agent of the Novichok group to poison the Russian opposition leader Alexey Navalny. Ministers call upon Russia and the international community to initiate an impartial and international investigation that would include the experts of the OPCW. Those responsible for the attack must be brought to justice.

NB8 Foreign Ministers also call for a strong and joint international response to the poisoning. Two years ago a chemical nerve agent of the Novichok group was used to commit a similar crime in the United Kingdom. Such attacks constitute an unacceptable threat to human lives as well as grave violations of basic human rights and international law. It is the responsibility of the international community to implement measures that would prevent similar crimes from happening in the future. We wish Mr Navalny a full and speedy recovery.

Referring to their joint statement from 11 August 2020 on recent developments in Belarus, the NB8 Foreign Ministers express their solidarity with the people of Belarus and admire their peaceful resolve. The continued violence from the authorities against peaceful demonstrators, threats to use military force, targeting of journalists, revoking foreign media accreditation, blocking of independent media websites and Internet shutdowns are alarming and must end. Ministers express concern about the criminal case opened against the Coordination Council, as well as the intimidation and detention of its members. The Coordination Council, which consists of representatives of

different parts of the society, could be instrumental in paving the way for a genuine and inclusive national dialogue.

In this regard, the NB8 Foreign Ministers call on the Belarusian authorities to engage with OSCE and the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Prime minister and Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of Albania, Edi Rama, and the incoming OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Ann Linde. Ministers urged the authorities of Belarus to release immediately and unconditionally all unlawfully detained persons. There is a need for a complete and transparent investigation of all abuses in order to hold those responsible to account.

Ministers agree that further strengthening of the regional economic cooperation can help to address the impact caused by the spread of Covid-19 virus. Current crisis has underlined the importance of digitalization as a tool to strengthen the resilience of affected countries and societies; regional digital solutions can help to address immediate challenges of the crisis and assist in medium and long-term recovery.

NB8 Foreign Ministers also pay tribute to the work done in the Nordic-Baltic format. By Nordic Baltic 8 cooperation award, the Ministers' meeting marks and celebrates the 30th anniversary from the first meeting of the NB8 Foreign Ministers, held in December 1990 in Copenhagen, and thus also the 30th anniversary of establishing the Nordic – Baltic cooperation format. The 1990s was a defining time in the history of Europe and the world. 30 years ago the Nordic countries were the most vocal supporters of restoration of the independent Baltic States, helped to pave their way back to international community.

Ministers recognise that the cooperation between Nordic-Baltic countries has developed over time, and today the group is working together aiming to build a more secure, innovative, strong, competitive region.

Published 09 September 2020



# Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde in telephone conversation with Belarusian Minister of Foreign Affairs Vladimir Makei

During the conversation, Ms Linde expressed deep concern over the developments in Belarus and referred to the statements that Sweden and the EU have issued concerning the unacceptable violence against demonstrators and election fraud during the presidential election.

Ms Linde pointed out that violence and provocations must not be used against demonstrators and called for the immediate release of all political prisoners.

Dialogue between the opposition, civil society and the authorities must now be initiated. It is important that the Belarusian Government listens to the people's protests rather than using violence to intimidate them. Sweden considers that the OSCE, of which Belarus is a member, can support to bring about the dialogue between the parties, a view that Ms Linde expressed to Mr Makei.

Sweden is the incoming Chair of the OSCE. In that role, Ms Linde offered to visit Minsk together with Albanian Prime Minister and Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Edi Rama, who is currently the Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE, to meet with representatives of the Belarusian Government and the opposition.



# Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs

The presidential election that took place in Belarus on 9 August was, as we have all seen, neither free nor fair. The people's engagement and desire for democratic change was met with a clenched fist by the Belarusian Government. The violence and repression used against demonstrators, journalists and opposition members exceeded our worst fears. The Belarusian authorities themselves state that over 6 000 people have been arrested; the opposition estimates that the real figure is considerably higher.

The Swedish Government was clear about what the demands and expectations were prior to the election: respect for human rights, democratic principles and no harassment of the opposition or civil society. I was in direct contact with representatives of the opposition and of civil society on election day and I reiterated our support for their democratic endeavours and their safety. After the election, we were among the first countries to immediately summon the Belarusian Ambassador in order to convey our strong criticism and condemnation.

The EU has also reacted clearly. On 11 August, the EU issued a strong statement calling for all those who had been deprived of their liberty in connection with the election to be released immediately. The EU also demanded that the Belarusian leadership begin a genuine dialogue with the opposition and that a thorough review of its relations with Belarus will be initiated.

The Swedish Government has been a staunch supporter of the clear standpoint of the EU. During an extraordinary Council meeting between the EU foreign ministers today, Sweden reiterated that the EU's reaction to the actions of the Belarusian Government must be strong and reflect the demands we need to set concerning respect for human rights and the rule of law. The Minister for Foreign Affairs stated that the EU should immediately initiate the process of adopting new sanctions against individuals who are directly responsible for the violence, unfounded arrests and fraud in connection with the presidential election. The minister also stressed that the EU's measures must not result in the population being isolated or punished



for the regime's violent actions. Sweden also stressed that the EU should increase its support to civil society and independent journalists in Belarus.

The meeting of the Foreign Affairs Council today resulted in a forceful condemnation of the violence against demonstrators and strong demand to release all persons detained in connection with the election. The EU also reiterated that the election was neither free nor fair. The EU expressed its readiness to facilitate a dialogue with the opposition and the possibility to send a mission to Minsk was also discussed. Furthermore, the ministers agreed to launch the process to adopt new sanctions against those directly responsible for violence against demonstrators and for election fraud. This constitutes an important step and is very much welcomed by Sweden. The ministers also agreed to increase support to civil society in Belarus, including through financial means.

Published 14 August 2020



Government Offices of Sweden

# Joint Statement of Nordic-Baltic Foreign Ministers on recent developments in Belarus

The Foreign Ministers of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden, in the context of the developments that are taking place in Belarus, express their grave concern about the violence against post-election demonstrations that have occurred in response to reports of widespread electoral fraud. We are very troubled by the reports of physical injuries inflicted on the demonstrators.

The presidential elections, which took place in Belarus on 9th August 2020, did not comply with the international commitments of Belarus and globally recognized standards of democracy and rule of law, and they were not free and fair.

We urge the Belarusian authorities to stop persecution of political opponents, to release all those unfairly detained immediately and to respect human rights and freedoms. We call upon the Belarusian government to immediately engage in a genuine political dialogue with the opposition in order to avoid further use of violence.

We remain committed to the people of Belarus and will continue to closely follow developments.

Published 11 August 2020



# Statement on the developments in Belarus

I take a very serious view of the developments in Belarus following yesterday's presidential elections. The police have used violence against demonstrators in a disproportionate and unacceptable manner. Demonstrators and journalists have been detained. There are reports that a number of people have been injured, and there are also reports of deaths. The responsibility for these violent developments lies with President Lukashenko and the Belarusian Government.

The conduct of the presidential elections follows a dismal tradition of undemocratic elections in Belarus. Electoral fraud is thought to have been widespread, including reports of a disproportionately high rate of advance voting. However, this information is difficult to verify as OSCE/ODIHR election observers were not given the opportunity to monitor the elections. Several opposition candidates were prevented in advance from participating in the elections, including through claims of invalid nomination signatures and politically motivated charges. In addition, the election campaign has been plagued by arbitrary detentions and fines imposed on journalists and political activists.

At the same time, the election campaign has demonstrated that demand for democratic change and reforms in Belarus is high. The massive popular engagement for change was clear when I spoke with representatives of the Belarusian opposition and civil society last night. I also met several of them during my visit to Minsk in November last year. My message was clear: Sweden will continue to support the Belarusian people's legitimate demands for democracy and respect for human rights.

We now demand that the authorities immediately release everyone who was arrested in connection with the elections and that politically motivated charges are dropped. We expect President Lukashenko to respect democratic principles and listen to the people's demands for change. Freedom of expression and assembly must be guaranteed, and all cases of electoral fraud and irregularities must be independently investigated. As an

initial step, the Belarusian leadership must enter into a genuine dialogue with the opposition.

If President Lukashenko refuses to listen to his people and continues along the chosen path of continued violence, it will have consequences for Sweden's relationship with the political leadership in Belarus. This will be conveyed to the Belarusian Ambassador today. We are in close contact with our EU partners, including on our further action should President Lukashenko refuse to listen to his citizens.

Published 10 August 2020



# Sweden, South Africa, Mexico, Spain and Germany discussed economic gender equality and engagement in a global coalition

On 2 July, Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde invited minister colleagues and government representatives from South Africa, Mexico, Spain and Germany to discuss economic gender equality. These countries, together with representatives of civil society, international organisations and private funds, will lead a global coalition on economic gender equality to accelerate results for global gender equality. Here are the key messages from the meeting:

- We, the Ministers in this meeting, share a strong commitment to global gender equality and women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights. 25 years after the agreement on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action at the World Conference on Women in 1995, the gender gap remains. This calls for intensified and concerted action. We therefore welcome the UN Women multi-stakeholder initiative "Generation Equality Forum", co-hosted by the governments of Mexico and France, and are fully engaged in moving the process forward.
- We are of the conviction that there can be no peace, security or sustainable development if half the population is left out. Gender equality is therefore not only a goal in itself, but also a means of achieving all the goals of the 2030 Agenda.
- Economic rights are fundamental human rights. Yet around the globe, a majority of women continue to live in abject poverty as opposed to men. A

majority of women also work in vulnerable, low-paid, or undervalued jobs. Gender wage gaps on the other hand are strikingly persistent in economic data. Globally, women continue to be paid less than men and as reported by the UN Women recently, women in most countries earn on average only 60-75% of men's wages. The principle of economic justice and socio-economic rights for women and girls must underpin our work to realise economic gender equality and the economic empowerment of all women and girls. This is also a lever for achieving progress in other related areas, such as women's and girls' representation and participation, countering of gender-based violence and strengthening of sexual and reproductive health and rights. Still, economic gender equality is one of the areas that is furthest from being reached according to World Economic Forum. This underlines the need for action in this matter.

- Economic gender equality means that women and men have the same opportunities to reach their full potential throughout their life cycle. In order to attain that, much needs to be done, including the strengthening of economic and social reforms for gender equality and work against discriminatory laws, as well as changing gender norms and roles. We must deliver game-changing results for women's active participation in our economies as creators of wealth, value contributors, innovators of new products across all sectors of our economies. We urgently need to turn commitments into actions and create economic opportunities for women in the margins, by building their productive assets as a primary driver for economic inclusion, giving access to land, digital id's and financial services. We must recognize unpaid care work and equally redistribute care and domestic work through a gender perspective. Women and girls need to have greater access to work, education, training, and social protection systems. We must also work on ending the gender technology gap in order to empower women and girls. There is also great potential in the area of trade and gender equality, including in reforming public and private procurement regulations to include and benefit female owned-enterprises.

- The COVID-19 crisis has revealed and exacerbated already existing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and inequalities. Women and girls are affected in a multitude of ways, including economically. Women have lower wages and pensions than men and are in majority in the informal, less secure, sector of the labour market. In addition, women are often outside social protection systems, but still bear most of the responsibility for domestic work, care work and the un-paid care work. As a result, this crisis has thrust to the spotlight the inherent structural precarity of women's roles in the labour force. Despite this, the COVID-19 crisis also

offers a unique opportunity for prioritisation of women and girls in the economic recovery plans. Prioritising women and girls is not just morally right, it is also an economic imperative. Women have always been critical agents of post-crisis recovery, and investing in gender equality has the potential to stimulate the economy and reverse losses to global wealth. Recovery from the COVID-19 crises requires that we develop a clear set of relief measures through a gender-lens, to ensure that we build back better to sustainable and inclusive economies that do not leave women behind. Women in the margins, such as those in the SMME and informal sectors deserve special attention in this regard.

- With this meeting, we would like to underline our commitment to work on economic justice and gender equality through actions that will guarantee the autonomy and economic empowerment of women. Germany, Mexico, South Africa, Spain and Sweden, together with other partners, will be co-leaders of the Global Action Coalition on Economic Justice and Rights, within the framework of the “Generation Equality”. This is a five-year commitment to contribute to accelerated progress on gender equality.

- Today, we are all facing the same crisis. We have an opportunity to make gender equality a top priority in the response and building back from the crisis and beyond. We are committed to contribute such transformative change in collaboration with UN Women and other partners.

Published 03 July 2020



Government Offices of Sweden

# Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde on developments in Hong Kong

Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde regrets China's decision to impose a national security law in Hong Kong and takes a very serious view of this decision.

The decision is in violation of China's international obligations, as the declaration by the EU of 29 May also pointed out.

These issues should be dealt with by Hong Kong within the framework of Hong Kong's Basic Law, which provides for Hong Kong making its own laws in the area.

Sweden and the rest of the EU support the 'One Country, Two Systems' principle to preserve Hong Kong's autonomy with an independent political and judicial system in accordance with Hong Kong's Basic Law.

Sweden and the EU have expressed our views to the Chinese authorities on several occasions.

The EU was able to raise the issue of Hong Kong directly with China's highest leaders at the EU-China summit on 22 June, which was very valuable.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs is following the serious developments closely and is pushing for continued and clear joint EU action.

Published 01 July 2020





Government Offices of Sweden

# Second Ministerial Strategic Dialogue on UNRWA

22 April 2020

Foreign Ministers H.E Ayman Safadi of Jordan and H.E Ann Linde of Sweden hosted the second Ministerial Strategic Dialogue today, via telecommunication, to discuss joint efforts to support the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Participants included Egypt, France, Germany, Japan, Kuwait, Norway, United Kingdom, the European External Action Service and the European Commission. The meeting was attended by UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini.

The participants underscored the importance of UNRWA as a critical component for humanitarian relief, regional development, stability and security, and underlined that UNRWA must continue to operate in fulfillment of its UN mandate until a durable and just solution to the Palestine refugee issue is found in accordance with international law and relevant UN resolutions, including UN General Assembly resolution 194, and within the context of a comprehensive solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict on the basis of the two-state solution.

The participants emphasized the importance of UNRWA's programmes in providing essential services to over 5.6 million Palestinian refugees in its five areas of operations, including East Jerusalem and Gaza, in line with UN values, and contributing to the Agenda 2030 in accordance with UNRWA's mandate.

The Strategic Dialogue welcomed the overwhelming international support for UNRWA's mandate renewal at the United Nations General Assembly in December 2019 and stressed the need to translate that political support into financial support, to allow UNRWA to continue delivering its vital services to Palestinian refugees efficiently and without interruption.

The participants expressed strong support for UNRWA's new leadership and

welcomed the Commissioner-General's briefing on his plans to further strengthen the Agency.

Given the gravity of the global COVID-19 crisis, the participants called for support to UNRWA's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including through ensuring that the Agency's flash appeals are fully funded. Participants also expressed appreciation for UNRWA's staff as frontline responders to the Covid 19 pandemic and the Agency's ability and ensure the delivery of its mandate in an increasingly challenging political and financial environment.

The Strategic Dialogue called for a renewed international commitment for 2020 and beyond, in order to ensure that UNRWA is able to maintain its educational, health, relief and vital development services to refugees and to advocate for their rights and protection in accordance with its mandate. The participants invited all donors to actively support UNRWA, notably through multiyear financial commitments and core financing, to help the Agency meet the 2020 budget requirements and ensure sufficient sustainable, and predictable financial support. Furthermore, the participants explored ways to assist the Agency diversify and expand its donor base and its funding opportunities.

The participants agreed to convene a virtual pledging conference in the coming months to ensure that the Agency's financial needs are met.

Published 22 April 2020



Government Offices of Sweden

# Jordan, Sweden Convene Trilateral Meeting on UNRWA

Amman/Stockholm 14 April 2020

The Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Jordan, H.E Ayman Safadi, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, H.E Ann Linde, and UNRWA Commissioner General, Philippe Lazzarani, held a meeting by teleconference today to discuss the importance of international and regional support to UNRWA as it faces increased financial and operational pressures compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic in its areas of operations. The meeting was also attended by the Minister of International Development Cooperation of Sweden, H.E Peter Eriksson, and former Acting Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Christian Saunders.

The meeting addressed the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic on Palestinian refugees and on the Agency's budget and operations. With the destabilising effect of COVID-19 worldwide, participants called on the international community to respond to the UNRWA flash appeal and emphasised the importance of the Agency's work as a critical component for regional development, stability and security.

The trilateral discussions explored resource mobilisation efforts in support of the 5.6 million Palestinian refugees under the Agency's mandate. To this end, participants discussed the preparations for convening the second Ministerial Strategic Dialogue on UNRWA in the near future, via telecommunication, with the aim to ensure sustainable political and financial support to UNRWA in 2020 and beyond.

The meeting explored ways to support UNRWA following the overwhelming international support to renew its mandate at the United Nations General Assembly in December 2019. In this regard, the participants stressed the need to translate the political support into financial support, to allow UNRWA to continue delivering its vital services to Palestinian refugees efficiently and without interruption. Participants acknowledged the role that UNRWA plays in situations of humanitarian emergencies, as well as its role

in ensuring that Palestinian refugees continue to access basic rights such as the right to health, education and other human rights, in line with Agenda 2030, as well as with the Decade of Action, which aims to leave no one behind, including Palestine refugees.

Participants of the teleconference underlined their strong political support for UNRWA and for it to continue to operate in fulfillment of its mandate until a durable and just solution of the question of the Palestine refugees is found in accordance with relevant UN resolutions, including UN General Assembly Resolution 194 and within the context of a comprehensive solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict on the basis of the two-state solution.

Published 14 April 2020



Government Offices of Sweden

# Nordic-Baltic Foreign Ministers meeting on 16 March 2020

## Joint statement

The Foreign Ministers of Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia and the State Secretary of Norway discussed over a video conference on Tuesday the response to the situation caused by the spread of COVID-19 corona virus.

The Ministers and State Secretaries emphasized the need to coordinate and co-operate closely and

- stressed the resolve to work together to ensure transit for EU and EEA citizens and permanent residents who are returning home, if necessary by establishing transit corridors;
- decided to establish a network of consular directors to exchange information, best practices and possible practical measures to help citizens and permanent residents of their countries returning home;
- acknowledged the impact on economies and stressed the importance of free movement of goods, including medical equipment, and keeping cargo corridors open to ensure that the internal market keeps functioning.

Published 18 March 2020



Government Offices of Sweden

# Joint press statement by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Sweden and France

Paris, 11 March 2020

Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ms Ann Linde, and French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Mr Jean-Yves Le Drian, met in Paris yesterday, at a time when the world is facing many challenges and threats. The deeply disturbing developments in Idlib leading to a humanitarian catastrophe, the rapid spread of the coronavirus and the climate crisis are examples that confirm the need for enhanced international cooperation and active diplomacy to build peace and security.

In this context, while recalling that France and Sweden are both engaged members of the Alliance for Multilateralism, and in line with the "Declaration on cooperation between France and Sweden in the field of European Affairs, as endorsed on June 7th, 2019 by French President Emmanuel Macron and Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, the Ministers decided to strengthen cooperation on foreign and security policy in areas related to peace, security and democracy. The Ministers confirmed their commitment to the Euro-Atlantic security order and a comprehensive approach to security where security is intertwined with democracy, the respect for international law and human rights.

The Ministers also underlined the importance of the joint efforts conducted within the European Union's Common Security and Defence Policy. They also welcomed their cooperation in the European Intervention Initiative.

The Ministers discussed the need for a coherent and active engagement on security, development and humanitarian aid in the Sahel and underlined the contribution of the 'Coalition for the Sahel' as a framework for strategic and political engagement with the Sahel. They underlined the centrality of the UN's efforts and coordination role in the region. They welcomed the close

cooperation between Sweden and France regarding the Sahel. Current tensions around the Gulf will need to be addressed through a long-term strategic approach and an active EU-role in support for an inclusive regional dialogue. They also discussed other foreign policy issues such as Iran and the continued importance of Iran's compliance with the JCPOA, and the upcoming NPT review conference.

Sweden and France reaffirmed that the two-state solution, with Jerusalem as the capital of each state, is the only framework that makes it possible to meet the aspirations of both Israelis and Palestinians and, in so doing, to bring about a lasting solution to the conflict.

Ministers confirmed their commitment to building a strong and effective Europe that responds to citizens' needs and, in this context, looked forward to the next Conference on the Future of Europe. The deliberations highlighted issues of common interest where Ministers decided to work more closely together.

Transnational organised crime is a threat to our common security and requires a collective response. Ministers expressed their readiness to share best practices and lessons learned. The soon-to-be appointed Swedish Ambassador in charge of combatting organised crime will work closely with the French counterpart to foster cooperation and promote appropriate initiatives at EU and international level.

Ministers agreed to intensify cooperation on emerging technologies, as well as cyber security, aiming at strengthening the capacity of the EU to secure critical infrastructure for the maintenance of vital societal and economic functions, counter cyber threats. The discussions underlined the shared view that the EU has the instruments and potential to become a leading global security policy actor in this area. France and Sweden share a common ambition for a safe, open, single and neutral digital space.

The Ministers confirmed their already strong collaboration for gender equality and all women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights, including sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and economic and social conditions. France, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, and Sweden, as incoming chairperson of the OSCE in 2021, will jointly increase efforts to support women's participation in conflict prevention, peace processes as well as in post-conflict reconstruction. In parallel, Sweden and France will jointly advance gender equality in all realms of the European Union as well as press on with their joint diplomatic initiative to fight

trafficking for sexual exploitation. Ministers reiterated their close cooperation in the run-up to the Generation Equality Forum to be held in Mexico City on 7-8 May and Paris on 7-10 July.

Finally, the ministers agreed that our two countries would benefit from greater coordination to promote our convergences, particularly at European level with a view to their next Trio of presidencies in 2022-2023 and a joint commitment to supporting a strong and cohesive EU foreign and security policy.

Published 11 March 2020





# International Coordination and Response Group for the victims of Flight PS752 – Framework for Cooperation with Iran

Canada, Ukraine, Sweden, Afghanistan and the UK – members of the International Coordination and Response Group for the victims of Flight PS752 – held an in-person meeting at Canada House in London, UK, today and agreed upon a framework for cooperation with Iran in response to this tragedy to provide closure, accountability, transparency and justice for the families and loved ones of all the victims.

The framework is centred on five key elements that will guide our engagement with the Iranian authorities to ensure:

1. Full and unhindered access for our officials to and within Iran to provide consular services.
2. That the victim identification process is conducted with dignity, transparency and according to international standards and that the wishes of the families regarding repatriation are respected in all cases.
3. A thorough, independent and transparent international investigation open to grieving nations governed by the Convention on International Civil Aviation.
4. Iran assumes full responsibility for the downing of flight PS752 and recognizes its duties towards the families of the victims and other parties – including compensation.
5. Accountability for those responsible through an independent criminal investigation followed by transparent and impartial judicial proceedings which conform to international standards of due process and human

rights.

We welcome Iran's engagement to date and encourage their continued cooperation.

Published 16 January 2020



# Joint Communique on Ministerial Meeting on Yemen Crisis at UN General Assembly

On Thursday September 26th, on the margins of the 74th United Nations General Assembly, Sweden's Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde co-hosted a high-level breakfast meeting together with the United Kingdom and Kuwait on the situation in Yemen. The meeting was attended by a number of countries who have been particularly engaged in supporting a political solution in Yemen within the UN Security Council. The Group agreed to continue their joint efforts for a political process in Yemen, and adopted on the following statement.

1. Representatives of the Governments of France, Germany, Kuwait, the People's Republic of China, the Russian Federation, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America met as a Group on Thursday, 26 September 2019, to underline their continued support for the UN-led peace process in Yemen.
2. The Group underlines its full support for the UN Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Martin Griffiths, and calls on the Government of Yemen and the Houthis to engage constructively and continuously with him. The Group commends the tireless efforts of the Special Envoy to support the parties to implement the Stockholm Agreement and to achieve a political solution to the conflict in Yemen. In this regard, the Group reaffirms its commitment to the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Yemen.
3. The Group emphasises the need for de-escalation and efforts by all parties to ensure that the conflict in Yemen is not further drawn into growing

regional tensions. In this regard, the Group condemns in the strongest terms the increased intensity of Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia as such attacks pose a serious national security threat to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as well as a wider threat to regional security, and threaten to undermine the UN-led political process. In this context, the announcement on 20 September that the Houthis would cease strikes on Saudi Arabia is an important first step towards de-escalation which will need to be followed with positive action on the ground by the Houthis as well as restraint by the Coalition.

4. The Group reiterates the need to increase the pace and scale of the humanitarian response. It expresses its concern at reports that the UN is increasingly running out of funding, forced to scale back or stop life-saving activities. The Group is clear that a political settlement is the only way to address the humanitarian crisis, but given the risk of starvation faced by millions, the Group calls on all donors to disburse promptly their pledges to the UN humanitarian response. The Group expresses appreciation for the disbursement of \$500 million by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the UN on 25 September. It also calls on the conflict parties to facilitate safe, rapid and unhindered humanitarian access in compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 2451. The Group calls on all parties to fulfil their obligations under international humanitarian law, including ensuring the protection of civilians.

5. Following the recent developments in the south of Yemen, the Group urges the invited parties to engage in the dialogue led by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to preserve Yemen's territorial integrity. These developments give further urgency for the need to start a comprehensive and inclusive political process that will lead to an enduring political settlement to end the conflict in Yemen.

6. The Group reiterates its commitment to the Yemeni peace process and the relevant Security Council Resolutions, including UN Security Council Resolution 2216, the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism, and the outcomes of the comprehensive National Dialogue Conference. In this regard, the Group expresses its full support for the UN Special Envoy's plan to hold informal consultations with Yemeni political actors and establish a political advisory group in preparation for the resumption of formal negotiations. The Group calls on the Yemeni parties to engage constructively with the Special Envoy to resume inclusive and comprehensive political discussions which can end the conflict.

7. The Stockholm Agreement remains an important element of the Yemen peace process and should be implemented as envisaged in order to alleviate the humanitarian situation, create confidence between the parties, and improve the conditions for political talks. To gain momentum, the Group calls on the Yemeni parties to respect the ceasefire in Hodeidah and participate constructively in negotiations on implementation of Hodeidah Agreement. In particular, the Group expresses its full support for UNMHA and calls on the Yemeni parties to engage constructively with the Mission as well as with UN proposals on security arrangements, which will allow for disengagement and the mutual withdrawal of military forces, tripartite monitoring and the establishment of the UNVIM presence. The Group further calls on the Yemeni parties to engage with UN proposals to establish a mechanism for redirecting port revenues to salary payments. It also calls on the parties to start implementation of the prisoner exchange agreement as soon as possible. However, lack of full implementation of the Stockholm Agreements should not prevent the parties from participation in the Special Envoy's process toward a broader political settlement to end the conflict.

8. The Group looks to the Security Council to review progress when they next meet. The Group also agreed to continue to meet regularly at different levels and with other partners in order to support the UN-led peace process.

Published 27 September 2019